



2021

Seven Hundred Years After Dante's Death. The Imperishable Image Of An Eternal Poet

Matteo Maselli

University of Macerata, mattmas91@yahoo.it

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.upenn.edu/bibdant>



Part of the [Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque Art and Architecture Commons](#), [Italian Language and Literature Commons](#), and the [Medieval History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Maselli, Matteo (2021) "Seven Hundred Years After Dante's Death. The Imperishable Image Of An Eternal Poet," *Bibliotheca Dantesca: Journal of Dante Studies*: Vol. 4 , Article 10.

Available at: <https://repository.upenn.edu/bibdant/vol4/iss1/10>

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. <https://repository.upenn.edu/bibdant/vol4/iss1/10>
For more information, please contact repository@pobox.upenn.edu.

REPORT

SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS AFTER DANTE'S DEATH. THE IMPERISHABLE IMAGE OF AN ETERNAL POET

MATTEO MASELLI, University of Macerata

This report provides a summary of the main initiatives that took place in 2021 to celebrate the seventh centenary of Dante's death (publications, conferences, exhibitions, events of various kinds). The plurality of the episodes recorded demonstrates how the attention paid to Dante is not an exclusive trait of the higher spheres of culture, but is instead well rooted even in non-academic contexts.

Keywords: Dante Alighieri, *Divina Commedia*, *Inferno*, Dante's anniversary

1. *The form of the centenary*

An awareness that 2021 has been a year specifically dedicated to Dante is shared not only by those who have a daily working relationship with him, but also by those who are not systematically devoted to the study of his works. In fact, the celebrations for the seven-hundredth anniversary of the poet's death have dictated the rhythm of the work of both cultural institutions, which have organized elaborate programs of events, and of private citizens who, without an academic affiliation, have either independently or in groups paid homage to the author of the *Commedia*. The «popular» configuration,¹ or with a better-known abbreviation, the «pop» nature² of the celebratory framework of Dante's anniversary would seem obvious. However, this is a trait that deserves to be underlined. If one had to indicate a characteristic that has defined above

¹ See at least Lino Pertile, *Dante Popolare* (Ravenna: Longo, 2021).

² This term can be applied beyond the obvious consumerist meaning, which nevertheless was amply reflected in Dante's anniversary celebrations. From ice creams to wine, to luxury fountain pens, more than one sector, obviously far from the figure of the poet, has been able to profit from the media attention that has been attributed to him in these months (see <https://forbes.it/2021/05/02/come-il-lusso-festeggia-il-sommo-poeta-dante-alighieri-a-700-anni-dalla-sua-morte/>).

all others the various initiatives, it is their globality³. This characteristic represents a change of tone for cultural experience more broadly, reflecting an inclination towards inclusivism that has opened up elements of high culture, once confined to select few, to a mass audience. Seen from this perspective, the schedule of events held during this year clearly differs from the intentions on which the ceremonies of 1921 and 1965 were based.

When a century ago the commemoration of the sixth centenary of Dante's death was held, it was common practice to praise his patriotic merits as a «grande figura [...] [che] si leva come simbolo d'italianità nell'espressione, nel costume e nella cultura»⁴ and Dante himself as a man who, without equal, fulfilled an important civilizing mission:

L'Italia ha sentito che nessuno la rappresenta così degnamente nel mondo come Dante, nessuno accoglie ed armonizza in sé medesimo i caratteri e le qualità della gente latina come questo povero mendico, che avrebbe fornito un convito di sapienza e di bellezza a tutti i popoli civili.⁵

Indeed, as early as 1921, one could already catch a glimpse of the themes that, little more than forty years later, marked the tone of the 1965 anniversary. One can read, for example, *Il sesto centenario dantesco e il carattere della poesia di Dante*, the speech that Benedetto Croce gave in Ravenna on September 14, 1920, inaugurating as Minister of Education the year of the sixth centenary of Dante's death:

