



Courtesy Lost: Dante, Boccaccio, and the Literature of History (Toronto Italian Studies)

Kristina Marie Olson

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In *Courtesy Lost*, Kristina M. Olson analyses the literary impact of the social, political, and economic transformations of the fourteenth century through an exploration of Dante's literary and political influence on Boccaccio. The book reveals how Boccaccio rewrote the past through the lens of the *Commedia*, torn between nostalgia for elite families in decline and the need to promote morality and magnanimity within the Florentine Republic.

By examining the passages in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, *De casibus*, and *Esposizioni* in which the author rewrites moments in Florentine and Italian history that had also appeared in Dante's *Commedia*, Olson illuminates the ways in which Boccaccio expressed his deep ambivalence towards the political and social changes of his era. She illustrates this through an analysis of Dante's and Boccaccio's treatments of the idea of courtesy, or *cortesia*, in an era when the chivalry of the declining aristocracy was being supplanted by the civility of the rising merchant classes.

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