

THE MACMILLAN DICTIONARY OF ITALIAN LITERATURE

Peter Bondanella

Julia Conaway Bondanella

co-editors

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The Macmillan
Dictionary of
Italian
Literature

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EDITORS' PREFACE

The first short reference guide to Italian literature in the English language, the *Dictionary of Italian Literature* provides within a single volume an introduction to major and minor Italian writers from the twelfth century to the present, to Italian metrics and poetic forms or genres, and to literary or critical schools, periods, problems, and movements. The three hundred and sixty-two entries, arranged alphabetically and cross-referenced for the reader's convenience, cover a wide range of subjects divided into the eight categories listed in Appendix B: two groups of entries on subjects which cross chronological boundaries (genres, periods, movements, and the like); and six groups on the writers from the basic chronological periods. Inevitably, some areas receive less attention than others. For example, although no individual entries are devoted to literary reviews or academies, these subjects are treated, whenever appropriate, within entries on the writers, movements, or periods to which they are directly related.

Two criteria determined the selection of subjects: their intrinsic importance to the history of Italian literature or culture; and their relevance to other national literatures, cultures, or art forms. It was our aim to present Italian literature from a comparative perspective and to go beyond Italian literary tastes or received critical opinion. Merely to have transposed an Italian reference dictionary into English would not have fully served English-speaking readers. Thus, while the relative space assigned to various writers, periods, or movements may reflect the most recent critical views in Italian scholarship, the editors and the other contributors have not hesitated to question or to modify standard interpretations, either explicitly in the text or implicitly by the relative space devoted to a particular item.

Although this dictionary is not designed solely for those who know little or no Italian, it is most probable that a majority of its users will fall into this category. In addition, many readers coming from fields outside Italian literature or literature in general will require information on the relationships of Italian literature to nonliterary disciplines such as the fine arts, music (especially opera), social thought, and history. Although most Italian reference guides naturally concentrate upon the Italian context of an individual author, period, or movement, we have felt it necessary,

whenever possible and limitations of space permitting, to refer not only to the Italian literary context but also to the international context, to a writer's links to music, art, the cinema, or other literatures, and to his or her translations from other authors. English translations of Italian literary works are noted in the bibliographies accompanying each entry to enable those who have studied little or no Italian to enjoy this wealth of good reading.

Finally, the present work does not pretend to be comprehensive; it aims, rather, to be the most useful initial reference tool for the general public and the specialist. Furthermore, this dictionary is a reference work and not a literary history of Italy. We have included entries on poetic genres that are easily defined in a brief space and are most typical of specific chronological periods, but no broad and comprehensive treatments of literary modes such as the novel, the drama, or the lyric are presented. It will be possible to trace the evolution of such topics by following individual entries through the appropriate periods, but no attempt has been made to produce a book which would replace comprehensive critical works. The dictionary format has its advantages, however, since separate entries provide the reader with more succinct and authoritative factual information and interpretative material and more detailed bibliographies than could a literary history in a narrative format. In addition, the dictionary supplies a selective list of general guides for the study of Italian literature and culture, all of which contain references to extensive bibliographies; standard works on Italian metrics and versification; authoritative literary histories of Italy; encyclopedias and dictionaries of value for the study of Italian literature; and scholarly periodicals which publish regular bibliographical supplements on research in the field.

Finally, to set the entries within the proper historical perspective, a timeline from the twelfth century to the present has been included (Appendix A), so that the reader can compare at a glance developments in Italian literature and culture with those in Western literature, political thought, history, religion, philosophy, science, and the arts. This chronological chart notes general trends and crucial events in Western thought, but it does not provide a complete account of developments in any particular field of study. For the reader's convenience, all entries are indexed at the end of the work and are arranged according to subject matter or chronological period in Appendix B. It is our hope that the user of this work will find it readable, reliable, self-contained, and, above all, a useful guide to the wealth of information available on Italy's brilliant literary heritage.

The thirty-five contributors to this dictionary represent a distinguished cross-section of North American Italianists and comparatists; they include most of the established critics in the field as well as some promising younger members of the profession. These contributors are the authors of

the signed articles, usually those on major writers, periods, or movements. The co-editors have shared the responsibility of writing the remaining unsigned articles, of choosing the entries to be included or excluded, of distributing the various entries among the contributors, and of editing the complete work. The spirit of cooperation and professionalism among the contributors to this dictionary speaks well for the future of Italian studies on this continent, and the editors are most grateful for their scholarly support.

Peter Bondanella

Julia Conaway Bondanella

February 1978

HOW TO USE THIS DICTIONARY

I. Style of Entries

1. Books and articles are given first in their original Italian form following Italian rules of capitalization. Books are set in italics, poems within quotation marks.
2. Following the Italian titles of books or poems, the reader will find within parentheses, first, the date of composition and or publication of that work (if known or applicable); and second, an English translation of the title. If an English translation of a book has been published, the title of this publication is set in italics; if a poem has been published in English, its specific title or first line is set within quotation marks. It should be noted that published titles may not correspond literally to the Italian original.
3. If no published English version of a book or poem exists, a literal English translation is provided for the reader's convenience. To indicate that these titles have not been published, book titles are left in Roman type and the titles or first lines of poems appear without quotation marks.
4. In addition to the index by subject and period at the end of the dictionary, entries are cross-referenced within the body of the text. Whenever an asterisk (*) appears, this indicates that an entry on this topic is to be found elsewhere in the dictionary. If information in other entries is pertinent to a particular topic, the reader's attention is drawn to these entries by a reference at the end of the article.

II. Bibliographical Style

1. All bibliographical entries are complete, including the full titles, the complete data of publication, and the names of editors or translators, if available, to simplify locating these works, especially if the reader must rely heavily upon interlibrary loans.

2. In general, the bibliography for each entry is arranged alphabetically in the following order: (a) Italian editions of primary texts, if any, listed first by title and then, whenever necessary, by editor; (b) English translations of primary texts listed first by title and then, whenever necessary, by editor or translator; (c) critical studies, books and articles, in a variety of languages, ordered by author or, whenever necessary, by title.
3. In some cases where no single Italian critical edition of an author's works exists, there may be few or no Italian texts cited while English translations may be rather numerous. In such instances, the critical works listed give detailed accounts of the standard Italian texts.
4. The bibliographies also refer whenever possible to currently available reprints of scholarly works or English translations, the original edition of which may be out of print. In these instances, only the original publication date will be listed, followed by "rpt." and the complete bibliographical information on the publisher of the reprint to facilitate the purchase of such works by readers or librarians.

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