E come a poeta noi dobbiamo accostarci a lui [a Dante], come poeta riceverlo nella nostra anima, come poeta farlo vivere in noi e trarre da lui vitale nutrimento. La poesia è un elemento necessario della vita umana, perché è necessità spirituale metterci di volta in volta di sopra delle lotte pratiche, o dal dominio del pensiero logico tornare a rinfrescarci nella visione immediata e ingenua del mondo, che ci è data solo dalla poesia.⁶

³ A reflection of this kind was also illustrated by Natascia Tonelli in the panel entitled «Dante nell'anno del settimo centenario» held on September 15, 2021 at the *Congresso Internazionale Dantesco Alma Dante 2021*.

⁴ F. E., «Il sesto centenario della morte di Dante,» *Rivista Internazionale di Scienze Sociali e Discipline Ausiliarie* 91, no. 345 (1921): 3.

⁵ Mariano Cordovani, «Il centenario dantesco e il rinnovamento etico», *Rivista Internazionale di Scienze Sociali e Discipline Ausiliarie* 91, no. 347 (1921): 15.

⁶ Benedetto Croce, «Il sesto centenario dantesco e il carattere della poesia di Dante,» in *La poesia di Dante*, ed. G. Inglese (Naples: Bibliopolis, 2021), 233.

Croce's speech was based on the theses articulated more systematically in his *La poesia di Dante* (1921). However, the intentions of his speech already denote how the attention previously paid to the homeland (as reflected in Dante) was shifting towards a focus on the language he used and, above all, to the most striking results of its use. In fact, the figure of Dante as a poet came to monopolize the well-known encomiastic speeches held in 1965, the year in which the seventh centenary of the author's birth took place. Worthy of note is Eugenio Montale pronouncement on April 24, 1965 as the closure of the *Congresso Internazionale di Studi Danteschi* held in Florence:

Esempio massimo di oggettivismo e razionalismo poetico, egli [Dante] resta estraneo ai nostri tempi, a una civiltà soggettivista e fondamentale-mente irrazionale perché pone i suoi significati nei fatti e non nelle idee. [...] Perciò la *Commedia* è e resterà l'ultimo miracolo della poesia mondiale. [...] Che la vera poesia abbia sempre il carattere di un dono e che pertanto essa presupponga la dignità di chi lo riceve, questo è forse il maggior insegnamento che Dante ci abbia lasciato. [...] E se è vero ch'egli volle essere poeta e nient'altro che poeta, resta quasi inspiegabile alla nostra moderna cecità il fatto che quanto più il suo mondo si allontana da noi, di tanto si accresce la nostra volontà di conoscerlo e di farlo conoscere a chi è più cieco di noi.⁷

In metaphorical contrast with Montale's «blindness», 2021 witnessed an explicit intention among event and other celebration organizers to correct precisely those assumptions that made Dante «foreign to our times» and thus encourage a more progressive approach towards his legacy that could appeal an ever larger section of the Italian and foreign population. Hence, in 2021 the global significance of Dante has been expressed through a staggering number of projects, initiatives, exhibitions, and publications, and in which large cities and small towns in Italy – but also other nations – have worked in synergy to remember Dante, arguably the most important poet in the history of humanity. Therefore, without attempting exhaustiveness, I will illustrate below some of the major Dantean events of 2021, which can be analyzed with reference to: educational opportunities, their capacity of participation, and their

⁷ Eugenio Montale, *Atti del Congresso internazionale di Studi Danteschi (20-27 aprile 1965)*, 2 vols., 2 (Florence: Sansoni, 1966), 330-33.

originality.⁸ For the reader's convenience, I have decided to proceed by thematic macro-areas.⁹

