The Italian inspiration in English literature

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If this opus had been a book I would have had to use a terser title, such as ‘The Italians in English’, although then I would have been accused of plagiarising the opera *L’Italiana in Algeri*. Since longer titles are allowed for essays and lectures I may also use a subtitle, ‘A Prospectus for a Companion to Italian Studies’, for that will explain my objective.

My companions since my schooldays have been the reference books published by the Oxford University Press. The *Oxford Companion to English Literature* (1932) has been followed by the Companions to *Classical* (1937), *American* (1941), *French* (1959), *Canadian* (1967), *German* (1976) and *Spanish* (1978) *Literature*. When the Spanish volume came out I inquired when one could expect the Italian companion. I learned that no such volume was in contemplation. As Italian authors are second to Latin authors alone in the influence they have had on writers in English, I was astonished at this dereliction. The Department of Language and Literature at Duntroon has been preparing an *Oxford Companion to Australian Literature*. My proposal is that we in Australia should now take the responsibility for compiling a similar work on Italian literature from Frederick II to Frederick May.

The facts that a dozen Shakespeare plays have Italian names, characters and plots and that Shakespeare wrote a sonnet sequence are so well known that it may not be sufficiently appreciated how many other authors during and since his time have depended on the Italians for their themes and forms.

The father of English poetry, Chaucer, was familiar with Italian and made diplomatic journeys to Genoa and Florence in 1372-73 and to Lombardy in 1378. Nevill Coghill, who has translated the *Canterbury Tales* and *Troilus and Criseyde*, now in Penguin, writes that ‘Chaucer’s power to tell a story seems to have emerged at this time and to derive from Italy’. In *The House*
of Fame (c. 1375), in the invocation and at line 730, Chaucer adapts the invocation to Apollo and Beatrice’s account of gravity from Dante’s *Paradiso* I and at line 545 makes fun of himself being carried aloft by an eagle as Dante had been in *Purgatorio*. In the *Monk’s Tale* he was the first to translate the grisly story of Ugolino from *Inferno* XXXIII; it was later to be translated by Jonathan Richardson (1719), Thomas Gray (c. 1739), the Earl of Carlisle (1773), Constantine Jennings (1794), Richard Wharton, Thomas Medwin (Shelley’s second cousin), A.H. Hallam and Gladstone (1863). Byron did not take the story so seriously; in *Don Juan*, canto II, justifying cannibalism at sea, he writes:

And if Pedrillo’s fate should shocking be,
   Remember Ugolino condescends
To eat the head of his arch-enemy
   The moment after he politely ends
His tale: if foes be food in hell, at sea
   ’Tis surely fair to dine upon our friends
When shipwreck’s short allowance grows too scanty,
   Without being much more horrible than Dante.

Nevertheless Byron would not have written ‘The Prisoner of Chillon’ without this story from Dante (Medwin’s *Life of Shelley*, II, 22).

In *Troilus and Criseyde* (c. 1385), Book 1, lines 400-20, Chaucer gives a version of Petrarch’s sonnet *S’amor non e, ehe dunque è quel ch’io sento?* (No. 132 in Robert Durling’s *Petrarch’s Lyric Poems*, Harvard U.P., 1976). He takes the *Clerk’s Tale* from Boccaccio through Petrarch’s Latin translation. Although he frequently parades his knowledge of Dante and Petrarch he never mentions Boccaccio, on whom he constantly draws. *Troilus and Criseyde* comes from *Filostrato* (c. 1335) and contains a great number of Italianate words and even some Italian rhymes. The *Knight’s Tale* comes from *Il Teseida* (1339-40), the *Reeve’s Tale* from the *Decameron* IX, 6, the *Franklin’s Tale* from X, 5, the *Shipman’s Tale* from VIII, 1. The *Squire’s Tale* comes from Marco Polo. Mario Praz, Ralph Elliott and J.A.W. Bennett give many instances of Chaucer’s verbal debt to Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio.

Chaucer’s English and Scots disciples in the fifteenth century did not have their master’s acquaintance with the Italians, except
that the Reverend John Lydgate took his *Fall of Princes* (first printed 1494) from Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium*. The full impact of the Italian Renaissance occurred under the Tudors. The Reverend Polydore Vergil (1470-1555) of Urbino came to Henry VII's court and was asked by him to write the *Anglica Historia*. One of the transcendent figures of the Renaissance — mourned by Charles V as *uno de los mejores caballeros del mundo* — Baldesar Castiglione (1478-1529) of Mantua made a visit to England as orator of Duke Guidubaldo I of Urbino for the latter's installation on 7 November 1506 as a Knight of the Garter. (The duke's father, Federico, who had been installed as a Knight of the Garter at the Feast of St George in 1475, had decorated the palace of Urbino with the badge and motto of the order and Guidubaldo now did the same in his palace at Gubbio.) Castiglione's polished and sophisticated classic *Il Cortegiano* (1528) enjoyed an immense success and influence throughout Western Europe and not least in England. It was translated into Spanish, French, German, Flemish and even Russian. Sir Thomas Hoby's translation appeared in 1561 and went through further editions in 1577, 1588 and 1603. Bartholomew Clerk's Latin version was published in London in 1571 and afterwards at Strassburg and Frankfurt. *The Courtier* purports to be a record of discussions held on four successive evenings during March 1507 at the ducal palace of Urbino in what came to be called the Sala delle Veglie. It has been suggested that Marlowe's lines on the first meeting of Hero and Leander, with the climax 'Who ever loved that loved not at first sight', are inspired by a passage in the first book, that Spenser's *Hymne in Honour of Beautie* (1596) and many passages in *Amoretti* came from the discourse on Platonic love by Pietro Bembo, later a cardinal, in the fourth book and that the verbal sparring between Benedick and Beatrice is based on that between Gaspare Pallavicino and Emilia Pia throughout. Jonson draws on *The Courtier* for a scene in *Every Man out of His Humour*. Castiglione is mentioned by Edward Guilpin in *Skialethia* (1598), by Marston in his satires (1598), *Antonio and Mellida* (1602) and *The Malcontent* (1604) and by Dekker and Webster in their *Westward Ho!* (1607). He must also be blamed for Shakespeare's addiction to puns. Quite apart from such literary reflections, however, *The Courtier* affected the whole
cultural, social and political attitudes and aspirations of the Elizabethans. In his posthumous *Scholemaster* (1570) Roger Ascham was indignant about Italy's corruption of his countrymen — *Englese Italianato è un diabolo incarnato* — but he expressly approved of *The Courtier*. Today the pupils of Ascham make constant visits to Italy but are not taught Italian.

