



Dante and the Making of a Modern Author

Albert Russell Ascoli

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Leading scholar Albert Russell Ascoli traces the metamorphosis of Dante Alighieri – minor Florentine aristocrat, political activist and exile, amateur philosopher and theologian, and daring experimental poet – into Dante, author of the Divine Comedy and perhaps the most self-consciously 'authoritative' cultural figure in the Western canon. The text offers a comprehensive introduction to Dante's evolving, transformative relationship to medieval ideas of authorship and authority from the early Vita Nuova through the unfinished treatises, *The Banquet* and *On Vernacular Eloquence*, to the works of his maturity, *Monarchy* and the *Divine Comedy*. Ascoli reveals how Dante anticipates modern notions of personalized, creative authorship and the phenomenon of 'Renaissance self-fashioning'. Unusually, the book examines Dante's career as a whole offering an important point of access not only to the Dantean oeuvre, but also to the history and theory of authorship in the larger Italian and European tradition.



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