2. *Publications*

The fact that 2021 is to be considered a fruitful year for Dante Studies is readily apparent by the quantity and quality of the publications released in recent months, with particular attention being paid to commentary and philological works dedicated to the *Commedia*. The centennial years of 1921 and 1965 too witnessed the release of the edition of the *Opere* of Dante edited by Michele Barbi and his collaborators for the Società Dantesca Italiana and Giorgio Petrocchi began working on the *Commedia* edition «secondo l'antica vulgata» (1966-67). The year 2021 has not failed to live up to these expectations, continuing the process of exegetical and philological renewal in Dante Studies.¹⁰

Adopting Petrocchi's text as a model of reference, Enrico Malato has begun a minute and accurate rereading of the *Commedia*, making suggestions that are absent in the ancient commentators and not recovered by the modern ones. By virtue of this, he arrived not only at a more complex articulation of the commentary of the poem's text, but also at a functional interconnection between *interpretatio* and *constitutio textus*. Malato's efforts have been translated into tome I, volume VI of the NECOD (*Nuova Edizione Commentata delle Opere di Dante*) containing the first 17 cantos of the *Inferno*, published by Salerno Editrice on September 9. The results achieved by the editor are immediately announced as of great impact as it seems that they can offer «un'immagine nuova del poema e del messaggio che questo intende trasmettere, aprendo una prospettiva inedita agli studi danteschi e ai suoi possibili sviluppi».¹¹

Due to a pleasant coincidence of dates, also on September 9, 2021 Paolo Trovato and his team of philologists of the University of Ferrara presented in the Sala dell'Arengo of Ferrara's Town Hall the new critical edition of the *Inferno*, a promising work of Neo-

⁸ An in-depth overview can be found at the following link: <https://dantesettecento.beniculturali.it/>.

⁹ It should be noted that this contribution was written in September 2021. All events mentioned in it are therefore up-to-date at that time.

¹⁰ I believe that the mention of these pivotal disciplinary fields for Dante is the ideal occasion to remember the exemplary figures who have actively contributed to their development but who could not play a leading role in this year's celebrations because they have sadly passed away. With great respect and as a sign of recognition I remember here the names of Andrea Battistini, Emilio Pasquini, Marco Santagata, Robert Hollander, John Freccero.

¹¹ Enrico Malato, *Introduzione alla Divina Commedia* (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2020), 25.

Lachmanism philological reconstruction begun in 2007. Trovato's working group analytically sifted and expertly compared 580 non-fragmentary manuscripts of the *Commedia* out of a sample of 630 verses in order to restore most objectively the author's final intention. Given the amount of documentation consulted, the precise methodological introduction, that is printed in a separate volume accompanying that of the first cantica of the *Commedia*, is fully justified if not necessarily required. Like Malato's critical findings, Trovato's philological ones are no less innovative. For example, it is shown that the codices of Emilia-Romagna and especially those of Bologna are more important than those of Florence as the closest witnesses to the lost original.¹²

Another initiative of philological revision belongs to the Società Dantesca Italiana and specifically to Giorgio Inglese. Contrary to the wide range of manuscripts considered by Trovato and his collaborators, Inglese has selected a chosen sample of codices from which to conduct his reconstructive study: a codex of an unspecified Forese of 1330-1331, known from the Martini *collatio* and ms. *Trivulziano* 1080, the Tuscan-Florentine Vulgate (with particular interest in *Egerton* 943, *Landiano* 190 and *Parmense* 3285) and parallel to it the *Ashburnham* 828 and finally a branch of the Emilia-Romagna Vulgate, of which *Urbinate Latino* 366 is the core. Among these manuscripts, Inglese has also elected the *Trivulziano* 1080 as the linguistic model for his edition, the publication of which is planned with the publishing house Le Lettere for October 2021.

