

Dante, the Divine Comedy, and the Middle Ages

Resource Guide

Manuscripts and Early Printed Editions
of Dante's works, and other important medieval texts;
in the Sheridan Libraries

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[Quotes are from *The Dante Encyclopedia*. Garland Publishing, 2000]

Facsimiles of Manuscript of the Divine Comedy

Dante estense : MS R.4.8 (Ital. 474) commentario di Ernesto Milano.

From the Biblioteca Estense di Modena. 2 volumes. Commentary volume contains a complete transcription of the text and discussion of the illuminations and images in the manuscript. One of the most important manuscripts of this great work, produced around 1380-90— no more than 60-70 years after Dante's death. One of the very few existing codices of the *Commedia* that is completely illuminated.

Eisenhower Special Collections : PQ 4301.A1 1995 FOLIO

Il Codice trivulziano della Divina commedia MS 1080

One of the few manuscripts that is not of anonymous origin: it is precisely dated (1337 - 16 years after Dante's death) and signed (by Francesco di ser Nardo da Barberino of Florence) in the colophon. Named for the Princess Trivulzio of Milan, in whose possession it had been during the 19th century. Includes commentaries by Jacopo di Dante and Buscone di Gubbio.

Eisenhower Special Collections : PG 1301 .A1 T8 1337f FC

Dantes Divina commedia with illustrations by Botticelli

Facsimile of Codex reg. lat. 1896, Biblioteca apostolica vaticana; and Codex. Ham. Text of the ms. in Italian; the commentary, by Peter Dreyer, in German.

Eisenhower Special Collections : PG 1301 .A1 R4 1986 FLAT FOLIO

Il Dante urbinata della Biblioteca vaticana

Biblioteca apostolica vaticana. MS Urb. lat. 365) 15th century manuscript (c. 1478) with 3 full-page miniatures and 110 large framed miniatures. Commissioned by the Duke of Urbino (Federigo da Montefeltro), executed by Guglielmo Giralaldi of Ferrara; the illuminator was influenced by Piero della Francesca. Commentary by M. Tocci, L. Petrocchi, & G. Salmi.

Eisenhower Special Collections : PG 1301.A1U7 1965 FC

Early printed editions of the Divine Comedy

La commedia.

Venice : Vindelinus de Spira, 1477.

This 1st Venetian edition was also the 1st to be printed with a commentary. In this case, the commentator is Jacopo della Lana (ca. 1278–ca. 1358), a contemporary of Dante. Della Lana wrote his commentary sometime after Dante's death, but before 1328. It is considered among the best of the early criticisms along with those of Benvenuto da Imola, Guido da Pisa, and two of Dante's three sons, Jacopo and Pietro. In this edition, however, the colophon incorrectly attributes the commentary to Benvenuto da Imola, perhaps to increase sales through name recognition (cf. Cachey, et al.). Includes Boccaccio's *Vita di Dante* and, at end, verses by Busone da Gobbio and by Jacopo Alighieri, and the *Credo* falsely attributed to Dante.

Garrett Library Manuscripts : Incun. 1477 .D34

La commedia.

Venice, Matteo Capcasa, 29 Nov. 1493.

With the commentary of Cristoforo Landino. Register is missing; bound in vellum with leaves from an old manuscript as lining papers. Text very close to the 1491 edition (Benalius and Capcasa).

Garrett Library Manuscripts : Incun. 1493 .D3

Opere del divino poeta Dante con suoi comenti : recorrecti et con ogne diligentia nouamente in littera cursiua impresse...

Venice : Bernardino Stagnino da Trino de Monferra, [24 Nov.] 1512.

Cristoforo Landino's commentary as edited by Pietro da Figino appears alongside Pietro Bembo's text. Also includes the *Credo*, *Pater Nostro*, and *Ave Maria* only.