Another popular Mantuan was the one mentioned and misquoted by Holofernes (*Love's Labor's Lost* IV, ii, 89):

> Facile precor gelida quando pecas omnia sub umbra ruminat, and so forth. Ah, good old Mantuan. I may speak of thee as the traveller doth of Venice:
> Venechia, Venechia,
> Que non te vede, que non te prechia.
> Old Mantuan, old Mantuan! who understandeth thee not, loves thee not.

 Brother Baptista Mantuanus (1448-1516, beatified 1885) wrote ten eclogues in Latin verse which greatly influenced Spenser and his generation. (Contemporary court documents call him Baptista Spagnolo, his father being a Spaniard. The *Oxford Companion to English Literature* calls him Johannes Baptist Spagnola, the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* Johannes Mantuanus and the *Oxford History of England* Baptista Spagnolo. The *British Museum Catalogue* gives Spagnuoli.) His work was a prescribed textbook at St Paul's School, London in 1518, St Bees, Cumberland in 1583 and Kings School, Durham in 1593 and, according to Samuel Johnson's life of Ambrose Philips, was read, 'at least in some of the inferior schools of this Kingdom', to the beginning of the eighteenth century. He was imitated in Alexander Barclay's *Eclogues* (1514), the earliest English pastorals, and by Barnabe Googe (1562). George Turbervile turned nine of the *Eglogs* into English fourteeners in 1567. Lodge, Drayton, Greene, Nashe, Heywood and Beaumont and Fletcher mention and quote Mantuan. The last line of Milton's 'Lycidas' comes from the last line of *Ecloga* IX. The first lines of the first eclogue run *Fauste, precor, gelida quando pecus omne sub umbra/ ruminat*. Fashions change. To the Englishman of three centuries later the Mantuan, the Mantovano whom Tennyson saluted, was Virgil.

The fascination which English dramatists have felt for Italy
from the days of Elizabeth I onward is obvious from the titles and settings of their plays. Shakespeare has *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello, The Moor of Venice*. Portia lives in Belmont, which is Montebello Vicentino, one-third of the way from Vicenza to Verona. She tells her man Balthazar to bring Dr Bellario’s brief and robes to Venice from Padua by the traject, i.e. the traghetto, the common ferry (III, iv, 53). (The First Folio’s misprint ‘tranect’ has given rise to centuries of futile exegesis.) Venice is the setting of Jonson’s *Volpone*, Byron’s *The Two Foscari* and Byron’s and Swinburne’s *Marino Faliero*. Otway wrote *Venice Preserved* (1681). Part of *The Taming of the Shrew* and the final act of Webster’s *The White Devil* take place in Padua. There is *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; Verona is the setting for most of *Romeo and Juliet* and the rest of *The Taming of the Shrew* and today for an annual Shakespeare festival. Mantua is the setting of the rest of *Romeo* and some more of *The Two Gentlemen*.

Massinger wrote *The Duke of Milan*. Jonson’s *The Case is Altered* is set in Milan. Prospero was the rightful Duke of Milan and the remainder of *The Two Gentlemen* took place there. Massinger also wrote *The Great Duke of Florence*. *All’s Well that Ends Well*, the original version of Jonson’s *Every Man in His Humour* (1598), in which Shakespeare acted, and Browning’s *The Ring and the Book* took place in Florence. Cassio, whom Othello promoted above Iago, is a Florentine. Rome is the setting of Barnabe Barnes’ *The Devil’s Charter* (on Pope Alexander VI), *The White Devil* and Shelley’s *The Cenci*. Webster’s *Duchess* comes from Amalfi. His *Devil’s Law Case* takes place in Naples and Alonso and Ferdinand in *The Tempest* come from Naples. Shakespeare places *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Winter’s Tale* in Sicily and *Twelfth Night* in Illyria.

The Italian influence was still greater in the plots of the plays than in their titles and settings. The Italian titles and settings are not crucial to most of the plays but the Italian sources were essential to their plots. The same plot was often used by several dramatists. To the Elizabethan dramatist, as to the Greek dramatist, the treatment of the theme was more important than its novelty. Shakespeare was more dependent on plots from the Italian novellieri than were the university wits, who were steeped in the classics. Shakespeare may have known small Latin and less Greek but he would not have known less Italian. He could often
have said, with Hamlet, 'The story is extant and written in very choice Italian'. He may even, like Jonson, have been schooled by John Florio. (Other Italian families resident in England during this period were Caesar, Ubaldini and Ferrabosco.)

Boccaccio, the prince of story-tellers, retained his charm for the Elizabethans. In her encyclopedic but poorly edited *Elizabethan Translations from the Italian* (Houghton Mifflin, 1916) Mary Augusta Scott lists thirty-three Elizabethan dramas derived from him and fifty-four English plays in all (p. 93). *Cymbeline* comes from the *Decameron* II, 9 and *All’s Well that Ends Well* from III, 9. The casket scene in *The Merchant of Venice* comes from *Decameron* X, 1 and the story of the pound of flesh, the judgment and the ring from Giovanni Fiorentino’s *Il Pecorone* IV, 1. An English translation of the whole *Decameron* did not appear until 1620. When a later version became readily available in Everyman in 1930 it was banned from Australia as obscene, despite the fact that *novella* III, 10 about the Arab girl’s instruction by the young hermit in the Sahara was left in Italian. Elizabethans, however, could read sixteen of the stories in William Painter’s immensely popular *The Palace of Pleasure* (1566-67).

The *Novelle* of Bishop Matteo Bandello (c. 1480-1562) was also a favourite source of Elizabethan plays. No less than twenty-six stories in *The Palace of Pleasure* came from Bandello, according to Sidney Lee’s article on Painter in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Scott lists twenty-seven plays (p. 42) derived from Bandello. From *Novelle* I, 3 comes *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, from I, 20 *Much Ado About Nothing*, from II, 9 *Romeo and Juliet* and from II, 36, and ultimately from the Sienese Comedy *Gl’Ingannati* (1538) (Penguin 1978), *Twelfth Night*. The story of *Lucrece* is also in Bandello.