One area of Dante criticism that has particularly benefited from this year's celebratory ferment has been that of biographies. In addition to the editorial case of Alessandro Barbero's *Dante* (Laterza), new proposals to reorganize the biographical profile of Dante have been attempted by Paolo Pellegrini (*Dante Alighieri. Una vita*, Einaudi), by John Took¹³, and especially by Elisa Brillì and Giuliano Milani with *Vite nuove. Biografia e autobiografia di Dante* (Carocci). This last work is noteworthy for its particular research methodology, as the authors have tried to encourage a syncretism between archival research and exploration the biographical

¹² Regarding findings of some importance, in March 2021, a few days before the second *Dantedì*, news circulated feverishly of the discovery of some Dante parchments of the mid-fourteenth century at the Collegio Ghisleri in Pavia (see https://milano.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/21_marzo_21/scoperta-pergamene-divina-commedia-sono-le-piu-antiche-mai-rinvenute-b1d94620-89b5-11eb-8483-12afb3b5bb7e.shtml).

¹³ Although his *Dante* (Princeton University Press) is from 2020, it has been translated into Italian with the title *Dante. Amore, essere, intelletto* by Donzelli in 2021.

suggestions that Dante's own works provide, thus contributing to the construction of a personal history of the poet that proceeds in parallel with the intertextual one.

Excluding the commentary of the *Commedia* by Roberto Mercuri for Einaudi, which will appear in the wake of the aforementioned works, there are many texts that are not subject to precise cataloguing, but which nevertheless deserve to be noted as evidence of the lively fervor of international *dantistica*: the impressive *Oxford Handbook of Dante* edited by Manuele Gragnolati and Elena Lombardi; the 34 *Lecturae Dantis* organized by the University of Basel and Notre Dante for Dante's centenary held between 2019 and 2021 by leading dantisti and collected in *Voci sull'Inferno di Dante. Una nuova lettura della prima cantica* (Carocci) edited by Zygmunt G. Baranski and Maria Antonietta Terzoli; the first volume of the *Atalante dei luoghi di Dante (I luoghi dell'ultimo esilio di Dante)* by the Olschki publishing house on which, among others, Alberto Manguel, Nicola Smerilli and Luca Fiorentini have worked; or, again by the initiative of the Società Dantesca Italiana, the publication of all Dante's works with parallel English translation (publisher Leonardo Libri).

Lastly, not counting monographs of established scientific journals, conference proceedings, or reprints of great classics, there is also mention of valuable products designed for a more limited audience, given their cost and manufacture. Among the institutions of high culture that have been at the forefront in promoting original works aimed primarily at book collectors, Treccani stands out, dedicating two limited edition volumes to Dante. The first, *La Commedia di Dante nello specchio delle immagini*, is edited by Lina Bolzoni and offers a rich collection of illustrations that reinterpret the content of the *Commedia*. The second, *Il Dante svelato dei Girolamini*, is instead a reproduction of the manuscript *CF 2 16* (otherwise known as the *Codice Filippino*), and is testimony to the diffusion of Dante's cult in the Neapolitan area. A similar product comes from the publishing house Imago, which has recreated with a remarkable similarity to the original the *Palatino 313*, the oldest copy of the *Commedia miniata* available, and which contains the autograph commentary of Jacopo Alighieri. Similarly, Panini of Modena has printed 590 copies of the *Urbinate Latino 365*, while the Gazzetta di Parma Editore has proposed for the first time in volume the *Commedia* published in Parma by Gianbattista Bodoni in 1796.

3. *Conferences*

Alongside meetings conceived as moments of reflection in which specialists were able to recapitulate the objectives of the projects they worked on and expound the methodological procedures they followed, there were also conferences with a less academic slant.

In the first scope, for example, there was the event held on September 8 and 9 at the Casa di Dante in Rome in collaboration with the Centro Pio Rajna. During this event, the commemorative contribution of the Dantean cities of Florence, Verona and Ravenna and a series of *lectiones magistrales* were presented. Equally ascribable to the above-mentioned scope are the two days of April 28 and 29 chosen by the Associazione degli Italianisti (ADI)¹⁴ for the International Conference *Dante e altri classici. Da Petrarca a Soyinca*, an initiative that preceded by about a month the important conference in Verona «*Con altra voce omai, con altro vello*». *Dante fra antico e moderno*, organized by the University of Verona in collaboration with the Scuola Normale of Pisa, the Catholic University of Milan, Columbia University, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven and the University of Notre Dame. During the conferences held in Verona from May 16 to 21, there was an opportunity to discuss the reception of the *Commedia* and the impact it had in Dante's time through first-hand evidence obtained from library, chronicle and juridical finds, as well as to take stock of the history of Dante's criticism and to envisage new forms of future investigation.