Garrett Library - Library Room : PG 1300 .A3 L3 1512

La comedia di Dante Alighieri con la nova esposizione di Alessandro Vellutello

Venice : Francesco Marcolini. 1544

Only 4 editions of the Commedia were printed between 1530 and 1550. This one contained a new commentary by Alessandro Vellutello, who criticized Bembo's text and used "different and older ones, those which are recognized as being less corrupt than all the others." His commentary concentrated on exegesis of the text, rather than its historical and philosophical background. He included a life of Dante and several new diagrams of *Inferno*.

Eisenhower Special Collections: PG 1302. B44

La Divina comedia di Dante, di nuovo alla sua vera letione ridotta con lo aiuto di molti antichissimi esemplari.

Venice : G. Giolito de Ferrari et fratelli, 1555.

The first time the adjective "divina" was added to the title. Edited by Lodovico Dolce, who revised the text using "very many ancient copies", and who claimed to have used a copy of the poem belonging to Dante's son. He devised an alternative to the traditional Landino and Vellutello commentaries, and used the margin space for short explanatory notes. He also included 2 indexes (words and subjects).

Eisenhower Special Collections: PG 1302 .Z3 D6

Divina commedia.

Venice : Pietro da Fino, 1568.

Facsimile (you can check it out) of the 1568 printed edition, with commentary of Bernardino Daniello da Lucca.

D Level : PG 1302 .B68f

Divina commedia.

Lyon : G. Rouillio, 1571.

Reprint of the 1551 Lyon edition. Annotations by Alessandro Vellutello.

Garrett Library – New Library: PQ 4302 .B71

Dante con l'espositioni di Christoforo Landino, et d'Alessandro Vellutello, sopra la sua comedia dell'Inferno, del Purgatorio, & del Paradiso. Con tauole, argomenti, & allegorie; & riformato, riveduto, & ridotto alla sua vera lettura, per Francesco Sansovino fiorentino.

Venice : Gio. Battista, & Gio. Bernardo Sessa, fratelli, 1596.

A 3rd printing of a 1564 edition by the Sessa family. Combined the editorial traditions of an earlier period with those of mid 16th century. Folio format, text based on Bembo, surrounded by 2 commentaries of Landino and Vellutello, with the woodcuts of Vellutello's ed. of 1544 (see above). The text which follows the Aldine ed. of 1502 with a more modern orthography, is printed in italics, and is surrounded by the commentary in double columns, printed in Roman letters.

Eisenhower Special Collections: PG 1302 .B96 R

The vision of Purgatory and Paradise. by Dante Alighieri. (translated by Henry Francis Cary and illustrated by Gustave Doré).

London ; New York : Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, [1868?]

Garrett Library - New Library: PQ 4315.13 .C3 1868 FOLIO

The Inferno from la Divina commedia of Dante Alighieri as translated by the Reverend Henry Francis Cary and illustrated with the seven engravings of William Blake.
New York : Richard W. Ellis for Cheshire house, 1931.

Eisenhower Special Collections : 851 D1926 I.C2B FOLIO

Related medieval manuscripts

Peter Lombard's Sentences. (Petrus Lombardus libri IV Sententiarum). Written on vellum, with the original wooden boards. The *Sentences* was the main textbook of the late Middle Ages. Inspired by Abelard's work *Sic et non*, and Peter Lombard compiled his work in Paris in the 12th century, a thematic collection of excerpts from existing theological works, covering the whole of Christian doctrine. Book 1 treats the Trinity and divine essence; Book 2 the Creation and Fall; Book 3 the Incarnation, Redemption, and the virtues of Christ and Christians; Book 4 the sacraments and eschatology. Lombard attempts to reconcile conflicting authorities using dialectics.

He is placed by Dante in Paradise, among other intellectually and spiritually enlightened figures, in the sphere of the Sun (Par. 10. 106-108).

Eisenhower Special Collections: MSB 19

Eclogues of Vergil. 14th century.

Partial text of the Eclogues. Heavily glossed manuscript, on paper. A nice, grubby working manuscript.

