T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* is often considered the most important poem written in English in the twentieth century. The poem dramatically shattered old patterns of form and style, proposed a new paradigm for poetry and poetic thought, demanded recognition from all literary quarters, and changed the ways in which it was possible to approach, read, and write poetry. *The Waste Land* helped define the literary and artistic period known as modernism. This *Companion* is the first dedicated to the work as a whole, offering thirteen new essays by an impressive group of international scholars on an extensive range of topics. Written in a style that is at once sophisticated and accessible, these fresh critical perspectives will serve as an invaluable guide for scholars, students, and general readers alike.

Gabrielle McIntire is Associate Professor in the Department of English at Queen’s University, Canada. She is the author of *Modernism, Memory, and Desire: T. S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf* (Cambridge University Press, 2008) and has published articles on T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Joseph Conrad, Nella Larsen, and James Joyce in journals and collections including *Modern Fiction Studies, Modernism/Modernity, Narrative*, and *Callaloo*. Her poetry has also appeared internationally, and she sits on the editorial boards of *Twentieth-Century Literature* and *T. S. Eliot Studies Annual*.

* A complete list of books in the series is at the back of this book.
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for Clara Sophia
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BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF ELIOT’S LIFE

1888 On September 26 Thomas Stearns Eliot is born to Henry Ware Eliot and Charlotte Champe Stearns Eliot in St. Louis, Missouri. He is the youngest by nine years of seven children, one of whom had died in infancy. In his adult years Eliot was especially close to his brother Henry, born in 1879.

1898 Eliot enrolls at Smith Academy, St. Louis. His grandfather, William Greenleaf Eliot, had founded the academy in 1854 and was its first chancellor.

1905 Eliot publishes several poems in the *Smith Academy Record* and graduates from high school. Moves to Massachusetts to attend Milton Academy, a prestigious preparatory school founded in 1798.

1906 Begins his first year at Harvard College, though does not initially excel academically. He studies broadly in the humanities, languages, and literatures, taking courses in the history of ancient art, philosophy, French, German, Greek, Latin, and English literatures.

1907 His poem, “Song,” appears in the *Harvard Advocate*. He continues to publish in the *Advocate* through his college years and takes up a position on the editorial board in 1909.

1909 Graduates from Harvard with an A.B. and begins his M.A., again taking a wide range of courses, especially in English literature, philosophy, and art history. He studies with Irving Babbitt and George Santayana.

1910 Creates a poetry notebook titled *Inventions of the March Hare*. Drafts portions of “Portrait of a Lady.” In the fall he leaves for Paris to study at the Sorbonne, where he attends...
Lectures by Henri Bergson at the Collège de France and lives at 151 bis rue St. Jacques, near the Panthéon and the Sorbonne. He receives private language tutoring with Alain-Fournier and befriends Jean Verdenal.

1911
Graduates from Harvard with his M.A. after another trip to Europe where he visits London, Munich, and Northern Italy. Eliot returns to Boston, commencing the doctoral program in philosophy at Harvard where he studies Indian philosophy and Sanskrit. He finishes his first major poems, including “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” “Portrait of a Lady,” “Prelude” [sic], and “Rhapsody on a Windy Night.”

1912
Meets and begins a romantic relationship with Emily Hale. He is appointed assistant in philosophy at Harvard.

1913
Reads F. H. Bradley’s Appearance and Reality, which becomes the subject of his doctoral dissertation.

1914
Meets Bertrand Russell, a visiting professor at Harvard. Travels to London, England, and then Marburg, Germany, en route to taking up a one-year fellowship at Merton College, Oxford. Germany declares war on Russia and invades Luxembourg and Belgium while Eliot is in Marburg; he only manages to reach England several weeks later. Within a week of his arrival in London, he meets Ezra Pound, who is deeply impressed with “Prufrock” and sends it to Poetry magazine.

1915
Meets Vivien Haigh-Wood in April. Jean Verdenal is killed in the Dardanelles in May. Poetry publishes “Prufrock” in June, and in October “The Boston Evening Transcript,” “Aunt Helen,” and “Cousin Nancy” are also printed in Poetry. Eliot marries Vivien Haigh-Wood at the Hampstead Registry Office, London, on June 26. His father stops all financial support. Wyndham Lewis’s Blast publishes Preludes, and “Portrait of a Lady” appears in Others. Eliot travels to Massachusetts to visit his family and decides not to move back to Boston. Upon his return to England he takes up a teaching post at the High Wycombe Grammar School, established in 1550.

