
This volume collects twelve of Vallone’s *lecturae Dantis*, four from each *cantica*: *Inferno* XI, XXV, XXVI, XXXIV, *Purgatorio* IV, XVI, XXVI, XXIX, *Paradiso* IX, XI, XXV, XXX. (Others, listed on page 7, note 2, did not make their way into the collection.) All of the essays (written mostly during the past twenty years) have appeared in print before, with the sole exception of the *Inferno* XXVI piece, which is of recent vintage. According to the author, the essays collectively bring into focus “il tema dell’unità e varietà (e di questa in quella) dei canti della *Commedia*.” He continues: “Si è, in sostanza, voluto cogliere la presenza di Dante razionalmente tesa nel suo viaggio conoscitivo a ricercare e a realizzare, in contemporaneità d’intenti, il particolare e il generale, il personaggio singolo (o l’insieme dei personaggi) e l’ambiente, la scena mutevole e l’ideazione complessiva, la ‘struttura,’ nel significato che via via ha acquistato da De Sanctis a Zumthor, e le modulazioni di lingua e stile” (7). The latter two aspects mentioned—the structural and stylistic modulations of the poem—are major concerns in virtually all the essays, and are thus justly highlighted in the title. To be sure, they are treated in a more systematic way in Vallone’s long chapter on the *Commedia* in the Vallardi *Dante* (Milano, 1981), especially pages 307–372, which the reader might be wise to peruse before broaching the present volume.

A.A.I.


On the basis of a rereading of the texts (printed and manuscript), and a reevaluation of the historical facts for the period 1454–1464, the author attempts to pinpoint more precisely the true beginning of the Neoplatonic current of thought characteristic of late fifteenth-century Florence. In the process he modifies the conclusions arrived at by previous scholars: in agreement with Garin (but not without some reservations), he discards the older view which held that the development of Neoplatonism was the direct result of Medici patronage, since, as he illustrates, many of Ficino’s central ideas were already developed by the time the Platonic Academy was founded in 1462 or 1463 when Cosimo de’ Medici gave Ficino the income from and use of his villa at Careggi. However, to a greater degree than Garin, the author stresses the importance of the arrival in Florence of the Byzantine scholar John Argyropoulos in 1454 for the early revival of metaphysical philosophy. For example, Donato Acciaiuoli, one of the followers of the Greek professor hired to lecture at the Florentine Studio, used his mentor’s lectures on Aristotle but, in his own commentaries, gave the ideas he gleaned from them a more Platonic slant. Other figures, like Niccolo Tignosi and Lorenzo Pisano, had a formative influence on Ficino whose ideas derived from multiple fields including scholasticism, religion and humanism. After weighing all the evidence Field concludes that the Platonic Academy was not isolated and was not the product of Medici politics, as is popularly believed. What gave rise to it was essentially a dialectical relation between intellectuals and rulers.

O.Z.P.