In terms of the number of speakers involved – about 200 articulated in monothematic panels covering an extensive range of Dantean issues – the *Congresso Internazionale Alma Dante 2021* (University of Bologna) held in Ravenna from September 15 to 18 proved to be a first-rate opportunity for a dynamic comparison between young Dante scholars and internationally recognized experts.

Aimed instead at the broad audience of Dantean enthusiasts was the project *Nel nome di Dante*, which also originated with the Associazione degli Italianisti and was carried out by the Gruppo Dante founded in 2015. The event, inaugurated on May 3 in Naples and concluded on July 5 in Rome, actively involved 26 Italian cities with a cycle of conferences in which intellectuals of various backgrounds proposed their own reading of issues that are cogent for current affairs, starting from a reinterpretation of specific Dan-

¹⁴ The complete program of ADI initiatives can be consulted here: https://www.dantenoi.it/calendario/?doing_wp_cron=1632845032.2838690280914306640625.

tean tercets. The plurality of the perspectives put forward stimulated the organizers to publish of a volume in which they are collected, the release of which is scheduled for September 2021 (*Se segui tua stella, non puoi fallire. I grandi narratori raccontano il loro Dante*, Rizzoli).

The Fondazione del *Corriere della Sera* has also participated in Dante's anniversary with its *Conversazioni con Dante*. From January 2, 2020 and for the whole of 2021 in the Sala Buzzati in Milan, great names of Italian and international culture have examined both wide-ranging issues (from the presence of Dante in the 20th century to the female figures of the *Commedia*) and more refined and sectorial ones (from paratextual aspects to linguistic features).¹⁵

The attempt transcend national borders and cultural expressions of individual communities are the principles from which the *Dante patrimonio dell'Europa* initiative was conceived. In a close dialogue between Italian (Genoa, Rome, Naples) and European (London, Paris, Brussels) cities, a rediscovery of the European matrix of Alighieri's writings was promoted, examined with originality by teachers and writers. This was brought to a worthy conclusion an event hosted in the European Parliament in which Dante's all-encompassing universalism was celebrated by its representatives and those of the European Commission.¹⁶

4. Exhibitions

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact, among other things, on the ways in which cultural events are enjoyed, requiring a rethinking of the use of new technologies.¹⁷ In addition to remote participation, which has become necessary for more than one conference, exhibitions have also benefited from digital mediation in order to be accessible to a wider audience of visitors. The Dante Year opened with the launch of an experience of this kind when the Galleria degli Uffizi inaugurated the digital exhibition *Dante*

¹⁵ The videos of the speeches can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.fondazionecorriere.corriere.it/iniziative/conversazioni-su-dante-com-media-che-titolo-e-questo/>.

¹⁶ In this way, an official follow-up is given to the correct intuition of Eliot, who had the opportunity to note how Dante “è, rispetto a tutti gli altri poeti del nostro continente, di gran lunga il più europeo.” Thomas S. Eliot, “Cosa significa Dante per me,” in *Scritti su Dante*, ed. Roberto Sanesi (Milan: Bompiani, 2016), 79.

¹⁷ One of the most interesting results of the mixture between technology and traditional study practices is *Dante's Interactive Environments*, an ambitious project that aims at the three-dimensional reconstruction of Dante's environments starting from the illuminated representations of the historiated codes of the *Commedia* that can be enjoyed interactively through the use of augmented reality viewers.