1916
Takes up a teaching position at Highgate Junior School in London, founded in 1565. Completes his doctoral thesis, which is accepted by Harvard, but with ocean passage delayed for several days he decides not to return to Boston for his oral
Brief Chronology of Eliot’s Life


1917
Gives up teaching at the preparatory school level, though he continues lecturing. Takes up a position with the Colonial and Foreign Department of Lloyd’s Bank, London. In April the United States enters the war; Eliot tries to enlist but is declined due to a congenital hernia. The Egoist Limited publishes his first volume of poetry, Prufrock and Other Observations. Eliot becomes assistant editor of The Egoist magazine.

1918
Eliot is still trying to enlist with the U.S. Navy against Vivien Eliot and Ezra Pound’s wishes; despite Eliot’s ill health the U.S. Military Service sends him an Order of Induction in November but he never sees service. He continues to lecture on Elizabethan literature in London.

1919

1920

1921
Begins to draft The Waste Land. From June to August Eliot’s mother, his sister Marian, and his brother Henry visit from the United States. In the fall Eliot suffers a breakdown, seeks medical help, and receives a leave from Lloyd’s Bank. He goes to Margate, Kent, by the sea to recuperate, and then to Lausanne, Switzerland, where he is treated by Dr. Roger Vittoz. In November, Eliot shows Ezra Pound drafts of The Waste Land.

1922
Eliot’s health is still unstable, but he decides to found and edit a new journal, the Criterion, which he edits until he closes it down in 1939. He finishes The Waste Land and publishes it in

1923      Virginia and Leonard Woolf publish *The Waste Land* in book form with their Hogarth Press; the poem has already sold 1,250 copies in the United States through the Boni and Liverwright publication. Vivien's health is very poor. Eliot is emotionally and physically taxed by full-time work at Lloyd's Bank, running the *Criterion*, and various personal struggles. The “Bel Esprit” (the “Eliot Fellowship Fund”) is launched in an effort by friends and admirers to allow Eliot to leave his job at the bank.

1925      Leaves Lloyd's Bank to work with Faber and Gwyer (later Faber and Faber). Publishes *Poems 1909–1925*, which includes “The Hollow Men.”

1926      Leaves Lloyd's Bank to work with Faber and Gwyer (later Faber and Faber). Publishes *Sweeney Agonistes*. Falls to his knees while visiting Michelangelo's *Pieta* in Rome.

1927      Baptized into the Church of England by W. Force Stead at Holy Trinity Church, Bishop's Palace Cuddesdon, near Oxford. He also takes British citizenship.

1929      Eliot's mother dies.

1930      Publishes *Ash-Wednesday* with Faber and Faber, with print runs in the United States and Britain.

1932      Delivers Charles Eliot Norton lectures at Harvard University for several months (through March 1933). Publishes *Selected Essays: 1917–1932*.

1933      Separates from his wife, Vivien Eliot. Publishes *After Strange Gods*. Lectures at Johns Hopkins University and at the University of Virginia.

1934      Visits Burnt Norton manor in the Cotswolds with Emily Hale.

1935      *Murder in the Cathedral* is first performed at Canterbury Cathedral.
BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF ELIOT’S LIFE

1936  Publishes Collected Poems 1909–1935; the volume includes the first publication of Burnt Norton.


1943  Publishes all of Four Quartets, which had each already appeared in individual pamphlet form. Notes Towards the Definition of Culture appears serially.

1945  Visits Ezra Pound at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in Washington, DC. The war ends.

1946  Moves in with the critic, John Davy Hayward, with whom he lives until Eliot marries Valerie Fletcher Eliot in 1957.

1948  Eliot is awarded the Order of Merit and the Nobel Prize in Literature. Selected Poems is published by Penguin, with a run of 50,000 copies. Notes Towards the Definition of Culture is published in book form. He lectures at Princeton University and travels to Andover, Massachusetts, to see Emily Hale.

1950  Publishes The Cocktail Party, and it is performed at the Edinburgh Festival.


1953  Travels with Emily Hale and his sister Marian to St. Louis.

1957  Eliot marries Valerie Fletcher, his secretary at Faber and Faber since 1949, in secret at St. Barnabus Church, London. Their years together were ones he described as his happiest. Breaks off contact with Emily Hale.
Brief Chronology of Eliot’s Life

1961      Delivers his last public lecture, “To Criticize the Critic.”


1965      Eliot dies on January 4 in London. Following his wishes, his ashes are later interred in St. Michael and All Angels Anglican Church, East Coker.