

successive moments” (389). Time is thus described as a means of self-perspectivization but also as an entity that speaks in the imperative for Dante.

Took’s chapters are brimming with both contextual information and analysis of Dante’s biography and life works; the book provides a full view into the background in which Dante is writing while bringing to light themes of existence, exile, language, temporality, and love through its meticulous selection of sources. It becomes clear through every chapter and analysis that the *lettore* mentioned in the preface, is necessarily part of this biography.

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Paolo Pellegrini.

Dante Alighieri. Una vita.

Turin: Einaudi, 2021. XX + 259 pp. €22.

Among the new generation of Dante biographies, inaugurated by Marco Santagata’s work *Dante. Il romanzo della sua vita* (2012), Paolo Pellegrini’s *Dante Alighieri. Una vita* is undoubtedly one of the most cogent and fascinating. This brand-new study begins with the assumption that Dante’s works, and particularly the *Commedia*, are not “instant books” of the poet’s life. In the last few decades, there has been a tendency among Dante biographers to use verses of the sacred poem to glean information about the author’s life. Pellegrini, referring to the interpretative discretion of Italian scholars of the first half of the twentieth century—and especially Michele Barbi—chose instead to find a balance between documentary analysis and literary interpretation in constructing his biographical profile of the poet.

The book is based on an accurate analysis of the archival documents related to Dante and his historical context (specifically the excellent collection of the new *Codice Diplomatico Dantesco* published by Salerno Editrice), as well as literary sources that Pellegrini considers reliable and worthy of consideration. Specifically, the author considers texts of the exegetical tradition of the *Commedia* (e.g., Jacopo and Pietro Alighieri, Andrea Lancia, the *Ottimo commento*, Boccaccio, Filippo Villani) as well as Boccaccio’s *Trattatello*, Leonardo Bruni’s *Vita di Dante*, and Biondo Flavio’s *Historiarum decades*. The author has analyzed the testimonies collected with a highly philological approach, delivering to both specialist readers and the broader public a balanced and innovative profile of Dante. From a strictly narrative point of view, the biographical portrait Pellegrini provides is a “traditional” account that develops chronologically through a geographic-poetic distribution of the chapters.

The book opens with a short introductory chapter on the historical context of Florence between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; this is very helpful for understanding the governmental structure of the Tuscan city and the social and political upheavals prior to the poet’s birth. This chapter is followed by one dedicated to the Florentine period of Dante’s life (1265-1302) and a third on the poet’s

political engagement. The biographical narrative develops through the poet's wanderings during exile and focuses particularly on the years Dante spent in Verona as a guest of the della Scala family.

Pellegrini offers some of the most original hypotheses on the Dante's peregrinations and social and intellectual activity during his exile. The author has recently attributed to Dante's hand a letter previously thought to have been written by Cangrande della Scala to Emperor Henry VII in August 1312. This new information, once corroborated, would confirm the hypothesis that Dante stayed for an extended period of time in Verona before moving to Ravenna and the court of Guido Novello da Polenta. Though other scholars have contested the attribution, Pellegrini is now working on the critical edition of the letter, where he will undoubtedly present new evidence in support of his hypothesis.

The author is also in favor of other attributional theories that are still not entirely resolved and which he uses to shed light on the latter years of Dante's life, for which there is almost no archival documentation. Specifically, Pellegrini considers the Epistle to Cangrande and the *Questio de aqua et terra* to be authentic; this, according to him, would confirm Dante's presence in Verona and involvement in the cultural and courtly milieu of the city. Despite the questions of attribution, the biography provided by Pellegrini is one of the most thorough in recent years. The author analyzes the historical data, with competence and lucidity, and explains and justifies his most controversial hypotheses. This is accomplished with a solid knowledge of medieval literary history and through a meticulous philological analysis of sources.

The other great quality of this biography is that it is beautifully written. With his light and elegant prose, Pellegrini catches the interest of both the specialist and casual reader. To explain some of the most challenging themes in the various chapters, Pellegrini occasionally inserts brief notes on the content and structure of Dante's works. For its rigorous analytical approach, and beautiful writing style, Pellegrini's book can be considered one of the best Dante biographies of the last few decades. And precisely because of this virtuous combination of methodological strength, knowledge of the subject matter, and writing skill, this work deserves to be translated. This would allow readers throughout the world to learn of Dante's biographical and literary journey, in a new fascinating light.

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Lino Pertile.

Dante Popolare.

Ravenna: Longo Editore, 2021. 385 pp. €34.

The 700th anniversary of Dante's death has been a formidable year to celebrate the cultural magnitude of the Florentine poet and to draw conclusions about global trends of Dante Studies. Lino Pertile's book arrives in this propitious time to