Ariosto’s *Il Negromante* is the source of Jonson’s *Volpone*. His *I Suppositi*, in George Gascoigne’s translation *Supposes* (1566), the first comedy in English, is the source of *The Taming of the Shrew. The Tempest* must have been influenced by his story of Ruggiero’s shipwreck in canto XLI of *Orlando furioso* (1532) and reconciliation with Orlando in canto XLI and *Much Ado* by the story of Ariodante and Ginevra in canto V (copied by Spenser in *The Faerie Queene* II, iii, stanza 17 et seq). Robert Greene wrote *Orlando Furioso*. 6
The Claudio-Hero, Ariodante-Ginevra story is also found in *novella* 9 in the Introduction to *Ecatommiti* by Giovanbattista Giraldi Cinzio of Ferrara. From VIII, 5 comes *Measure for Measure* and from III, 7 *Othello*. From the same source Dryden drew his comedy, *The Kind Keeper, or Mr Limberham*, first produced on 11 March 1678 and first published in 1680.

In English commentaries Giraldi is often to be found as or under Cinthio. The references to him and his work are so various and inconsistent as to justify an excursus. The original title page gives *De Gli / Hecatommithi / di M. Giovanbattista / Gyraldi Cinthio* and the place and date Monte Regale 1565. Later editions were published in Venice with the title *Hecatommithi / ouero / Cento Novelle / di M. Giovanbattista / Giraldi Cinthio*. It is as inappropriate to reproduce the archaic spellings with H as it would be to use the spellings in the First Folio. For some centuries Italians have used the forms *Ecatommiti* and Cinzio, an epithet Giraldi adopted as a pair for his heroine, Cinzia; Apollo and Diana were called Cynthia and Cynthia because they were born on Mt Cynthus in Delos.

Just as the *Decameron* is a collection of stories told by refugees from the plague in Florence in 1348, so the *Ecatommiti* is a collection of stories told by refugees from the sack of Rome in 1527. There are ten *novelle* in each of ten groups; a group of ten *novelle* is called a *deca*. One area of confusion concerns the number of stories and storytellers in Giraldi’s book. Cassell’s *Encyclopedia of World Literature* (1953) and *Everyman’s Dictionary of European Writers* (1968) say there are 130 tales, the *Penguin Companion to Literature* (1969) says 113. The *Oxford Companion* says they were told by ‘10 ladies and gentlemen’. The book was published in two parts. The first part had an introduction with ten *novelle* about the foursome (two pairs of twins) and nine couples who tell the stories. The second part was preceded by three *dialoghi della vita civile*. Thus the count can be stretched to 113 tales and 22 persons.

Another area of confusion concerns the manner of referring to the author, the book and the individual tales. Sidney Lee’s article on Painter in the *D.N.B.* cites Cinthio’s ‘Ecatomithi’. Scott makes no fewer than seventeen references to Giraldi’s work. Seven times she calls him Giraldi, three times Giraldi Cinzio and another three times Cinzio, twice Cinthio and once Giraldi.
Cinthio. On page 476 she uses Giraldi and on the next page GIRALDI CINTIO, GIRALDI CINTIO and CINTIO. She calls his book Gli Hecatommithi five times, Hecatommithi once and Gli Ecatommiti once. She uses the form of citation VI, 9 three times, Deca Sesta, Novella Nona twice, Deca VIII, Novella 5 once and Decade 8, Novel 5 once. In preparing this paper I was embarrassed to find that her book was not in the A.N.U. libraries. I was not so upset when I found that the National Library had acquired a copy in 1956 and that the pages were still uncut.

A third area of confusion is over the place and date of publication. In 1903 the first edition of the Arden Othello said that The Hecatomithi (sic) ‘was originally published at Monteregale, in Sicily, in 1565’. In 1954 Deighton said that the ‘seventh novel of Giraldi Cinthio’ was ‘originally published at Venice in 1566’. In 1958 a later Arden edition said that ‘the Hecathommithi . . . was published in Venice in 1566’. Thus the Arden came to correct the title and falsify the place and date. The first edition had nevertheless been incorrect in the gloss that Monteregale was in Sicily. Although I thought it strange that a Ferrarese author should publish a new work in Sicily, which lost its cultural primacy after Frederick II, I would not have suspected an error if the British Museum Catalogue had not put Mendovi in brackets after Monte Regale. This is itself a misprint for Mondovi, which eight centuries ago was called Monte Regale in Piemonte to distinguish it from Monte Regale (Monreale) in Sicily. Monreale became a bishopric in 1176 and has had archbishops since 5 February 1183; they sign Montis Regalis. Mondovi has had bishops since 5 June 1388; they sign Montis Regalis in Pedemonte. Mondovi acquired the first printing press in Piedmont in 1472. Its inhabitants are still called Monregalesi.

One is driven to the conclusion that literary editors and historians engage in a constant process of compounding errors by cannibalising the efforts of their predecessors. I have hesitated to point out its errors to my exemplar, the O.U.P., because I have gained the impression that in subsequent editions it might rather omit references than correct them. In 1966, full of Gore Vidal’s Julian, I expressed doubts to Oxford’s manager in Australia, Frank Eyre, whom I knew well from the old Commonwealth Literary Fund, about the statement in the Classical Dictionary that Constantius II ‘gave his daughter, Helena, in marriage’ to
Julian, surely one of the best documented figures in antiquity. The editor wrote from Oxford:

I took it up with the author of the article, who now agrees that you are right and that Helena was the sister, and not the daughter, of Constantius.

We shall get it right in the new edition now in preparation. Thank you very much for pointing it out to us.

The new edition made no reference to Julian’s marriage. Perhaps Homer did not like people to see that he had once nodded. It was not till its fourth edition (1967) that the *Oxford Companion to English Literature* corrected its spelling from Geraldi to Giraldi. The third edition of the *Oxford Companion to the Theatre* (1967) still uses *Hecatonmiti* (p. 389) and *Eccatonmiti* (p. 482).

It is notable that the Elizabethans and Jacobean dramatists wrote many plays about contemporary events in France or Italy but not England. Donizetti could exploit the dramatic potential of *Elisabetta al Castello di Kenilworth* (1829), *Anna Bolena* (1830), *Maria Stuarda* (1834) and *Roberto Devereux, Conte di Essex* (1837) but English dramatists could not have written on these themes until a half or two centuries earlier.

