

Crafting the Renaissance Dante (online/Florence, 10–11 Jun 26)

Online / Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz–Max-Planck-Institut, Florence, Italy (KHI), Jun 10–11, 2026

Rebecca Bowen

Workshop & Study Day: Crafting the Renaissance Dante: Editions of the 'Commedia' as Artefacts of Early Modern Print.

Early modern imprints of Dante's 'Commedia' are unique testaments to the expectations of their readers and buyers as well as the ambitions of their creators and patrons. Produced in an era of accelerated technological and social change when global (and particularly transatlantic) travel underwent unprecedented expansion, these books hold insight into the developing cultural expectations that shaped and reshaped Dante's medieval poem for a new Renaissance readership. With a primary focus on the early printed book as an artefact and artistic object, this two-day workshop examines: the role of early modern bookmaking in the cultural positioning of Dante and his 'Commedia' between the 1470s and c. 1600; the physical state of surviving copies of early printed editions of Dante's works; the cultural value ascribed to these books through historical and modern trading practices; and the effect of printed editions of the 'Commedia' on visualizations of Dante and his text in and beyond book culture. The workshop also seeks to explore the noticeable intensification in visual and textual representations that drew the 'Commedia' into a scientific cultural frame, shedding new light on the ways in which Dante and his poem were caught up in the expanding global concerns of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries. Participants will have the chance to consult items from the Biblioteca Serlupiana, a collection of rare books recently arrived at the KHI after an extended period in private ownership.

Organizers: Rebecca Bowen (KHI/Notre Dame); Gerhard Wolf (KHI); Camilla Musci (KHI); Laura Banella (Notre Dame); Simon Gilson (University of Oxford); Theodore J. Cachey Jr. (Notre Dame); Marcello Ciccutto (Società Dantesca Italiana).

This Workshop and Study Day has been jointly sponsored by the Max-Planck-Institut and the University of Notre Dame through the Center for Italian Studies and the Nanovic Institute for European Studies, Keough School of Global Affairs.

To attend and for further questions please write to rbowen2@nd.edu.

Programme:

Day I, Wednesday 10th June 2026

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz–Max-Planck-Institut, Palazzo Grifoni, Firenze and online

9.30–9.35 (CEST) Welcome

Gerhard Wolf, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz–Max-Planck-Institut

9.35–10.00 Introduction: Dante at the KHI

Rebecca Bowen, University of Notre Dame/KHI

10–11.30 Session I – The 'Commedia' and the Craft of Early Printing

Chaired by Simon Gilson, University of Oxford

Guyda Armstrong, University of Manchester John Rylands Research Institute and Library

'Designing Dante: The Milan 1477–78 Edition of the "Commedia"'

Cristina Dondi, Sapienza Università di Roma

'The copy census of the Florence 1481 Edition of the "Commedia"'

Neil Harris, Università degli Studi di Udine

'The Blank Page in the Parchment Copy of the 1481 "Comedia" (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Vélins 569)'

11.30–12.00 Coffee Break

12.00–13.30 Session II – Visualising the 'Commedia' in the Age of Print

Chaired by Theodore J. Cachey Jr., University of Notre Dame

Martyna Grzesiak, La Sapienza & Ilenia Maschietto, Fondazione Cini

'The Copy Census of the First Fully Illustrated Venetian Edition of the "Commedia"'

Lia Markey, Newberry Library, Gloria Moorman, Scaliger Institute Leiden University Libraries & Zoe Langer, University of Virginia Rare Book School

'Dante and Stradanus'

13.30–14.30 Lunch Break

14.30–16.00 Session III – Mapping Dante in the Sixteenth Century

Chaired by Gerhard Wolf, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz–Max-Planck-Institut

Barbara Stoltz, Philipps-Universität Marburg

'Systems of Reading and Interpretation: Images, Text and Typography in "La Commedia Esposta da Alessandro Vellutello" (1544)'

Shannon McHugh, Huntington Library

'Bringing Beatrice to Life in Vellutello's "Nova espositione" (1544)'

Theodore J. Cachey Jr., University of Notre Dame

'The Site, Form, and Measure of Dante's Cosmos: Fiction, Mapping, and Quattrocento Reception'

16.00–16.15 Coffee Break

16.15–17.45 Session IV – Collecting 'Commedie' Past to Present

Chaired by Laura Banella, University of Notre Dame

Eva Del Soldato, University of Pennsylvania
'The Wycliffite Comedy: Father Hardouin and Dante'

Edoardo Barbieri, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore Brescia
'Le "Commedie" della collezione Serlupi: qualche nota di esemplare'

Natale Vacalebri, Universidad de Alcalá
'Dante at Auction: The "Divine Comedy" and the Golden Age of Bibliophilia'

Day II, June 11th 2026

Speakers only

10.30–13.00 Collection Viewing

Jan Simane, Camilla Musci & Anette Creutzburg (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz–Max-Planck-Institut)

"Introduction to Rare Books at the KHI"

Study of selected editions from the Serlupi Library

13.00–14.00 Lunch Break

14.00–14.45 Final Discussion & General Roundtable

Moderated and concluded by Gerhard Wolf

14.45–15.30 Optional Tour of the Library

Jan Simane (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz–Max-Planck-Institut)

Reference:

CONF: Crafting the Renaissance Dante (online/Florence, 10-11 Jun 26). In: ArtHist.net, May 29, 2026 (accessed Jun 21, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/52592>>.