DANTE IN CONTEXT

In the past seven centuries Dante has become world renowned, with his works translated into multiple languages and read by people of all ages and cultural backgrounds. This volume brings together interdisciplinary essays by leading international scholars to provide a comprehensive account of the historical, cultural, and intellectual context in which Dante lived and worked: from the economic, social, and political scene to the feel of daily life; from education and religion to the administration of justice; from medicine to philosophy and science; from classical antiquity to popular culture; and from the dramatic transformation of urban spaces to the explosion of visual arts and music. This book, while locating Dante in relation to each of these topics, offers readers a clear and reliable idea of what life was like for Dante as an outstanding poet and intellectual in the Italy of the late Middle Ages.

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DANTE IN CONTEXT

EDITED BY

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AND

LINO PERTILE

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For Maggie and Anna
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Chronology

1250–1350

1250
Death of Emperor Frederick II.

1252
First gold florin coined in Florence.

1260
Battle of Montaperti. Banished Florentine Ghibellines defeat Guelfs.

1265
May/June Dante born in Florence.
Charles of Anjou enters Italy.

1266

1289
Florence defeats Arezzo at Campaldino.

1270–73
Dante’s mother, Bella, dies.

1274
May: first encounter with Beatrice.

1276
Guido Guinizzelli dies in Bologna.

1277
9 February: marriage contract with Gemma Donati.

1282
Dante’s father, Alighiero di Bellincione, dies.

1282
War of the ‘Sicilian Vespers’: the Aragonese rulers (Spanish) replace the Angevin (French) in Sicily.

1283
Dante publishes first poem. Friendship with Guido Cavalcanti.

1285
Marriage to Gemma Donati.

1286–87
Dante writes the *Fiore* and *Detto d’Amore*.

1287
Dante in Bologna?
Beatrice marries Simone de’ Bardi.

1287
Birth of first child, Giovanni (?).

1289
Dante as horse soldier at the battle of Campaldino against Arezzo.
Son Jacopo is born (?).

1290
Death of Beatrice. Son Pietro is born (?).
Chronology

1293  Ordinances of Justice.
      Dante writes Vita nova.
      Brunetto Latini dies in Florence.

1294  December, Pope Celestine V abdicates five months after his
election. Boniface VIII becomes pope.
      Construction of Basilica di Santa Croce begun in Florence.

1295  Dante enrols in the Guild of Physicians and Apothecaries and
      enters political life. From November he is a member of the
      Council of Thirty-Six.

1296  Dante a member of the Council of the Hundred.
      Construction of new cathedral (Duomo) begun in Florence.

1299  Daughter Antonia is born (?).
      Construction of Palace of the Priors (Palazzo Vecchio) begun
      in Florence.

1300  Easter week: Dante’s fictional journey to the realms of the
      afterlife.
      April: Pope Boniface proclaims the Jubilee Year.
      May: Florentine Guelfs split into Blacks and Whites.
      May: Dante is ambassador to San Gimignano on behalf of the
      Guelfs.
      15 June–15 August: Dante serves as Prior; signs warrant sending
      Guido Cavalcanti into exile; Guido dies in the summer.

1301  April–September: Dante member of the Council of the Hundred.
      October: Sent on a diplomatic mission to Pope Boniface VIII
      in Rome.
      November: Charles of Valois enters Florence; Black Guelph
      coup d’état.

1302  27 January: While on his way back to Florence, Dante is fined
      5,000 florins and excluded from public office for two years;
      refuses to pay fine.
      10 March: sentence confirmed; if caught, Dante will be burnt
      at the stake.
      Dante joins exiled White Guelfs in a leading position.
      Boniface VIII’s bull Unam sanctam, proclaiming supreme
      authority.

1303  Dante in Verona, guest of Bartolomeo della Scala. Probably
      visits Treviso, Venice, and Padua. Begins Convivio and De
      vulgari eloquentia.
Chronology


1304
20 July: White Guelfs and Ghibellines defeated at La Lastra, near Florence.