Italian tales continued to provide plots for English dramatists throughout the seventeenth century. As late as Farquhar’s *The Twin Rivals* (1702) a poet in search of a plot is recommended to ‘read the Italian’ as well as the Spanish plays. English poets have never been as dependent as English dramatists on Italian plots although they have provided some splendid examples. Dryden took his fables *Sigismonda and Guiscardo, Theodore and Honoria, Cymon and Iphigenia* and, via Chaucer, *Palamon and Arcite* from Boccaccio as Keats took *Isabella* and Tennyson *The Lover’s Tale, The Golden Supper* and a verse-play, *The Falcon*, which was actually performed (1879). The English were aware of the Senechisti; for instance, Luigi Groto (‘il Cieco d’Adria’) (1541-85) is mentioned by Jonson and Virgilio Malvezzi (1595-1654) — the Valezzi of *D.N.B.* III, 979 — by Suckling and other cavaliers. English tragic and comic dramatists, however, have been but briefly influenced by the more extreme forms of Italian drama, Senecan or farsa, while English poets have always been
influenced by the forms of Italian poetry. Chaucer, Wyatt, Milton, Shelley, Byron, Browning and Swinburne have all been considerable Italian scholars and, even when heretics, made many Italian friends. Spenser was influenced not only by Ariosto and Tasso, whose epic appeared while he was at work on *The Faerie Queene*, but also by such an abstruse epic as *L'Italia liberata dai Goti* (1547-48) by Giangiorgio Trissino (1478-1550). Milton, after whom a street in Florence is named, was influenced not only by the Italian epics but even wrote five sonnets and a *canzone* (c. 1630) in Italian professing his love for a singer Emilia.

In *Hudibras* the learned Samuel Butler gave elemental, often fundamental, versions of the hero’s tribulations in Boccaccio’s *Filocolo* and the loves of Armida and Rinaldo in Tasso as well as the theories of the plastic surgeon Gaspare Tagliacozzo (1545-99), the satirist Traiano Boccalini (1556-1613), the scholar Giulio Cesare Scaligero (1484-1558) and the mathematician Girolamo Cardano (1501-76). Henry Carey (1596-1661), second Earl of Monmouth, translated both Boccalini (1656) and Malvezzi (1637). Boccalini was a progenitor of Swift.

A typical Renaissance personality, Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder (c. 1503-42), undertook diplomatic missions to several Italian courts in 1527. Thereafter he became one of the greatest innovators in English poetry. *Terza rima* had been pioneered by Dante, whom Boccaccio followed in the *Amorosa visione* and Petrarch in *I Trionfi*. Chaucer used it in ‘A Complaint to his Lady’. Wyatt revived it. *Ottava rima*, pioneered by Boccaccio’s *Filostrato* and *Il Teseida*, and the sonnet, identified with Petrarch above all others, were transplanted by Wyatt. His ‘Paraphrase of the Penitential Psalms’ (1549) from Aretino alternates between *ottava* and *terza rima*. There were three satires in *terza rima*, twenty-five epigrams in *ottava rima* and thirty sonnets among his ninety-six poems first published in *Songes and Sonettes written by the Ryght Honorable Lorde Henry Haward* (sic), late Earle of Surrey, and other printed by Richard Tottel in 1557 and always called Tottel’s *Miscellany*. Wyatt’s seminal work in these three forms was to germinate brilliantly after some decades. I shall treat each form separately.

Sonnets were also among the forty poems of Wyatt’s disciple Henry Howard (1517-47), Earl of Surrey, which were the main other and the most popular components of Tottel’s *Miscellany*.  

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The sonnets of Sir Philip Sidney (1554-86) were widely circulated before their publication as *Astrophel and Stella* (1591). Wyatt and Surrey developed the concluding couplet which has characterised the English sonnet. Sidney, who kept more closely to Petrarch's rhyme schemes, also used a concluding couplet in four out of five cases. All three developed a less stylised content than Petrarch and his Italian successors. Nevertheless Sir Walter Ralegh wrote Petrarch off too soon in his famous commendatory sonnet (1589) for the first three books of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, 'at whose approach the soul of Petrarch wept' and 'in whose stead / Oblivion laid him down on Laura's hearse'. The themes discovered by Petrarch continued to pervade the astonishing outpouring of sonnets in the 1590s. Samuel Daniel's first *Delia* and Henry Constable's first *Diana* appeared in 1592 and in 1593 *Phillis* by Thomas Lodge, *Licia* by Giles Fletcher, *Parthenophil and Parthenope* by Barnes and, posthumously, *Tears of Fancie* by Thomas Watson (c.1557-92), who had applied the word 'sonnets' to 100 poems, each consisting of three sestets, in the *Hecatopathia, or Passionate Centurie of Love* (1582). In 1594 William Percy published *Coelia*, Michael Drayton *Idea* and an anonymous writer *Zepheria*. Edmund Spenser's *Amoretti* came out in 1595, Bartholomew Griffin's *Fidessa*, Richard Linche's *Diella* and William Smith's *Chloris* in 1596 and Robert Tofte's *Laura* in 1597.

Lee, in his introduction to *Elizabethan Sonnets* (Constable, 1904), J.W. Lever, in *The Elizabethan Love Sonnet* (1956), and Scott have collated the poems which have been based to a greater extent, as with Wyatt and Watson, or to a lesser extent, as with Sidney and Constable, on specific sonnets by Petrarch. Wyatt himself translated 19, 21, 49, 57, 82, 98, 102, 124, 134, 140, 153, 169, 173, 189, 190, 224, 258 and 269. No. 134 — *Pace non trovo et non o da far guerra* — was also translated by another contributor to Tottel and by Richard Hill in *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1576), George Gascoigne, Lodge, Robert Southwell's *St. Peter's Complaint* and John Wilbye's *Second Set of Madrigals* (1609). Watson translated the sestet of 20 and 132, 164, 248, 364 and 365 in 1582, 84 in 1593 and 310 in *Italian Madrigals Englished* (1590). Daniel translated 45, 224 and 297, Spenser 90, Francis Davison (*A Poetical Rapsody, 1602*) 102, William Drummond (*Poems, 1616*) 108, 340 and 353, Surrey
140, 145, 164 and 310, Sidney 180, 208, 238 and 248, Drayton 185, Barnes 189, Constable 231 and 233.

The Elizabethan sonneteers also drew on many other Italian poets and on the Pléiade, who in turn often drew on their Italian precursors. Lever identifies twelve sonnets in Amoretti which were suggested by Tasso. Shakespeare’s sonnets were not published till 1609 and are less derivative than those of any of his contemporaries. The sonnet has continued its popularity in all succeeding generations of English poets. Its themes have much transcended the Italian originals. Even those who, like Milton, retained Petrarch’s form, were not limited to his themes; Petrarch could never have written with the fire of Milton in ‘On the late Massacre in Piedmont’ (1655).

