

Organized by
Christiane Frey
Manuele Gragnolati
Christoph Holzhey
Arnd Wedemeyer

Dante's

**Saturday,
6 July
2019 10:30–21:00**

With

Elisa Brilli
Franco Costantini
Nicolò Crisafi
Christiane Frey
Manuele Gragnolati
Christoph Holzhey
Karl-Heinz Ladeur
Andrea Lanza
Franziska Meier
Judith Revel
Jennifer Rushworth
Facundo Vega
Arnd Wedemeyer

In the second decade of the fourteenth century, Dante wrote the *Monarchia*, a treatise of political theology deeply rooted in the philosophy of his time, yet conspicuously original in its treatment of secular and ecclesiastical authority. Immediately attacked by the Church, and later banned until 1881, the treatise was long relegated to the margins of the history of political theory. In 1993, Claude Lefort re-established the importance and contemporary relevance of the treatise in an extensive introduction, entitled 'La modernité de Dante', for a French translation of the *Monarchia*. The symposium takes its cue from Lefort's suggestive invitation to reconsider Dante's endorsement of a 'temporal monarchy', that is, a secular order restricted to humankind's common pursuit of earthly happiness and hence fully independent from the Church. Lefort sketches the political reception of Dante's treatise, referenced by humanist advisors of princes, jurists of absolutist rule, and historians of nation-states alike, which, for him, testifies to a profound historical eccentricity of Dante's conception rather than a teleology inherent to the modern history of the West. For Lefort, 'the past always interrogates our present'.

Political Modernities

**Claude Lefort
Reads the *Monarchia***