Virgil of course was Dante's guide through 2/3 of the *Commedia*, and his writings are quoted there more frequently than any other source other than the Bible and Aristotle. "Whatever Virgil meant for Dante, it was the fact that he was a poet that seems to have meant the most." Virgil resided in Limbo.

Eisenhower Special Collections: MSB 16

Vergilius Romanus. Virgil. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (Vatican Library). *Facsimile*
Virgil's *Eclogues* is one of the finest manuscript books from classical Antiquity. The text is written in rustic capitals, with the precision of a stonecutter, and the illustrations are large and colorful. The manuscript has suffered over the centuries though, its parchment has deteriorated and many of its original illustrations are probably lost. This facsimile faithfully reproduces the state of the parchment, showing how the ink sometimes flaked off the flesh side (smooth) of the skin, how it also bled, and sometimes ate through the parchment.

Eisenhower Special Collections: PC 1801 .A2 1985 QUARTO

De officiis. Cicero. 1471.

Includes 3 books of Cicero: *Orationes in Catilinam*, *De Officiis*, and *Somnium Scipionis*.

Manuscript bound in morocco leather. Written in a humanist script, on paper. Each book has a separate, dated colophon. Some decorated initials, rubrication.

Dante placed Cicero in Limbo (Inferno 4) among the great philosophers and writers of Antiquity. "He credits Cicero's *De amicitia*, along with Boethius's *De consolatio philosophiae*, with having spurred his passion for philosophy after Beatrice's death."

Eisenhower Special Collections: MSB 3

Decameron.

A manuscript believed to be in Boccaccio's hand. (facsimile). Dante's "first great promoter and apologist. Except for Dante's 2 sons, no one in the 14th century knew the poet's works more extensively or thoroughly than Boccaccio. No writer was ever more influenced by Dante, and none ...did more to establish the poet's reputation. Boccaccio saved works of Dante that would otherwise have been lost, and he preserved crucial details of Dante's life and thought"

Eisenhower Special Collections: PG 1267 .A1 H33 1975 FLAT FOLIO

Treatise on the Sacraments, in Italian (Siena). Maestro Ugo (Hugh of St. Victor), July 10 – October 11, 1442.

Hugh's masterpiece, and the first complete theological work ("a summa of Christian theology") of the 12th century schools. His other important work was the encyclopedic *Didascalicon*. Dante places him in Paradise, in the Heaven of the Sun.

Written on paper, with original boards covered in leather, with brass bosses and clasps. A very nice example of an ordinary manuscript, the kind that rarely survives.

Eisenhower Special Collections: MSB 23

Book of cosmology (Liber de macrocosmo). Marcus Trivisano. Italy, late 14th century.

Presumably a unique manuscript, although it may have been copied from the author's draft, which no longer exists. The text examines various questions concerning the creation of the earth and its existence in time.

Book One: the question of number is introduced (One), and the nature of the continuum.

Book Two: is the continuum infinitely divisible or not. This book is a useful demonstration of the kind of arguments that were used in the c14 to prove physical and metaphysical theorems.

Book Three: has the world always existed, or did it have a beginning in time?

Book Four: the age of the world and the time of the year it was created.

Books Five and Six: an *Hexaemeron* (the 6 days of Creation, after the creation of heaven and earth) in the form of a vision.

Written on vellum, with decorated borders, and very nice illuminations, including an author portrait on the 2nd leaf. Evidence of possible theft (scissored out piece of 1st page). Bound in 18th century calf gilt.

Dante's *Commedia* was itself a kind of cosmology, where he articulates an architecture and history of the heavens and hell. "Dante's universe, beyond its fundamental indebtedness to Aristotelian and Ptolemaic thought, reflects in its general form medieval conceptions on the order of the cosmos advanced by St. Augustine."

Eisenhower Special Collections: MSB 17A

Related Early Printed Books

Consolation of Philosophy. Boethius.