Petrarch perfected the canzone, which probably originated in Provence, and Dante and Petrarch cultivated the intricate Provençal sestina. Wyatt paraphrased three of Petrarch’s canzoni (37 ‘In Spain’, 206 and 360) but not in their prosodic scheme. Similarly Spenser’s seven sonnets in The Visions of Petrarch formerly translated in The Complaints (1591) are from a canzone (323). The canzone verse-form was first used by Barnes and then Drummond but very rarely afterwards. Milton used it in ‘Upon the Circumcision’ (1633). Among the multitude of verse forms in Sidney’s Arcadia, which was published in 1590 and with additions in 1593 and with further additions in 1598, were a ‘sestine’ (Penguin edition, p. 774) and a ‘double sestine’ with twelve 6-line stanzas (p. 413). Barnes wrote a triple sestina with eighteen stanzas. In England the largest collection of canzoni was published in Italian (1596) by Petruccio Ubaldini, a courtier and historian of Elizabeth, and the largest collection of sestine in German (1641 and 1648) by Georg Rudolf Weckherlin, Latin secretary to Charles I and, before Milton, to the Republicans. The sestina was resurrected by D.G. Rossetti and there are examples by Kipling (‘Sestina of the Tramp-Royal, 1896’), Pound (‘Sestina; Altaforte’), Auden and — according to the Britannica and Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics but not as far as I can check — Eliot. The undaunted Swinburne created a rhymed sestina (‘I saw my soul at rest upon a day’) and even a double sestina, ‘Complaint of Lisa’, with twelve 12-line stanzas and a tornada of 6 lines.

Byron thought that he was pioneering the terza rima in English
with 'The Prophecy of Dante' (1819). After Wyatt, however, it had been used by Sidney, who had visited Italy, in *Arcadia* six times (pp. 183, 296, 409, 420, 423 and 709), by Daniel, who had also visited Italy and whose sister married Florio, in ‘To the Lady Lucy, Countess of Bedford’ and by Milton in his version of Psalm II. Shelley commenced to experiment with it in ‘Prince Athanase’ (1817) and ‘The Woodman and the Nightingale’ (1818) and used it in ‘Ode to the West Wind’ (1819), which adopts a concluding couplet, ‘The Tower of Famine’ (1820) and ‘The Triumph of Life’, on which he was working when he died in 1822. It has been used in translations of the *Divine Comedy* since the middle of the last century more than for all other purposes and in all other periods. Browning used it in ‘The Statue and the Bust’ and Hardy in ‘A Plaint to Man’ and ‘The Burghers’. Several modern poets have used it, Eliot in ‘To Walter de la Mare’ (1948), Empson in ‘Reflections from Rochester’ and ‘Courage Means Running’, Auden in ‘If I could tell you’ and ‘The Sea and the Mirror’, MacNeice in ‘A Fanfare for the Makers’ and the long poem ‘Autumn Sequel’ (1954) and Dom Moraes in ‘The Island’. In the United States Archibald MacLeish used it in a free form in much of *Conquistador* (1932) and Allen Tate in ‘The Married Man’ (1952), ‘The Swimmers’ (1953), which Robert Lowell told him was the finest handling of *terza rima* in English, and ‘The Buried Lake’ (1953). The Australian J.S. Manifold used it in ‘The Tomb of Lieut. John Learmonth A.I.F.’.

*Ottava rima* was used by Sidney twice in *Arcadia* (pp. 197 and 662) and in 1591 by Spenser in ‘Virgils Gnat’ and ‘Muiopotmos’ and by Sir John Harington for his translation of Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso*. Daniel turned to it from his earlier rhyme royal for his historical epic, *The civile wars between the two houses of Lancaster and Yorke* (1595-1609) (not York and Lancaster, as the *Penguin Book of Narrative Verse* has it). Fairfax used it in his translation (1600) of Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberata*. Thereupon Drayton used it to re-write his *Mortimeriados* (1596), which was in rhyme royal, as *The Barons Warres* (1603); in his ‘Epistle to the Reader’ he said ‘I choose this Stanza, of all other the most complete and best proportioned’. Daniel continued to use it in ‘To Sir Thomas Egerton’ (1603) and in the chorus at the conclusion of Act II of *Philotas* (1605). Drayton went on to use it in *The Legend of Great Cromwell* (1607), *The Battaile of Agincourt*
(1627) and *The Miseries of Queene Margarite* (1627). It was used by the Reverend Richard Crashaw in ‘Sospetto d’Herode’ (1646), his translation of the first of the four books of the religious epic *La strage degli Innocenti* by Giambattista Marino (1569-1625), and by Sir Richard Fanshawe in his translation (1655) of Camoens’ *Lusiads*.

The Romantics were attracted to *ottava rima* even more than to *terza rima*. Shelley used it in *The Witch of Atlas* and Keats in *Isabella*. Above all, Byron realised its pre-eminent potential as a vehicle for satire. He used it to translate Pulci’s *Morgante Maggiore* (1817-18) and then, stimulated by Francesco Berni’s *rifacimento* of Boiardo’s *Orlando innamorato* (1541) and a mock Arthurian romance (1817-18) by John Hookham Frere, with increasing brilliance in his own final works, *Beppo* (1818), *The Vision of Judgment* (1821) and *Don Juan* (1819-24). William Cullen Bryant used it in ‘The Evening Wind’ and Browning in *The Two Poets of Croisic* (1878). At Sydney University in 1937 I resorted to it in a satire which I found it prudent to publish under the pseudonym ‘Pulci’. It is the measure of Eliot’s ‘A Fable for Feasters’ ‘written in early youth’ and Yeats’ ‘Among School Children’ (1927), ‘Sailing to Byzantium’ (1928), ‘Coole Park, 1929’, ‘Coole Parke and Ballylee, 1931’ and ‘The Municipal Gallery Revisited’ and ‘The Circus Animals’ Desertion’ (1940). The successor of Berni, Pulci and Byron is A.D. Hope in ‘Persons from Porlock’ (1956), ‘A Letter from Rome’ for Dr Leonie Kramer (1958) and ‘Conversation with Calliope’ (1962). Howard Nemerov has used *ottava rima* in ‘The Gulls’ (1952) and Elizabeth Jennings in ‘Beyond Possession’. In the April 1980 issue of *Quadrant* Peter Lawrence used it in the longest poem that that ‘literary journal’ has published for years.