Istoriato. Inferno - La Divina Commedia illustrata da Federico Zuccari, a collection of drawings by the Italian painter accompanied by audio descriptions specially conceived for the occasion. The Accademia della Crusca¹⁸ also exploited the hypermedia advantages of the web: from the digitization of part of its archives – above all, the documentation related to the preparation of the well-known *Vocabolario* – and with the support of the Soprintendenza Archivistica e Bibliografica della Toscana, it created the virtual exhibition *Dall'Archivio dell'Accademia della Crusca. Documenti su Dante e le sue opere*.¹⁹ Following the same operational logic, the Digital Vatican Library has made precious manuscripts and printed works accessible online on the occasion of the virtual exhibition *Viaggiare con Dante*²⁰.

Of recognized historical value, as evidence of the early stages of the *Commedia*'s spread is the exhibition *Landiano 190 (1336). Frammenti, incunaboli e cinquecentine* dedicated to the oldest known codex of Dante's poem today stored at the Biblioteca Passerini Landi in Piacenza.

The exhibition *Onorevole e antico cittadino di Firenze. Il Bargello per Dante*, curated by Luca Azzetta, Sonia Chiodo and Teresa De Robertis (open from April 21st to July 31st) was dedicated to the reconstruction of the turbulent relationship between the poet and his hometown. Structured in six sections and benefiting from considerable loans of manuscripts and paintings, which have integrated the already rich collections of the Bargello, the event has allowed a historical framework of the social and cultural dynamics that characterized Dante's Florentine life.

The exhibition *Dante e il suo tempo nelle Biblioteche fiorentine* (September 23, 2021 - January 15, 2022) is also dedicated to the role of Florence, but mainly focused on the period of Alighieri's youthful formation. The exhibition brought together the three main public libraries of the city (Medicea Laurenziana,

¹⁸ From the beginning of 2021, the social profiles of the Florentine Institution publishes daily *La parola di Dante fresca di giornata*, i.e. synoptic cards that in a few lines contextualize historically and linguistically a word taken from the *Commedia* (<https://accademiadellacrusca.it/it/dante>). With the support of the Accademia della Crusca and other research centers (CNR-Opera del Vocabolario Italiano, the Ezio Franceschini Foundation, the International Society for the Study of the Latin Middle Ages, the Società Dantesca Italiana, the Department of Philology, Literature and Linguistics of the University of Pisa and the ISTI-CNR of Pisa), the online release of the *Vocabolario Dantesco Latino* has also been planned. This will be a direct continuation of the *Vocabolario Dantesco delle opere volgari* and will include the lexicographic indexing of all of Dante's Latin works.

¹⁹ See: <http://sa-toscana.beniculturali.it/index.php?id=383>.

²⁰ See: <https://spotlight.vatlib.it/teaser-dante>.

Nazionale Centrale and Riccardiana). Among the manuscripts and ancient editions of Dante's works, the section *Leggere e studiare nella Firenze di Dante: la biblioteca di Santa Croce* stands out. With its unique library repertoires, it bears witness to the cultural currents that had a great influence on Dante's philosophical development.

The perspectives regarding the hypotheses on the texts that Dante consulted or to which he had only indirect access thanks to quotations and *compendia* are intentionally taken up by the exhibition *La biblioteca di Dante*, that opened in Rome in parallel to the Florentine one under the guidance of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei (September 20th – December 2021). In addition to an international conference that will complete the framework of the Roman proposal (7th – 9th October), the itinerary conceived and realized by the city's historical institution includes the exhibition of texts that Dante presumably had the opportunity to read or that were significant for his poetic formation. The codices have been arranged in relation to the continuous movements imposed to Dante by his exile, an event that marks the three sections of the exhibition: the first concerns Dante's works before his exile, the second those following his banishment, while the third is occupied by the *Commedia* alone.