1305
Bertrand De Got elected pope with the name of Clement V. Giotto paints the interior of the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua.

1306
Dante in Lunigiana, guest of Moroello Malaspina.

1307
Dante in Casentino: letter and canzone (Rime CXVI) to Moroello Malaspina.

1308
Henry of Luxembourg chosen to be next Emperor. Dante in Lucca. In this period he starts writing the Commedia and continues until 1320/21.

1309
Henry crowned emperor as Henry VII at Aix-La-Chapelle (Aachen). Clement V moves the papacy to Avignon, France, where it remains until 1377. Robert of Anjou, King of Naples.

1310
October: Henry VII in Italy. Dante in Poppo, near Arezzo, guest of Guido da Battifolle, writes an open letter to rulers and people of Italy urging them to welcome Henry.

1311
Henry VII crowned in Milan. 31 March: Dante writes letter urging the Florentines to open the city to Henry VII. 17 April: Dante writes to Henry VII exhorting him to attack Florence.

1312
Henry VII crowned in Rome, but not in St Peter’s. Dante settles in Verona as guest of Cangrande della Scala. He writes or begins writing Monarchia (?).

1313
August: Henry dies of malaria in Buonconvento, near Siena. Giovanni Boccaccio is born in Florence (or Certaldo?).

1314
Completes Inferno. Pope Clement V dies. Dante writes open letter to Italian cardinals urging them to elect an Italian pope. Conclave closes for two years.

1315
Completes Purgatorio. June: Amnesty offered to Florentine exiles; Dante rejects offer.
Chronology

October: Florence reconfirms Dante's exile and extends it to his children.

Albertino Mussato crowned poet laureate in Padua.

1316      Conclave reopens in Lyons. Frenchman Jacques Duèse is elected pope as John XXII.

1318      Dante leaves Verona and settles in Ravenna as a guest of Guido Novello da Polenta.

1319–20   Dante writes two Latin eclogues to Giovanni del Virgilio and the Questio de aqua et terra.

1320      20 January: Dante reads the Questio de aqua et terra in a public lecture in Verona. Completes Paradiso between 1320 and 1321.

1321      Dante is sent on a diplomatic mission to Venice by Guido Novello. On his return, he dies of malaria in the night between 13 and 14 September and is buried in Ravenna in the Church of San Pier Maggiore, now San Francesco.

1322      Commentary to Inferno in Latin by Jacopo, son of Dante.

1324      Commentary to Inferno in Latin by Graziolo Bambaglioli, Bologna.

1324–8   Commentary to the full Commedia in Italian by Iacomo della Lana, Bologna.

1327      Milan: Biblioteca Trivulziana, Ms. 1080: first illustrated ms of the Commedia.

1328      The Dominican Guido Vernani writes the De reprobatione Monarchiae, a fierce attack on Dante's political treatise.

1329      According to Boccaccio, the Monarchia is publicly burnt as heretical in Bologna.

1333      Commentary to Inferno in Latin by Guido da Pisa, Pisa (?).

1334      Ottimo Commento, full commentary in Italian.

1335      The Commedia is banned by the Dominican order in Tuscany.

1340      Comentum in Latin by Pietro Alighieri, Verona.

1341      Petrarch crowned poet laureate in Rome by Robert of Anjou, King of Naples.

1343      Death of Robert of Anjou and end of Angevin dynasty in Naples.

1343–50   Commentary on the whole poem in Latin by Alberico da Rosciate, Bergamo.

1347–50   Black Death.
Abbreviations and note on translations

The following editions and translations are used throughout, unless otherwise stated.

**Bible**


**Commedia**


**Conv.**


**Detto**


**Dve**


**Ecl.**


### Abbreviations and note on translations

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<tr>
<td>Inf.</td>
<td>Inferno.</td>
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<td>Par.</td>
<td>Paradiso.</td>
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<td>Purg.</td>
<td>Purgatorio.</td>
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All translations from classical Latin authors, unless stated otherwise, are taken from the Loeb Classical Library. All other translations are noted in the individual chapters.