Thus for four centuries poets in English have used the forms invented by Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. Lesser known Italian poets have also influenced English poetry. In the Cinquecento Trissino and others employed blank verse in emulation and translation of Homer and Virgil and the playwrights of antiquity. Surrey introduced it to English in his translation (1557) of the *Aeneid*, Books II and IV, not Book III, as the *Oxford Companion to English Literature* asserts. Since its successful use by Norton and Sackville in *Gorboduc* (1561) it has been the standard English measures for epics, narratives and
drama, although in drama under the Restoration and in narrative verse during the eighteenth century it was surpassed by the heroic couplet adopted from France. In the Seicento Marino's baroque style was emulated by many of the metaphysical poets. Daniel translated 'A Description of Beauty' by him. Crashaw translated his Amor non hà più foco, while his notorious 'The Weeper' was inspired by Marino's poems on Mary Magdalen. The antimarinist Gabriello — not Gabriele, as in the Princeton Encyclopedia — Chiabrera (1552-1637) and his contemporaries revived the Pindaric ode. In 1629 Jonson used it in 'To the Immortal Memory and Friendship of That Noble Pair, Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morison' and Milton in 'On the Morning of Christ's Nativity', whose content seems to have been influenced by Tasso’s Canzone sopra la capella del presepio. It was much used in an irregular form by Abraham Cowley, whose 'Pindarique Odes' appeared in 1656, and he has been followed at long intervals by Dryden, the youthful Pope, Gray, Wordsworth's 'Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood', Tennyson's 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington' and Tate's 'Ode to the Confederate Dead' (1926). The mock heroic La secchia rapita (1622) of Alessandro Tassoni suggested Pope's The Rape of the Lock.

The genre which approached the sonnet in popularity and flowered for two centuries was the pastoral. Sannazaro's mixture of prose and verse on pastoral themes, Arcadia (1504), was the original of Sidney's own Arcadia, for two centuries the most popular work in English, and of Greene's Menaphon (1589) and Lodge's Rosalynde (1590) (the origin of Shakespeare's pastoral As You Like It). From Grillo (infra) I take this list of English pastoral plays showing traces of Italian influence:


— Gallathes, 1592.

Anon. A Pastoral Pleasant Comedie of Robin Hood and Little John, 1594.


— Love’s Metamorphosis, 1601.

Anon. The Maydes Metamorphosis, 1600.

Daniel, Samuel. The Queen’s Arcadia, 1606.

— Hymen’s Triumph, 1615.

Fletcher, John. The Faithful Shepherdess, 1610.

Brooke, Samuel. Melanthe, 1615.


Goffe, Thomas. The Careless Shepherdess, 1629.
Jonson, Ben. Chlorinda, 1630.
--- The Sad Shepherd, 1641.
--- Pan's Anniversary, 1641.
Knevet, Ralph. Rhodon and Iris, 1631.
Fletcher, Philip. Siclesides, a Piscatory Drama, 1631.
Tatham, John. Love Crowns the End, 1632.
Anon. Florimene, a Pastoral, 1635.
Rutter, Joseph. The Shepherd's Holiday, 1635.
Heywood, Thomas. Amphriosa, the Forsaken Shepheardesse, 1637.
--- Apollo and Daphne, 1637.
Cowley, Abraham. Love's Riddle, 1638.
Randolph, Thomas. Amyntas, or the Impossible Dowry, 1638.
Glapthorne, Henry. Argalus and Parthenia, 1639.
Shirley, James. Arcadia, 1640.
Baron, Robert. Grapus and Hegio, 1647.
Peaps, William. Love in its Ecstasy, 1649.
--- Love's Kingdom, 1664.
Cox, Robert. Actaeon and Diana, 1656.
Lower, William. The Enchanted Lovers, 1658.
Forde, Thomas. Love's Labyrinth, 1660.
Webster, John. The Thracian Wonder, 1661.
Killigrew, Thomas. Bellamira, 1663.
Shadwell, Thomas. The Royal Shepherdess, 1669.
Crowne, J. Calisto, 1675.
Anon. Constant Nymph: or the Rambling Shepherd, 1678.
Tutchin, John. The Unfortunate Shepherd, 1685.
Motteux, Pierre Antoine. The Novelty. Every Act a Play, 1697.
Oldmixon, John. Grove, or Love's Paradise, 1700.
Anon. Fickle Shepherdess, 1703.
Greber, Giacomo. Loves of Ergasto, 1705.
Anne, Countess of Winchelsea. Aristomenes, or The Royal Shepherd, 1713.
Hughes, John. Cupid and Hymen's Holiday, 1714.
--- Apollo and Daphne, 1716.
--- Acis and Galatea, 1732.
Cibber, Colley. Myrtillo, 1716.
--- Love in a Riddle, 1729.
--- Damon and Phillida, 1729.
Theobald, Lewis. Pan and Syrinx, 1718.
Bellamy, Daniel. The Absent Nymph; or the Doating Swain, 1723.
--- The Rival Nymphs; or the Merry Swain, 1723.
--- Love Triumphant; or the Rival Goddesses, 1723.
Motteux, P. Acis and Galatea, 1723.
--- Roger and Joan, 1739.
Ramsay, Allan. Gentle Shepherd, 1725.
Cibber, Theophilus. Patie and Peggie; or the Fair Foundling, 1730.
Anon. The Judgment of Paris; or, The Triumph of Beauty, 1731.
Carey, Henry. Teraminta, 1732.
--- Phoebie. Pastoral Opera, 1748.
Mendez, Moses. The Chaplet, 1749.
--- The Shepherd's Lottery, 1751.
Boyce, Samuel. The Rover; or, Happiness at Last, 1752.
Morgan, M. Philoclea, 1754.
--- Florizel and Perdita; or, the Sheep-shearing, 1754.
Lennox, Charlotte. Philander, a Dramatic Pastoral, 1758.
Hill, Aaron. Duraxes. Pastoral Opera, 1760.
Lloyd, Robert. Arcadia; or, The Shepherd's Wedding, 1761.
Harris, James. The Spring, 1762.
Thomas. Elizabeth. A Dramatic Pastoral, 1762.
Pastoral poems in English were much in vogue in the generation after Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender* (1579). Marlowe’s lyric, ‘The Passionate Shepherd to his Love’, was written in 1589, although published posthumously. Drayton wrote *The Shepheards Garland* (1593) and William Browne *Britannia's Pastorals* (1613-16). Phineas Fletcher in his *Piscatory Eclogues* (1633) also wrote idylls on fishermen as Theocritus himself and Sannazaro had done. Andrew Marvell’s ‘Thyrsis and Dorinda’ (1642) was set to music by William Lawes. After Pope’s precocious *Pastorals* and Ambrose Philips’ ‘namby-pamby’ ones appeared in Tonson’s *Miscellany*, vol. VI (1709, not 1708 as declared by *D.N.B.* under Tonson and by the *Oxford Companion to English Literature*), the whole genre was laughed to death by John Gay in *The Shepherd’s Week* (1714). Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera* (1728) springs from Swift’s suggestion of a ‘Newgate pastoral’. John Byrom’s ‘Pastoral’ (1714) in anapaests was one of the last pastoral poems for many years. Wordsworth wrote ‘Michael, A Pastoral Poem’ (1800). Milton’s ‘Lycidas’ was followed by Shelley’s and Arnold’s elegies for Keats and Clough, *Adonais* and ‘Thrysis’.