The iconographic side is also worth celebrating. In addition to a due reference to the comics sector²¹, represented excellently by the initiative of the City of Monza that in collaboration with the WOW Spazio Fumetto Museo in Milan has set up *Con Dante nel fumetto! Da Topolino a Geppo a Go Nagai* and a digital exhibition dedicated entirely to the latter *mangaka* (*Dante. Attraverso l'immaginario artistico di Go Nagai*; Romics, March 25th – April 30th)²², it is appropriate to mention at least three artistic exhibitions.²³ The first – *Dante. La visione dell'arte* (April 1st – July 11, 2021) – saw Forlì as the undisputed protagonist. With the support of the Galleria degli Uffizi, the Museo di San Domenico of the

²¹ Among the various ways in which children's publishers remembered Dante, there was a good response to *Paper Dante* (Giunti, in bookshops from 17 March), a single volume containing reprints of *L'Inferno di Topolino* (1949) and *L'Inferno di Paperino* (1987) and an unpublished 48-page story with texts by Augusto Macchetto, drawings by Giada Perissinotto and colors by Andrea Cagol; there was also no lack of board games such as *Dante Alighieri - Comedia: Inferno* by Sir Chester Cobblepot, a board game designed by Federico Latini.

²² See: <https://www.romics.it/it/dante-attraverso-l-immaginario-artistico-di-go-nagai-mostra-digitale>.

²³ I recommend, however, to keep in mind the exhibitions *«In su'l lito di Chiassi»*. *Tesori danteschi nelle biblioteche e negli archivi di Ravenna* and *L'iconografia della Divina Commedia dal Settecento al Novecento* at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale of Naples.

Romagnola city collected more than 300 works centered on the figure of Dante and on the suggestions that the verses of his masterpiece have inspired artists of various figurative currents, from the Pre-Raphaelites to the Romantics to English and German art of the 19th century.

Conceptually similar to the logic of the Forlì's exhibition was that entitled *Dante Plus. Uno, nessuno e 150 volti*, which throughout the summer welcomed hundreds of works of various types (illustrations, sculptures, plastic and urban art, drawings) to the center of Ravenna, some of which came to life thanks to the interaction with augmented reality through the ARIA app, freely downloadable on smartphones. These and other peculiarities denote how the strength of the project «risiede nella sua semplicità che spoglia il Poeta dell'austerità alla quale ci avevamo abituati restituendoci una figura non più datata e distante, ma piuttosto un'icona pop del nostro presente».²⁴

Overtly pop, if not mainstream, is the vision of the Englishman Tom Phillips, known mainly for the BBC program *A TV Dante*, for which in 1989 he created, with the director Peter Greenaway, the transposition of the first eight cantos of the *Inferno*. At Palazzo Blu in Pisa, 139 sketches by the British artist were exhibited (*Tom Phillips. Dante's Inferno*; March 24th – May 30, 2021), from which, in contrast to the artistic practices of the 20th century, emerged an *Inferno* that was «spiazzante, quasi privo di grandi personaggi sofferenti e di chiaroscuri violenti, mentre non mancano i toni comici e satirici, e in molti casi le immagini sembrano fare quasi da commento interpretativo»²⁵.

5. *Various events*

The popular aspect of Dante's celebrations has been much more evident in the city festivals that involved the entire Italian peninsula. One of the most important, in terms of number of participants and variety of proposals, was *Piazza Dante. #Festivalinrete*, an extensive network of forty-three literary festivals internally divided into branches of poetry, fiction and journalism based around Dante. In an ideal dialogue that has united the squares of Italy, writers,

²⁴ Alessandra Carini, "Per trattar del ben ch'i vi trovai, / dirò de l'altre cose ch'i v'ho scorte," in *Dante Plus. Uno, nessuno e centocinquanta volti* (Berlin: Vetro Editions, 2021), 15.

²⁵ Alberto Casadei, «Dante per i lettori colti o Dante per tutti?», in *Dante. Storia avventurosa della Divina Commedia dalla selva oscura alla realtà aumentata* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 2020), 173; see also Alberto Casadei, "Visualità e interpretazione: sul Dante di Tom Phillips, Peter Greenaway, Romeo Castellucci (a altri)," in *Dante oltre l'allegoria* (Ravenna: Longo, 2021), 147-60.

scientists and musicians have thus contributed to defining a new way of understanding Dante's legacy.