Printed in Strasbourg in 1491, by Johann Pruss. One of the most popular and most translated books of the Middle Ages. Boethius aspired to fuse the doctrines of the Church with Aristotelianism. His projected Latin translation of Plato and Aristotle was thwarted by his execution for treason in 524. The Consolation was a standard textbook in medieval schools, and was also popular among laymen.

"Dante places Boethius in the Heaven of the Sun...It is generally thought that he must have felt a special closeness to Boethius, both as a fellow victim of false accusations and political corruption and as an inspiration to turn embittering events of his own life toward a great and positive goal."

Garrett Library: Incun. 1492 .B6

Saint Augustine. De trinitate and The city of God.

Augustine of Hippo was one of the 4 major Latin Fathers of the Church (Jerome, Ambrose and Gregory the Great were the other 3). Throughout the Middle Ages, Augustine was the preeminent authority on biblical exegesis, the Trinity, grace, and predestination. His works appear in all medieval library catalogues.

Mentioned only in passing in the Paradiso, "nonetheless, the *Commedia* is inconceivable apart from Augustine's thought." Augustine's account of his conversion in his *Confessions*, "where a writer looks back on his earlier self across the divide of a life-changing experience and recounts the painful journey between then and now precisely to bear witness to the goodness he discovered" served as a model for Dante's work.

Eisenhower Special Collections: Incun. 1489 .A8

Platonis. Opera

Ficino's translation of Plato's works. The majority of Plato's writings were not known in the early Middle Ages, but a few of his works had a great impact on medieval scholarship and theology, especially the *Timaeus*. Plato was reconciled to Christianity by positing that a knowledge of creation (the material world) will lead to a knowledge of the mind of the Creator (God). It was Ficino's work (translations and commentaries of Plato's works), built upon centuries of medieval thought and learning, that transmitted Plato and platonism to the modern world.

Dante places Plato in Limbo, (Inferno 4), where he is ranked below Aristotle.

Eisenhower Special Collections: PB 2280 .A4 F4

Aristotle. Opera. With the commentary of Averroes, 5 volumes in 2. The translation of the text which is in numbered sections is the "new" translation from the Arabic; the unnumbered is directly from the Greek. The works on logic are the translation by Boethius; the *Ethica*, *Politica* and *Economica* are translated by Leonard de Arezzo and also include his commentary.

Only a small number of Aristotle's works were known in the early Middle Ages. Their "rediscovery during the 100 years preceding Dante's birth was one of the major landmarks in the intellectual history of western Europe." By the 12th and 13th centuries, his works reached Western Europe in significant numbers and were enormously influential, and controversial, in the early universities.

Dante puts Aristotle in Limbo, among the "great spirits". His works greatly influenced Dante.

Garrett Library: Incun. 1489 .A7,

Opera Graece. The celebrated Aldine *editio princeps* (1st printed edition) of Aristotle in Greek. 5 volumes in 6.

Garrett Library: Incun. 1495 .A7

St. Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas was one of the most important medieval theologians, of particular importance for his careful, subtle, and precise treatment of faith and reason, his effort to show that philosophy and theology were compatible with each other. Receptive to pagan thought, he showed that natural reason could cast light on revealed truths.

Dante also placed him in Paradise 10, sphere of the Sun.

Quodlibeta (“Various Subjects”) *Garrett Library: Incun. 1473 .T5*

Super quarto libro Sententiarum (“On the 4 Books of the Sentences”: See Peter Lombard above)

George Peabody Library: Rare Book Room Incun. 1481 .T150 Quarto

Commentaria in omnes epistolas Sancti Pauli (“Commentary on the Letters of St. Paul”)

George Peabody Library: Rare Book Room Incun. 1498 .T212

De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii. The marriage of Philology and Mercury. Martianus Capella’s textbook of the early Middle Ages. A compendium of classical mythology and the 7 liberal arts – the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, logic), and the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy). “Central to Dante’s understanding of the trivium and the quadrivium were their structural and symbolic correspondences with the world.”