Italianate manners were often satirised in seventeenth and eighteenth century England but must have had an exotic fascination for the mass of the population; the Daemon Lover in the ballad tells the carpenter’s wife whom he has abducted

I'll show whare the white lillies grow 
On the banks of Italie.
English novels, ever since Congreve’s *Incognita* (1692), have frequently had Italian characters and locations. Never was this more so than in the generation of Gothic novels or tales of terror from Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) through Ann Radcliffe’s *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797) — she never wrote *An Italian Romance* (1791) ascribed to her by the *Oxford Companion to English Literature* — to Shelley’s *Zastrozzi* (1810) and *St. Irvyne* (1811). Among the twenty-two other novels and twelve chapbooks and their authors detailed by Roderick Marshall in *Italy in English Literature 1755-1815* (1934) there are even to be found a *Santa-Maria* and one Anne Ker. These works owe much to Italian history and little to Italian literature.

After the Napoleonic Wars the English poets flocked to Italy and soon afterwards political refugees flocked from Italy to England. In his preface to the *Revolt of Islam* (1817) Shelley proclaimed ‘The poetry of ancient Greece and Rome, and modern Italy, and our own country, has been to me, like external nature, a passion and an enjoyment’. In her notes on his *Poems Written in 1820* Mary Shelley describes how ‘It was on a beautiful summer evening’ near Leghorn, ‘while wandering among the lanes whose myrtle-hedges were the bowers of the fire-flies, that we heard the carolling of the skylark which inspired one of the most beautiful of his poems’. *The Cenci* is based on Roman archives. Byron devotes Canto the Fourth (1818) of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* to Italy. Wordsworth recorded his impressions of Italy in the concluding parts of *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1820* and in *Memorials of a Tour of Italy, 1837*; they are not as memorable as his sonnet ‘On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic’ (published 1807).

By the middle of the nineteenth century Italy and Italians were favourite subjects in England and thereafter in the United States. Edward Lear produced *Illustrated Excursions in Italy* (1846). *The Italics of Walter Savage Landor* was published in 1848. Ruskin, Pater and Symonds popularised Italian culture. In 1850 Gladstone wrote an article on Leopardi in the *Quarterly Review* and in 1863 included Manzoni’s ‘Il cinque maggio’, on the death of Napoleon, in his *Translations*. The Rossettis and five friends formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. E.B. Browning wrote *Casa Guidi Windows* (1851), George Eliot
Romola (1863), George Meredith Vittoria (1867), Henry James The Portrait of a Lady (1881). In Middlemarch (1871-72) George Eliot proclaims ‘To those who have looked at Rome with the quickening power of a knowledge which breathes a growing soul into all historic shapes, and traces out the suppressed traditions which unite all contrasts Rome may still be the spiritual centre and interpreter of the world.’ Leopardi influenced James Thomson’s The City of Dreadful Night (1880).

In the twentieth century Pirandello has influenced the English drama. E.M. Forster set Where Angels Fear to Tread, A Room with a View and many short stories in Italy. Frederick William Rolfe (‘Baron Corvo’), Norman Douglas, Max Beerbohm, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, Osbert Sitwell, Martin Boyd, Alan Moorehead, Morris West and David Malouf took up domicile in Italy. Australians now note their Italian connections. On 28 January 1974 a plaque in honour of Raffaello Carboni (1817-75), the historian of Eureka, was unveiled in his native Urbino by Hon. Al Grassby. On 3 March 1980 Il Globo celebrated its twentieth anniversary by publishing the first Italian translation of Carboni’s history.

At least I could have given the title ‘The Italians in English’ to the admittedly idiosyncratic aspect of my theme to which I now turn. Until Penguin took the initiative most publishers seemed to believe that the present generation would not be interested in translations of the Italian classics. In the 1930s I came upon Tasso’s Jerusalem Delivered in a Routledge reprint (1890) of the Fairfax translation and his Amyntas (performed 1573, published 1581) with an English prose translation on facing pages (Ernesto Grillo, Dent, 1924). It was a revelation to find that Spenser’s Bower of Acrasia came from the Garden of Armida and that Comus and the whole Elizabethan and Jacobean pastoral drama came from Italy. It was still not possible, however, to obtain translations of the other great epic, Ariosto’s Orlando furioso, and the other great pastoral, Guarini’s Il Pastor fido (1590). In 1964 the O.U.P. published Fanshawe’s translation (1647) of the latter and in 1972 Harington’s translation of the former. In 1975, when Penguin sent me the first volume of Barbara Reynolds’ Orlando, I wrote to ‘applaud the firm’s continuing and confident enterprise in commissioning and printing such major pieces of literature and scholarship’. I went on:
My own interest in Ariosto is now being amply fulfilled. I've had the original for some years and also Stewart Rose's translation. Then two or three years ago O.U.P. brought out their edition of Harington and I discovered the Centaur Classics edition of 1962.

Barbara Reynolds, having completed Dorothy Sayers' Paradiso and Ariosto, should now, I suggest, be sent to work on Tasso. Fairfax, after all, is almost as old as Harington.

