Vittorio Alfieri. *Agamennone, Mirra*, ed. Vittore Branca. Milano: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 1981. Pp. 268.

Annali Alfieriani del Centro Nazionale di Studi Alfieriani. III, ed. Luigi Firpo. Asti: Casa d'Alfieri, 1983. Pp. 208.

Vittore Branca's concise but substantial introduction to his edition of the *Agamennone* and *Mirra* takes full cognizance of Alfieri criticism past and recent. It will be recalled that in 1949 Branca brought out his *Alfieri e la ricerca dello stile*, published again in revised form in 1959. In that volume Branca dealt with the dialogue, *La virtù sconosciuta*, Alfieri's unpublished translations of Alexander Pope's *Windsor Forest* and *Essay on Criticism* plus the *Satire*. In the book he also examined the variants in Alfieri's *Rime* from the earliest to final form. Branca stressed that to study the various stages in the elaboration of the *rime* was to discover how Alfieri succeeded in writing verse by trial and error. For this reason, Branca included several unpublished poems rejected by the poet and justified their inclusion in the volume arguing that established authors thereby risked no loss of reputation.

Branca added five articles to his book on Alfieri's style in 1981 including three notes on the tragedies, *Filippo*, *Agamennone* and *Mirra*, the last two of which serve as introductions to his edition of Alfieri's two tragedies on the incest theme. Branca claims that Alfieri has been regarded by critics as a national, almost provincial figure rather than European. Alfieri's reputation as a man of iron will has obscured the more accurate picture of a man torn by doubt, a victim of alternating bouts of indecision and determination. Alfieri was heralded as a man of the new world challenging the old, a solitary prophet, a protoromantic, a precursor of a renewed Italy and Romanticism. Yet, Branca contends, Alfieri manifests a love of the *bello antico* which he may have inherited from his uncle, Benedetto Alfieri, an architect. Alfieri's language with its roots in the eighteenth century also shows the influence of the classics and of a seventeenth century petrarchism. One cannot help but sense the presence of the tradition of the preceding two centuries and of his feelings of compassion for the vanquished which Alfieri shared with Tasso, Shakespeare and Milton. Distinct from classical tragedy with its closed ending, Alfieri prefers the open end which prolongs dramatic tension well beyond the conclusion of the play.

Branca's edition contains other pertinent background material on Alfieri and specific notes on *Agamennone* and *Mirra* necessary for a true appreciation and understanding of the tragedies. The text published by Rizzoli represents a marked improvement over the old Signorelli editions with their meager introductions. Nine illustrations enhance the edition. They are photographs of: the palazzo Alfieri, the poet's home and birthplace; an engraving of Alfieri and one of the Fabré painting of the Countess of Albany; an autograph page of the text of *Agamennone* and *Mirra*; a scene from each of the two tragedies in the Milan Sonzogno edition of 1871; Adelaide Ristori who played the part of *Mirra* in Paris in 1855; Giorgio Albertazzi and Anna Proclemer in a scene from the 1968 television production of *Agamennone*.

In his prefatory note to the third number of the *Annali Alfieriani*, Luigi Firpo, President of the Centro di Studi Alfieriani, explains that this volume, containing seven articles and one news item, is published in the same format as the first two numbers which came out in 1942 and 1944 respectively.

In the first article on "Alfieri and Marino," Angelo Fabrizio challenges De Sanctis' contention that Alfieri's style repudiates Marino's. Taking his cue from Vittore Branca, who first suggested a connection between Marino and Alfieri, Fabrizio demonstrates with concrete examples that Alfieri, who never mentions Marino by name, was indeed familiar with the *Adone* and the *Dicerie sacre*. In the second article on "Piccoli inediti e osservazioni varie," Filippo Di Benedetto sheds light on various phases of Alfieri's mode of composition, based on unpublished variants, changes or annotations discovered in a number of works of the Piedmontese author. Di Benedetto's article is the fruit of a systematic examination of Alfieri's manuscripts. Related to the same subject is Roberto Marchetti's "Nuovi manoscritti alfieriani" in which the author analyzes his finding of a hitherto unknown manuscript — in private hands — of Alfieri's *Della Tirannide, Del Principe e Delle Lettere* and the *Panegirico*.

The fourth article of this most valuable collection of essays is Marco Sterpos' "Per una nuova edizione delle *Rime* di Vittorio Alfieri" in which the author submits that Maggini's critical edition of 1954 must now be considered outdated. In support of his thesis Sterpos produces the results of his research: unpublished poems and poems which significantly differ from those in Maggini's edition. On another theme Willem Jan van Neck's "Saul: Testimonianze e Curiosità" unearths recondite bio-bibliographical material relating to Alfieri the actor and provides a useful list of translations of *Saul* into thirteen languages. A second article by van Neck on "Ludwig Guttenbrunn e due ritratti di Vittorio nel castello di Masino" attempts to identify the painter referred to by Alfieri in a letter from Paris to his friend Mario Bianchi, dated February 13, 1788. The article is embellished by two fine reproductions of paintings of Alfieri: one executed in 1782 in Rome, the other in April 1785 in Siena by the Austrian painter Ludwig Guttenbrunn.

In his review article on "Rassegna Alfieriana (1978-1981)," Guido Santato examines in some detail and lists the number of Alfieri studies — eighty-two to be precise — including single editions of Alfieri's works, books, articles and reviews which appeared in the short span of three years. In the last item in the collection, Roberto Marchetti reports on the "Cronache del Centro" covering the years 1943 to the present with information concerning the Library, conferences and Alfieri plays sponsored and the national edition of the works of Vittorio Alfieri.

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GIORGIO CAVALLINI. *Lettura dell'Adelchi e altre note manzoniane*. Roma: Bulzoni, 1984. Pp. 112.

In this volume, Cavallini has collected five essays and three notes, of which two of the essays and two of the notes have previously been pub-