



The Wings of the Doves: Love and Desire in Dante and Medieval Culture

Elena Lombardi

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In *The Wings of the Doves*, Elena Lombardi undertakes a detailed reading of Dante's *Inferno* V - the canto of Francesca da Rimini and her doomed love for her brother-in-law, Paolo Malatesta, a richly layered episode within the *Divine Comedy*, which continues to challenge readers today, blurring the distinction between poetry and doctrine, pity and condemnation, and literature and reality. Lombardi plays on the complex nature of the canto in order to shed light on a larger and much-debated theme in medieval culture - the relation between spiritual and erotic forms of love and desire. Eschatology and law, pilgrimage and beauty, the role of affective practices in the religious and social spheres, intertextuality and the medieval culture of reading are just some of the themes that come together to unravel this tale of adultery and its bordering with the soul's search for God. *The Wings of the Doves* examines the flexibility of the medieval notion of desire to unearth the hidden meanings of this complex story of lust and love and the radical nature of medieval love poetry.



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