Garrett Library: Incun. 1499 .M3

Artifacts and specialized teaching resources

Specimens of Parchment. A portfolio with 9 specimens of different parchments.

Eisenhower Special Collections: TS 1165 .R41 1976 QUARTO

Full parchment sheet

A full skin, uncut but prepared for writing.

Eisenhower Special Collections, Teaching Collection MS 479

Late Carolingian vellum manuscript leaf

from a Homiliary in Latin, later used as a book binding (Italy, Tuscany, ca. 1125).

MSB 85

Bible leaves

1. Ecclesiastes. Paris, 1250. (small format “Paris Bible”)

Bibles that appeared c. 1230, arranged in an identical order, resembling modern Bibles; with a nearly standard set of 64 prologues. Generally of a small format, a single volume, and possibly made for use in classrooms and for preaching. Small, thin parchment leaf, with some rubrication, many abbreviations.

2. Leaf of a large glossed Bible (2).

With *Glossa ordinaria*: by the German Walafrid Strabo (died 849), had some knowledge of Greek and made extracts chiefly from the Latin Fathers and from the writings of his master, Rabanus Maurus, for the purpose of illustrating the various senses of all the books of the Bible. This gloss is quoted as a high authority by St. Thomas Aquinas, Until the seventeenth century it remained the favorite commentary on the Bible; and it was only gradually superseded by more independent works of exegesis.

Showing many phases of manuscript production: pricking, ruling, different scripts, marginal and interlinear glosses, rubrication.

Eisenhower Special Collections, Teaching Collection MS 479

Ars minor. Donatus. A fragment of a Donatus grammar, from the binding of a later book, probably printed by Gutenberg, around 1455.

Garrett Library: Incun. X .D6

West-European incunabula: 60 original leaves from the presses of the Netherlands, France, Iberia and Great Britain. text by Konrad Haebler. Individual leaves of early printed books, mounted.

George Peabody Library, Rare book Room: 093 H133W FOLIO

Loose **individual leaves of 15th and 16th century printed books**

Eisenhower Special Collections, Teaching Collection MS 479

Books in Sheets:

Octavo: Prima elementa historiæ urbis. (1763). Augustæ Vindelicorum, In uncut octavo sheets that illustrate how books first take shape off the printing press.

Eisenhower Special Collections : DD 901 .A92 P95

Folio: Ordonnance concernant la censure & police des livres. (1768). Full sheet of handmade laid paper, showing deckle edge, watermark (no countermark), and vatman's tears.

Eisenhower Special Collections : Z 658. H3 H3 1768 QUARTO

Duocecimo: Actus Interni (1691). Franciscus Josephus Busmanshausen. In uncut sheets folded once for storage. *Eisenhower Special Collections : Folio BX 2160 .A2 F73 1691*

Woodblocks.

Examples of how most printed book illustrations were made in the 15th century:

- Original pear wood block of a Chameleon Plant, used to illustrate Pier Andrea Mattioli's celebrated 1562 herbal.

- 17th century woodblock (abbot blessing boy).

Eisenhower Special Collections, with teaching materials

Type and Composing Sticks / Galley tray and Furniture

Artifacts from hand-press printing, illustrating how books were printed in the 15th century.

Eisenhower Special Collections, Teaching Collection MS 479

Handmade Paper: facsimile sheets of handmade paper that demonstrate the various book formats (folio, quarto, octavo)

Eisenhower Special Collections, Teaching Collection MS 479

Selected bibliography of secondary materials

(all call numbers on D Level, unless otherwise indicated)

The Dante Encyclopedia.

General Reference: PQ 4333 .D36 2000

Enciclopedia dantesca, 6 volumes:

PG 1333 .E5 1970 Quarto

The Cambridge Companion to Dante.

PQ 4335 .C36 2007

Companion to the Divine Comedy. Charles Grandgent.

