

ROBERT WILSON

PROPHECIES AND PROPHECY IN DANTE'S *COMMEDIA*

This study of the prophecies in Dante's *Commedia* lists and examines all of the prophetic passages in the poem with the intention of providing a comprehensive and integrated basis for an understanding of Dante's use of prophecy in the poem. With Dante's text as its starting point, it proposes new conclusions about the mechanism of prophecy and presents some suggestions about the status of his text and its truth claims.

The introductory chapter surveys previous work on prophecy in Dante, and looks at the question of Dante as author, narrator and character in the *Commedia*. The next three chapters list and examine the prophe-



cies in the poem (including some apparent prophecies), focussing on their intelligibility. The fifth chapter examines possible sources for the mechanism of predictive prophecy by the dead as found in the *Commedia*, with particular attention to classical epic poetry. The sixth chapter considers the *post eventum* prophecies and what their presence means for the poem and its truth claims. Chapter seven discusses the *ante eventum* prophecies, taking Dante's compositional practice throughout the poem as a guide to how these predictions should be approached. The concluding chapter offers a reconsideration of the figure of Dante as a prophet and his text as prophetic.

Questo studio delle profezie nella Commedia di Dante indica ed esamina tutti i passaggi profetici del poema, nel tentativo di fornire per la prima volta un esame completo di tali testi e per far luce sull'uso dantesco della profezia nel più ampio orizzonte dell'intero poema. Partendo dall'esame critico del testo, il volume raggiunge inedite conclusioni sulla funzionalità e i meccanismi della profezia, e presenta importanti proposte per il poema e le sue rivendicazioni in termini di veridicità.

ROBERT WILSON is a Lecturer in the Italian Department of the University of St. Andrews. His research interest is primarily in Dante, including the early commentaries on the *Commedia*, and classical literature and ideas in Dante. He also studies Italian detective fiction.

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