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The Monarchia Controversy: An Historical Study with Accompanying Translations of Dante Alighieri's Monarchia, Guido Vernani's Refutation of the ... Dante, and Pope John XXII's Bull Si fratrum

Anthony K. Cassell

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The Monarchia Controversy provides both the background to the imperial and ecclesiastical machinations that drove Dante Alighieri to begin penning the *Monarchia* in 1318 and also the subsequent history of the efforts by papal authorities to ban the book after the writer's death. Dante's political treatise on the Empire and the Papacy was listed by the Church in the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* in 1564, and it was removed only in 1881. Anthony Cassell's account of the *Monarchia*'s genesis is both compelling and provoking, especially in the descriptions of the intransigence of Dante's proponents and antagonists. While earlier scholars have viewed Dante's treatise as peacefully divorced from its times, Cassell shows that Dante's pose of calm authority above the fray was at once traditional, forensic, courageous, and hard-won.

Cassell examines in close detail Dante's relations to his patron Can Grande della Scala, Pope John XXII's attempts to strip Can Grande of his privileges, the pertinent traditions of canon law, the culture of contemporary political and ecclesiastical publicists, the work of formal logicians, and the motives of Dante's first post-mortem opponent, Friar Guido Vernani. The author traces the treatise's reception through and beyond the first censorship and public burning that it suffered in Bologna from Cardinal Bertrand du Poujet in 1328, and the failure of Bertrand's threat to incinerate the writer too should his mortal remains be discovered.

To document the history, Cassell presents a fresh, annotated translation of the Monarchia, together with the first English versions of Guido Vernani's refutation of Dante's *Monarchia* (1329), and Pope John XXII's bull *Si fratrum* of 1316-17, which sparked the crisis. Cassell's volume will interest not only the general reader but scholars in many fields, such as medieval philosophy, history and theology, canon law, ecclesiastical history (especially Ockham and Marsilius of Padua studies), medieval Latin, Italian and Comparative Literature.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Anthony K. Cassell is Professor of Italian and Comparative Literature at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. The former associate editor of Dante Studies, Cassell is the author, editor, or translator of numerous works, including *Diana's Hunt (Caccia di Diana): Boccaccio's First Fiction*, *Lectura Dantis Americana: Inferno*, and *The Corbaccio*.

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK:

"[T]he longest and most elaborate study yet of the *Monarchia* controversy. . . . The prose of [Cassell's] essays is lucid and witty, while his notes are a labyrinthine mine of information for the advanced scholar, who will especially appreciate the up-to-date and thorough bibliographical references. . . . [T[his is the best book on Vernani and the *Monarchia* controversy."?Richard Kay, *Catholic Historical Review*

"In this handsomely produced study Cassell has in effect given us a casebook on Dante's political thought. . . . The scholarship is throughout on the highest level. Cassell's bibliography is extremely rich: a comparably accessible trove of pertinent, well-organized information in English regarding the politics, law, and theology of the first decades of the fourteenth century in Italy would be hard to find. The documentation is in any case more than sufficient, and many of the footnotes are in effect brief articles in themselves."?Ronald L. Martinez, *Speculum*

"Cassell's book furnishes materials that, while probably indispensable to a responsible reading of the work, are very rarely furnished in so much richness of detail and with such a firm grasp of their import. Cassell's contribution is significant."?Prof. Ronald L. Martinez, Brown University

"Anthony Cassell's book is a magisterial edition of Dante's political treatise, and it comes at

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