PG 1464 .G7 1975

Concordanza della Commedia di Dante Alighieri, 3 volumes.

PG 1464 .L67 1975

A dictionary of proper names and notable matters in the works of Dante. by Paget Toynbee:

PG 1333 .T68 1968

Illuminated manuscripts of the Divine comedy. Peter Brieger, Millard Meiss, and Charles S. Singleton.

PG 1366 .B7 1969 QUARTO

Dictionary of the Middle Ages: an excellent background source. With a good article on "Dante"

General Reference: D 114 .D51 1982

Writers and readers in medieval Italy: studies in the history of written culture. Armando Petrucci.

P 211.3 .I8 P4913 1995

Print culture in Renaissance Italy. Brian Richardson.

Z 155 .R53 1994

Medieval foundations of the western intellectual tradition, 400-1400. Marcia Colish

CB 351 .C54 1997

The mind of the Middle Ages, A.D. 200-1500 : an historical survey. Frederick B. Artz.

CB 351 .A7 1980

The idea of the book in the Middle Ages. Jesse Gellrich

Z 6 .G441 1985

Leaves of gold: an exhibition catalogue of illuminated manuscripts from Philadelphia collections, with very good, short essays on manuscript production. Ed. James R. Tanis.

ND 3125 .L43 2001 quarto

The intellectual climate of the Early University. Ed. Nancy Van Deusen.

CB 351 .S83 1997

The intellectual life of Western Europe in the Middle Ages. Richard Dales.

CB 351 .D271 1992

Scribes and scholars: a guide to the transmission of Greek and Latin literature. L.D. Reynolds.

PA 47 .R5 1991

Relevant Electronic Resources and Web sites

Dartmouth Dante Project

A major resource, containing the full text of "La Commedia" & commentaries by 47 authors, from 14th to 20th century commentaries.

Web database: Available from the Libraries home page under "Search a Database"

Princeton Dante Project

Includes: the Petrocchi text of the poem
New verse translation of the poem
Texts of all the Minor Works (with Translation)
Recitation of the poem in Italian
Historical and Interpretive Notes
Links to Dante sites all over the world

<http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/index.html>

The World of Dante

from the University of Virginia. A hypermedia environment for the study of the Inferno.

<http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/dante/>

Dante Studies

A rich Web site. Use the various drop-down menus to navigate.

http://www.lieberknecht.de/dante/welc_fr.html

Digital Dante

from Columbia University, another multi-media Web site.

<http://dante.ilt.columbia.edu/new/>

Dante pc talk : la lettura interrattiva de La divina commedia

Includes entire text of La divina commedia, along with notes and comments, sound clips of actors reading various passages, and illustrations.

A Level : COMP FILE 1135

I commenti danteschi dei secoli XIV, XV e XVI

All the criticism on the Divina Commedia, from Jacopo Alighieri to Castelvetro and Tasso. The complete works of Dante, in Latin and in the vernacular, are also included. The 30 commentaries are a compilation of all critiques systematically carried out between the 14th and 16th centuries. In the cases of Landino and Vellutello this is the first edition made after 16th century.

A Level : COMP FILE 2991

The ORB : Online Reference Book for Medieval Studies.

<http://the-orb.net/>

The Labyrinth, resources for medieval studies. Georgetown University
<http://labyrinth.georgetown.edu/>

Internet Medieval Sourcebook
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html>

Medieval Manuscript Manual, a very valuable, in-depth resource for the study of manuscripts. Includes sections on materials and techniques, patronage, typology of the medieval book, and glossary.
<http://www.ceu.hu/medstud/manual/MMM/home.html>

DScriptorium : devoted to collecting, storing and distributing digital images of Medieval manuscripts.
<http://www.byu.edu/~hurlbut/dSCRIPTORIUM/>

New Catholic Encyclopedia: a very good source for background information on authors of the Middle Ages.
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/>

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