

Dante's Global Female Public: Readers, Writers and Collectors

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Prof. Elena Lombardi (Oxford), keynote speaker

Whether appearing as an individual or within a collective, as silent or vociferous; implied addressee or dynamic participant in poetical, philosophical, theological discourses, the ubiquitous presence of women is one of the most striking aspects in Dante Alighieri's canon of works. Women inhabit his early lyrical production and the *Vita nuova*, *Convivio* and *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, culminating in the figure of Beatrice in the *Divina Commedia*. Scholars (Barolini 2000; 2006; Cornish, 2010; Olson, 2012; Lombardi, 2018) unearthed Dante's modern and progressist stances on gender, and the inclusive and empowering idea of 'female readership' that reasserts the role and recognizes the value of women as 'capable readers' exerting independent intellectual, hermeneutic, and emotional agency. However, while the nature and function of this 'textualized female audience' has been amply investigated, the extratextual dimension remains largely unmapped. Despite the extraordinary burst of interest for the transmedial, transnational and transhistorical reception of the poet's life and oeuvre, the formation and development of Dante's female public in Italy and abroad appears dramatically neglected.

Sponsored by the [Centre of Dante Studies in Ireland](#) and the [Leeds Centre for Dante Studies](#), this conference aims at capturing **the multidimensional, multidirectional, and palimpsestic nature of women's experiences as private consumers (readers, annotators, and book-collectors) and public mediators (writers, illustrators, and lecturers) of Dantean knowledge** across a broad chronological and geographical spectrum. We invite proposals that seek to write back women's experiences into the history of **Dante's global reception**, exploring their role as

- historical readers of Dante (1300s-present)
- historical agents of reception (1300s-present):
 - creative rewritings (poetry, novel, children's short stories); re-imaginings and adaptations across media (visual art, theatre, film, new media)
 - Critical and scholarly responses (biographies, handbooks and companions, critical editions, studies)
 - Linguistic mediation: translations
- book collectors: public and private library collections across the globe.
- pedagogy and scholarship: teaching Dante within and beyond academic contexts
- patronage of cultural institutions

The organizers also welcome papers discussing:

- Feminist approaches to Dante studies
- Dante's historical women (Gemma, Beatrice, Antonia)

- The representation of women as readers, interpreters and mediators within Dante's oeuvre.

Papers can be delivered in English and Italian. Please send an abstract (approximately 250 words) and a short bio (100 words) to modernbeatrices@gmail.com. The deadline for submissions is **27th May 2024**. Notification of acceptance by **10^h June 2024**.