Dante’s Latin treatise Monarchia inscribes itself within the long medieval conflict between Pope and Emperor and the debate that opposed the theorists of theocracy to the supporters of the empire. The Monarchia, traditionally assumed to be a subversive work as its tormented reception testifies—it remained listed in the Index of Prohibited Books from 1559 to the end of the 19th century—results from the strong connection Dante emphasized between politics and ethics. The bene esse of human beings is the crucial issue that the treatise discusses from its very beginning. More than focusing on power and sovereignty, the Monarchia aims to demonstrate that the government of a single universal ruler guarantees the achievement of the natural goal of human life. The central role assigned to the Emperor discloses, in fact, the importance the poet gives to earthly happiness and to the temporal dimension of humanitas.

The essays in this volume are the result of the first International Symposium of the Global Dante Project of New York, a scholarly initiative committed to the systematic study of the whole of Dante’s opus. Held in 2015 and devoted to the Monarchia, this inaugural event saw the participation of scholars from Europe and the USA who investigated Dante’s political treatise addressing diverse issues from multiple and innovative methodological perspectives. The fertile discussion generated on that occasion and the insights it produced animate this book.