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européens, et qu'il laissa une trace considérable sur la littérature de l'époque' (p. 275).

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

MALCOLM COOK

Poetica dell'amore e conversione: considerazioni teologiche sulla lingua della 'Commedia' di Dante. By PIERLUIGI LIA. Florence: Olschki. 2015. xiii+321 pp. €35. ISBN 978-88-222-6410-7.

Every now and again, where Dante is concerned, you come across a nicely seasoned account of what is going on in the text, nicely seasoned in the twofold sense of conceived and articulated from within the theological circle and offered as the fruit of a now lengthy and thoughtful companionship. Just such a book is Pierluigi Lia's volume on poetry and conversion in Dante, a volume having at its centre a nothing if not developed sense (*a*) of the ultimately mystical nature of the soul's journey into God as lived out by Dante, and (*b*) of poetic form as for him the intelligible form or *species intelligibilis* of his experience as a wayfaring spirit, as the principle both of its truth and of the accessibility of that experience. These, then, as set out in the introduction with a discursive ease and assurance suggestive of one long since at home in the highways and byways of medieval spirituality, are the leading ideas of the book, the first chapter settling on the recognizably Dantean notion of language, not merely as the *expression* of experience, as brought to bear in respect of a prior order of intentionality, but as its *actuality*, as that whereby the one who says 'I' knows himself or herself in the twofold substance and truth of his or her presence in the world as a creature of moral, intellectual, and ultimately eschatological accountability. 'Fuori della lingua', in short, 'nessuna realtà umana, nulla che si potesse ereditare e comunicare, nulla per la memoria e la speranza' (p. 2). But then, hard on the heels of the linguistic moment of the argument comes the mystical moment, a moment explored, it is true, by way of the specifically Bernardine, but developed in response to the leading emphases of the *Commedia* in terms of the strict association of love and order, of love as that whereby the pilgrim spirit seeks out union with God as but the beginning and end of all loving and of order as that whereby everything that *is* in the world may be said to resemble its maker. Again, the emphasis is unexceptionable, any number of passages in Dante celebrating these things both discretely and in union one with the other as paradigms of consciousness in the wayfaring spirit, as the twin facets of being at the point of emergence. It is in this context, then, and on this basis that Lia sets out in what follows to explore Dante's particular species of mystical awareness, the successive moments of the soul's ascent into God, together with the linguistic solutions (at once lexical, syntactical, rhetorical, and metrical) whereby ascent understood is confirmed in its twofold integrity and intelligibility. True, Chapters III to VI have to do pre-eminently with the substance and psychology of ultimate awareness in and for itself, but from Chapter VII onwards we tread with Dante the downward and upward way, the word, however, in its power to

confirm and to celebrate a fundamentally rapturous order of experience throughout commending itself as the principal object of concern. While, then, this is not a book which breaks new ground in Dante Studies (its moving comfortably within the tradition both of Anglo-American and continental Dante scholarship is not the least of its merits), what we have here—or so it seems to me—is something still more precious; for what we have here is not only a book throughout faithful to its own reasons (to piety and predication, love and language, as but part and parcel of one and the same thing where Dante is concerned), but a sense of Dante as a fellow traveller, a companion along the way. And that—a sense of the alongsidedness of it all—is indeed the mark of a seasoned commentator on the text.

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JOHN TOOK

War and Peace in Dante: Essays Literary, Historical and Theological. Ed. by JOHN C. BARNES and DARAGH O'CONNELL. Dublin: Four Courts Press. 2015. 264 pp. €49.50. ISBN 978-1-84682-420-3.

This volume is a collection of ten essays which explore a range of topics around ideas of conflict and peace in the works of Dante. Particular emphasis is given to the ways in which peace, for Dante, is far more than the opposite of war. The terms 'war' and 'peace' are both allowed to have wide definitions, so that space is given to consideration of the internal moral conflicts to which humans are subject and to themes such as the politics of argumentation.

The first essay, by John C. Barnes, explores Dante's attitude to conflict by examining how his attitude to war is related to his political ideal of universal empire. Also considered is the presence of conflict and warfare in Dante's personal history and the presence of military terminology in Dante's works, in particular in the scenes at the gates of Dis in *Inferno*. Joseph Canning then considers Dante's notion of just warfare as it relates to the Roman Empire and assesses how far Dante's views accord with contemporary ideas of just and holy wars.

Dante's views of the effects of war on individuals and societies are considered by Hannah Skoda, who examines the tensions in the intellectual sources available to Dante. From justification of war in Augustine and glorification in Virgil, to the negative view of war to be found in Augustine, Aquinas, and Lucan, the chapter assesses how for Dante conflict is both potentially a tool of justice and a manifestation of greed.

In Chapter 4 Barnes returns to the language of warfare in Dante and presents a close reading of the military aspects of *Inferno* VIII and IX, in particular relating the episode to medieval siegecraft and military tactics and thus to Dante's personal experiences of warfare.

Stephen Milner considers the relationship of Dante and Brunetto Latini in terms of their use of rhetoric. It is argued that Dante's exile meant that rhetoric could only ever be of limited use to him as he was removed from the urban political contexts for which it was designed. For Milner, in Dante and Brunetto master is transcended