Blackburn, Paul.

Paul Blackburn Provençal poets collection circa 1953

Descriptive Summary

Identification: MSS 536

Creator: Blackburn, Paul.

Title: Paul Blackburn Provençal poets collection

Inclusive Dates: circa 1953

Extent: .1 linear foot (1 box)

Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Citation: MSS 536, Paul Blackburn Provençal poets collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.

Shelving Summary: Box 1: Shelved in SPEC MSS manuscript boxes (1 inch)

Location: Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware 19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL: http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/


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Biographical Note

Prolific American poet and translator Paul Blackburn (1926-1971) is known for his verse focusing on life in New York City; for his association with the Black Mountain literary circle that included American poets such as Robert Creeley (1926-2005), Charles Olson (1910-1970), and Denise Levertov (1923-1997); and for his work as a translator of Provençal, Spanish, and Portuguese writers.

Blackburn was born on November 24, 1926, in Saint Albans, Vermont. His mother was the author Frances Frost (1905-1959), who encouraged her son's literary development during his teen years in New York's Greenwich Village.

Blackburn was influenced by the work of American poet Ezra Pound (1885-1972), whom he read in the course of his studies at the University of Wisconsin, where he received a bachelor's degree in 1950. Blackburn even traveled to Washington D.C., to visit Pound while he was institutionalized at St. Elizabeths Hospital. Pound's friendship benefitted Blackburn both personally and professionally; Pound introduced Blackburn to poet Robert Creeley (1926-2005), whose friendship also expanded Blackburn's literary circle and publishing opportunities. Proensa (1953), his first book of translations, and his first book of poetry, The Dissolving Fabric (1955), were published by Creeley's Divers Press. Through his relationship with Creeley, Blackburn became associated with the Black Mountain school of writers, including Charles Olson (1910-1970), Jonathan Williams (1929-2008), and Denise Levertov (1923-1997), and also took part in the emerging style of poetry called Projective Verse.

It was the use of Provençal in Pound's Cantos that encouraged Blackburn to learn the language, and in 1954, Blackburn received a Fulbright fellowship to study in France. His translations of and commentaries on the Provençal poets in Proensa have received much critical attention. Blackburn's own collections of verse include Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit (1960); The Nets (1961); The Cities (1967); In, On, or About the Premises (1968); The Journals (1975); and The Selection of Heaven (1980). Blackburn was honored as a Guggenheim fellow in poetry in 1967. Although Blackburn was a prolific poet, during his lifetime his works were most often published with smaller presses, and several of his works were published posthumously. Blackburn was also a translator of Spanish and Portuguese. Other translated works by Blackburn include: Poem of the Cid (1966); Pablo Picasso's Hunk of Skin (1968); and Guillem de Poitou: His Eleven Extant Poems (1976).

Sources:


Scope and Content Note

The Paul Blackburn Provençal poets collection documents the publication process of American poet Paul Blackburn's translations of and commentaries on Provençal poets in his small collection and first major translated work, *Proensa* (1953). The collection comprises 30 undated leaves of carbon typescripts and a copy of the 1953 Divers Press edition of the book. The date of the collection is derived from the publication date of *Proensa*. The typescripts appear to have served as preliminary work or early drafts for the printed version. Significant changes are apparent; many of the poets treated in the typescript did not appear in the printed version, and two sections were greatly altered between the draft and publication included in the collection. An expanded edition of *Proensa* was published in 1978 (ed. George Economou) and in paperback in 1986.
Selected Search Terms

Topical Terms

Provençal poetry--Translations into English.
Black Mountain school (Group of poets)

Form/Genre Terms

Typescripts.
Books.

Occupation

Translators.

Personal Contributors

Blackburn, Paul.

Corporate Contributors

Divers Press.
Detailed Description of the Collection

Provençal poets typescripts, circa 1953

Typescript manuscripts arranged and listed in order corresponding to appearance of related text in the Blackburn's 1953 edition of Proensa.

"Arnaut de Mareuil", undated [Box 1 1]
2 p.
Printed version significantly expanded.

"Beatriz de Dia", undated [Box 1 1]
3 p.

"Cercamon", undated [Box 1 1]
3 p.

"Cercamon and Guilhalmi", undated [Box 1 1]
2 p.

"Jaufré Rudel de Blaia", undated [Box 1 1]
5 p.

"Peire D’Alvernhe", undated [Box 1 1]
8 p.

"Bernhart de Ventadorn", undated [Box 1 1]
7 p.
Pasteover on first page; printed version appears significantly different.

Proensa, 1953 [Box 1 2]
7 p.