

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO



DANTE

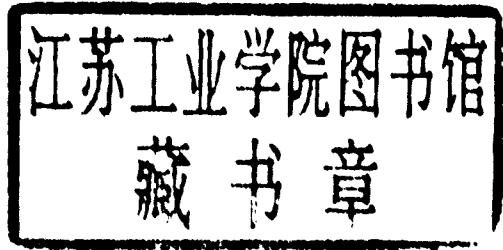
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THE CAMBRIDGE
COMPANION TO
DANTE

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RACHEL JACOFF



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PREFACE

This second edition of *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, like the first one, is designed to be an accessible and challenging introduction to Dante for students, teachers, and general readers. Seventeen essays by distinguished scholars provide contemporary perspectives on Dante's life and work, offering readings of his major texts and of various aspects of his cultural context. Contributors to the first edition were asked to update their essays and bibliographies, and there are three new essays as well. The essays concentrate on five general areas: Dante's early works and their relation to the *Comedy*; the literary antecedents, both vernacular and classical, of Dante's poetry; biblical and theological influences and their poetic implications; the historical and political dimensions of Dante's work; and selected reception history (the commentary tradition and Dante's presence in English-language literature). In addition, there are introductory essays to each of the three canticles of the *Comedy* that analyze their particular themes and strategies. The book aims to provide both insightful readings of specific textual practices and useful background material.

Because Dante's work is so capacious and multi-faceted, it is impossible to address all of the issues it raises and all of the areas of classical and medieval culture with which it intersects. Many of the essays conclude with suggestions for further reading, and there is a section at the end of the book that provides information about translations, web sites, critical works, and other aids to further study. The selective list of critical works includes many books that have appeared in the years since the first edition was published.

Indeed, there seems to be no end in sight of work on Dante or of Dante's presence in works by other writers, artists, musicians, and in popular culture.

NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS

Quotations from the *Divina Commedia* are taken from *La commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, edited by Giorgio Petrocchi, 4 vols. (Milan: Mondadori, 1966–67), and reproduced, with very few changes, in *The Divine Comedy*, translated by Charles S. Singleton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970–75). Translations are either by, or based on, that of Singleton in this edition.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1265 Dante born under the sign of Gemini
- 1283 Dante's father dies and Dante comes of age. He is married shortly thereafter to Gemma Donati with whom he has four children (Jacopo, Pietro, Giovanni, and Antonia)
- 1289 Dante takes part in the battle of Campaldino against Arezzo
- 1290 June 8, death of Beatrice
- 1293-94 *Vita nuova* written
- 1294 Dante meets Charles Martel, king of Hungary, and heir to the Kingdom of Naples and the country of Provence, in Florence
- 1295 Dante enters political life
- 1300 Boniface VIII proclaims Jubilee Year. June 15, Dante becomes one of the six priors of Florence for a term of two months. Easter 1300 is the fictional date of the journey of the *Divina Commedia*
- 1301 As Charles of Valois approaches Florence, Dante is sent on an embassy to Pope Boniface VIII
- 1302 January 27, the first sentence of exile against Dante reaches him in Siena. On March 10, Dante is permanently banished from Florence
- 1303-05 *De vulgari eloquentia* and *Convivio*, both unfinished, written
- 1303 Guest of Bartolomeo della Scala in Verona
- 1304 Birth of Francesco Petrarca
- 1309 Papacy moves from Rome to Avignon
- 1310 Henry VII of Luxemburg descends into Italy. Dante writes Epistle to him. Possible date of *Monarchia* (others think it may have been written as late as 1317)
- 1312-18 Guest of Cangrande della Scala in Verona
- 1313 Death of Henry VII. Birth of Giovanni Boccaccio
- 1314 *Inferno* published. Epistle to the Italian cardinals

CHRONOLOGY

- 1315 Florence proposes to repeal Dante's exile on the condition that he acknowledges his guilt. Dante refuses. *Purgatorio* published
- 1319 Dante in Ravenna as guest of Guido Novello da Polenta. Latin correspondence with the humanist Giovanni del Virgilio
- 1320 Dante lectures on the *Quaestio de aqua et terra*
- 1321 Completion of *Paradiso*. September 13 or 14, Dante dies in Ravenna

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