

# **Daphne and her Sisters** *Framing Gendered Violence in Early Modern Literature and Art*



**June 10-11, 2026, Durham**

**Image credit:** Picture by Ita Mac Carthy of Carlo Cignani, 'Apollo and Daphne' (c. 1680), at the Palazzo Ducale del Giardino, Parma.

**In affiliation with:**



## Conference Summary

'Daphne and her Sisters' explores the representation of gendered violence in 15th- and 16th-century European literature and art. European texts and images attract criticism for the predominance of male voices and the cultivation of a male gaze that objectifies women. Yet global libraries, galleries and their publics prize early modern collections like no others: scholarly and public debates seem only to enhance their cultural capital. How best to respond to the important questions raised by literature and art that represent gender and gendered violence? Conference speakers examine relevant works in their historical contexts. They reflect on how these works frame gendered violence, what purposes that framing serves, and what value (or danger) studying them carries in the contemporary world.

## Conference Convenors

- Ita Mac Carthy, Durham University

## Scientific Committee

- Costanza Barchiesi, Durham University
- Anna Carocci, Università di Roma Tre
- Nicola Catelli, Università di Parma
- Luca Degl'Innocenti, Università degli Studi di Firenze
- Annalisa Perrotta, Sapienza Università di Roma
- Stefano Jossa, Università di Palermo

## Conference Notes

**Day 1** launches the project 'Daphne and her Sisters' (2025-2029) which studies depictions of gendered violence in early modern literature and art. A team of international speakers will reflect on the gendered violence represented in select case studies, asking how writers and artists mediate in societal realities and respond to everyday experiences. While seeking to understand better literature and art from the past, the conference will also explore modes of engagement that allow us to consider the challenges of gendered violence in our present and future too. Papers will be in English.

**Day 2** concludes a three-year project centred on Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* / *Innamoramento de Orlando* (1494). Amongst other themes, Boiardo's romance epic provides an ideal test case for the study of gendered violence since it features valorous knights sparring over the most beautiful damsels in Christendom. Specialists from Europe, the UK and the US offer close readings of the final nine cantos of the poem (Book 3), bringing to a close the peripatetic series of *lecturae*. Papers will be in English and/or Italian.

Registration: 9.30

**Session 1: 10.00 – 11.30**

**Gendered violence across literary genres (Chaired by Costanza Barchiesi)**

Annalisa Perrotta, Università della Sapienza

‘Resisting Violence: Women, Weapons and Armour in Chivalric Poems from Pulci to Ariosto’

Virginia Cox, University of Cambridge

‘Del tuo sangue innocente, ahi, carte vergo: the scandal of uxoricide in late-Renaissance Italian lyric’

Jennifer Ingleheart, Durham University,

‘Golding’s Translation of Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 6. 424-674 (the episode of Tereus, Procne and Philomela)’

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**Tea & Coffee break: 11.30 - 12**

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**Session 1: 12.00 – 13.00**

**Gendered violence in the historical record (Chaired by Tom Hamilton)**

Monica Calabritto, Hunter College and CUNY

‘Violence and Death in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Bologna: Issues of Gender’

Marc Schachter, Durham University,

‘Tyrannicide and Sexual Violence in Benedetto Varchi’s *Storia Fiorentina*’

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**Lunch: 13.00 – 14.15**

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**Session 3: 14.15 – 15.30**

**Framing gendered violence in literature and art (Chaired by Corinne Saunders)**

Jessica Goethals, University of Alabama

‘The Gendered Sack of Rome’

Péter Bokody, University of Plymouth

‘Reading and Viewing Giovanni Boccaccio’s ‘The Nymph of Fiesole in Renaissance Florence’

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**Tea & Coffee break: 15.30 – 16.00**

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**Session 3: 16.00 – 17.00**

**Roundtable discussion chaired by Ita Mac Carthy**

Q. What might a British Academy volume arising out of this conference seek to achieve?

**Drinks reception** (open to all); **Conference Dinner** (private invitation only)

Daphne and her Sisters

**Day Two: Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> June, 9.30 – 17.00 (GMT)**

**LRC Lecture Room, St John's College**

**Session 1: 9.30 - 11**

**Book 3, cantos 1-3 (Chaired by Jane Everson)**

Marco Dorigatti, University of Oxford, 'Reading of Canto 3, 1'

Claudia Rossignoli, University of St Andrews, 'Reading of Canto 3, 2'

Silvia Raimondi, Loyola University Maryland, 'Reading of Canto 3, 3'

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**Tea & Coffee break: 11-11.30**

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**Session 2: 11.30 – 12.30**

**Book 3, cantos 4 & 5 (Chaired by Stefano Jossa)**

Federica Pich, Università di Trento, 'Reading of Canto 3, 4'

Alessandro Giammei, Yale University, 'Reading of Canto 3, 5'

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**Lunch: 12.30 – 13.30**

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**Session 3: 13.30 – 14.30**

**Book 3, cantos 6 & 7 (Chaired by Luca Degl'Innocenti)**

Eugenio Refini, New York University, 'Reading of Canto 3, 6'

Elissa B. Weaver, University of Chicago, 'Reading of Canto 3, 7'

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**Tea & Coffee Break: 14.30 – 15.00**

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**Session 4: 15.00 – 16.00**

**Book 3, cantos 6 & 7 (Chaired by Anna Carocci)**

Alessio Decaria, Università di Genova, 'Reading of Canto 3, 8'

Selene Scarsi, Kingston University London, 'Reading of Canto 3, 9'

**Concluding discussion: 16.00 – 17.00**