The 14th century

Dante, Giotto and Petrarch, in the century of the Black Death.

The worst disaster in Europe's recorded history killed perhaps a third of its people. The same century gave the Divine Comedy, Giotto's frescoes, Petrarch's humanism and the mechanical clock.

What rose

1305. Giotto paints the Scrovegni Chapel. Source: Scrovegni Chapel

c. 1320. Dante completes the Divine Comedy. Source: Divine Comedy

1330s. Mechanical clocks appear in European towns. Source: History of timekeeping devices

1340s–70s. Petrarch revives classical learning: the start of humanism. Source: Petrarch

c. 1400. Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. Source: The Canterbury Tales

What fell or stalled

The Black Death (1347–51) killed perhaps a third or more of Europe's people. Source: Black Death

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