By exalting instead the adaptability of Dante's word and focusing on an itinerant representation, Marco Martinelli and Ermanna Montanari, founders and artistic directors of the Teatro delle Albe of Ravenna, ventured into grand theatrical representations that made the concept of the city itself the stage for the shows proposed. The eclecticism of Martinelli and Montanari's initiatives, which have already worked on the three canticles of the poem, reached its climax with *La Divina Commedia in cinque continenti*, a global project (from Timisoara to New York, from Nairobi to South America and the Far East) in which, on the basis of the language and cultural traditions of the host area, the way of experiencing Dante's poetry was redefined.

Also in Ravenna between June and October the *Ravenna Festival 2021. Dedicato a Dante* took off. It has been an ensemble of hundreds of musical, theatrical, dance and cinematographic performances. The result was a conglomeration of ceremonies that composed a «viaggio dal Medioevo ai giorni nostri, tra filologia, pertinenza storica ma anche proiezione dell'universo dantesco nella contemporaneità, nella convinzione che l'*everyman* sia al contempo lettore e protagonista del poema»²⁶.

To round off the active participation of the city of Ravenna, in addition to the concert (September 4, 2021) held under the direction of Maestro Riccardo Muti in which three unpublished symphonic compositions inspired by the cantiche of the poem were performed, from September 14, 2020 every day, at the «ora che volge il dìsio» (Purg. 8.1), a canto of the *Commedia* is recited at Dante's Tomb (*Lettura perpetua della Divina Commedia*).²⁷

We can lastly suppose that when Dante finally managed to see the stars again after the torrid darkness of Hell, he certainly did not imagine that the story of his journey willed by God would actually reach space illuminated by those constellations and resplendent stars. However, from the cosmodrome of Bajkonur (Kazakhstan) in October 2021 a copy of the *Commedia* will be launched into orbit aboard the Soyuz Ms 19. The text of the poem, on the initiative of the Bolognese publishing house Scripta Manent, has been engraved on a sheet of titanium and gold so as to withstand the impervious temperatures of space when, in memory of one of the most profound human minds, it will be released into open space as a testament to Earth's genius.

²⁶ *Ravenna festival 2021. Dedicato a Dante* (Fusignano: Grafiche Morandi, 2021), 22.

²⁷ See: <https://vivadante.it/lettura-perpetua/>.

Conclusion

From the moment in which the President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella officially inaugurated the beginning of the celebrations of the Dante Year on September 4, 2020 in Ravenna²⁸, a contagious ferment has invested the daily life of Italians. Everyone, in different contexts and with different possibilities and aims, has responded to the laudatory call of a man, even before being a poet, who in his sullen face, in the verses memorized as a child or in the moral of episodes of public domain has become an integral part of a cultural heritage that is transmitted from generation to generation. There has thus been a follow-up to what Charles Singleton hoped for in the seventh centenary of Dante's birth:

Il poema che Dante ci ha lasciato rimane una grande esperienza *potenziale*, aperta ad ogni nuova generazione di lettori: è la nostra eredità e, ritengo, la prima ragione per celebrare in gratitudine il settimo centenario della nascita del poeta. Ma è un'eredità su cui possiamo far valere i nostri diritti solo attuandola: vale a dire, nell'atto di leggere e di farne esperienza.²⁹

The habitual coexistence with Dante, now indissolubly rooted in our daily habits, is then the most precious praise that could be reserved for him, that same sincere approval that Dante had tenaciously sought in life and that only now, with seven centuries of delay, we can finally say he has reached in the inscrutable peace of eternity.

²⁸ See: <https://www.ravennafestival.live/events/dante700/>.

²⁹ Charles S. Singleton, «Le visuali retrospettive», in *La poesia della Divina Commedia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2021), 465-66.