Verse translations of the Greek and Latin epics and narrative poems commenced under Elizabeth I and continued to be fashionable for two centuries. There must have been a similar demand for translations of the Italian classics. Among Handel's operas, whose libretti were usually in Italian, were Rinaldo (1711) from Tasso, Il Pastor Fido (1712) from Guarini and Orlando (1733), Ariodante (1735) and Alcina (1735) from Ariosto. Harington's translation was followed by William Huggins (ottava rima, 1757), John Hoole (heroic couplets, 1783), the Reverend Henry Boyd ('a specimen' in Spenserian stanzas, 1785) and William Stewart Rose (ottava rima, 1823-31). Fairfax's translation had been preceded by Richard Carew (the first five cantos in ottava rima, 1594), and was followed by Philip Doyne in blank verse (1761), Hoole in heroic couplets (1763) and eight others last century. The Aminta was translated into Latin by Watson (1585) and, according to Grillo and Scott, into English by Abraham Faunce (1596), Henry Reynolds (1628), an anonymous author (1650), John Dancer (1660), John Oldmixon (1698), P.B. Du Bois (1726), William Ayre (1737), Percival Stockdale (1770) and Leigh Hunt (1820). Anthologies frequently give Daniel's translation of the chorus O bella età dell'oro. Fanshawe's Pastor Fido was preceded by a translation made by a close but unnamed relative of Sir Edward Dymock — not, as is usually stated, by Dymock himself — and published posthumously in 1602 and by a translation published by Jonathan Sidnam in 1630. New editions of Fanshawe appeared in 1648, 1664, 1676, 1692 and 1736 and an adaptation was made by Elkanah Settle (1677). There are later translations by an anonymous author (1736), by William Grove (1782) and by William Clapperton (1809). In A Jar of Honey (1848) Leigh Hunt made a translation of the opening of Act III, O primavera, gioventù de l'anno. I have
mentioned the 1964 Oxford edition of Fanshawe; Edinburgh U.P. produced a further edition in 1976 and Penguin a reprint in 1978. The third famous Italian pastoral drama, Filli di Sciro (1607) by Guidubaldo Bonarelli della Rovere of Urbino, was also translated by Sidnam (1655). A translation of the physician Girolamo Fracastoro’s didactic pastoral in rhyming Latin, Syphilis (1530), was made in couplets in 1686 by Nahum Tate, who became Poet Laureate and is better remembered for his translation of the Psalms.

I have not mentioned Dante since my paragraphs on Chaucer and Wyatt. Even the bluestocking wife of Sir Politick Would-be in Volpone III, ii, could not be restrained from expressing the view that ‘Dante is hard, and few can understand him’. Only the most scholarly English writers came to be really familiar with him. Spenser took The Faerie Queene I, ii, 33 from the story of Pier delle Vigne in Inferno XIII. Milton adopted Dante as an exemplar in Of Reformation Touching Church Discipline in England (1741) and his Apology for Smectymnuus (1642) as in his epics. Gray’s ‘The curfew tolls the knell of passing day’ has overtones of Purgatorio VIII, 5-6. Shelley paid tribute to Dante in his Defence of Poetry and the preface to Prometheus Unbound and had constant reminiscences throughout his poetry. The Victorians, however, were the first to be at home with him. Tennyson, remembering Inferno XXVI, 120, said of his ‘Ulysses’ that ‘there is an echo of Dante in it’ and of In Memoriam ‘It begins with death and ends in promise of a new life — a sort of Divine Comedy, cheerful at the close’. From their first books of verse Pound and T.S. Eliot quoted and imitated Dante, an exile like themselves.

Dante was for long the conspicuous exception in the English cult of translation. The first complete version of the Divine Comedy in English was made by Huggins after he finished his Orlando furioso. It seems to have been written between 1758-1760 but it has not survived. The first complete version which has survived was by Boyd (1785-1802). It was soon superseded by the Reverend Henry Francis Cary’s blank verse translation (1814). After this was praised by Coleridge it became very popular with their contemporaries and was Keats’ only reading on his Scottish tour in 1818. It is in Everyman. Byron thought poorly of it and in his fragment ‘Francesca of Rimini’, which he
called his 'Fanny of Rimini', he showed that it was possible and preferable to translate Dante in terza rima. Gilbert Cunningham in *The Divine Comedy in English* (1967) lists forty-five subsequent translators of the whole *Divine Comedy* since 1840, twenty-one in terza rima, and twenty-three translators who did not persevere beyond the *Inferno*. In 1867 Longfellow published a blank verse translation. Sir Samuel Griffith, the first Chief Justice of Australia — Cunningham calls him Lord Chief Justice — wrote a translation in hendecasyllabic blank verse; Angus and Robertson published his *Inferno* in 1908 and O.U.P. the whole work in 1911. The High Court library did not have copies until, in a personal capacity, I gave them in 1973. The happiest translations in terza rima seem to have been made by Melville Anderson (1921, in World's Classics since 1932), Laurence Binyon (1933-43) and Dorothy Sayers (Penguin, 1949-62, the *Paradiso* being completed by Barbara Reynolds after Miss Sayers' death in 1957). At the parliamentary luncheon to President Saragat, whose visit to Australia in 1967 was the first by any head of state from the continent of Europe, I ventured to signalise the post-war relations between our countries by quoting the last line of the *Inferno*.

Every significant English and American poet of the last hundred years has done some translation. Poetic translation has been as prevalent as it was three centuries before. The Italian poets have been among the most translated. For instance, Elizabeth Jennings translated Michaelangelo's sonnets (1960). The assiduous and prolific Ezra Pound has led the way with imitations rather than translations. Robert Lowell expressly calls his own work *Imitations* (1962).

If in this lecture I have cannibalised earlier pundits as much as any of them and if the whole lecture sounds too much like a catalogue I can only repeat that it is designed as no more than a prospectus to illustrate the variety, the continuity and, often, the profundity of the Italian inspiration in English literature over six centuries and even to expose the deficiencies of much English scholarship. Italian has not been a forte — if I may be permitted a French word — of many English scholars. They have not gone to the originals. There are more people who can speak and read Italian in Australia than in England. There would be few State capitals in the United States with more Italian speakers and
readers than some State capitals in Australia. There are professors of Italian at Sydney, Melbourne, Flinders and Western Australia and courses in Italian at the A.N.U., Griffith, Wollongong, New England and La Trobe. There are many Italian newspapers with a large circulation and some radio stations with a large Italian audience. There are many social and sporting clubs with a large membership. There is many a magnate about to become a Mecenate. There are six university presses and the Australia Council's Literature Board. The Frederick May Foundation is demonstrating how to assemble various disciplines and attract community support. Alitalia and Qantas are generous and the Italian and Australian governments should be benign. We do not have and we need a book in English in which we can find accurate and basic information about any Italian person or place, custom or event encountered in our reading or conversation. Australia is well situated and equipped to produce a work which will be useful and attractive to scholars and students of both English and Italian and to the pilgrims — I had almost said the tourists — who will always take the many roads which lead to Rome.