

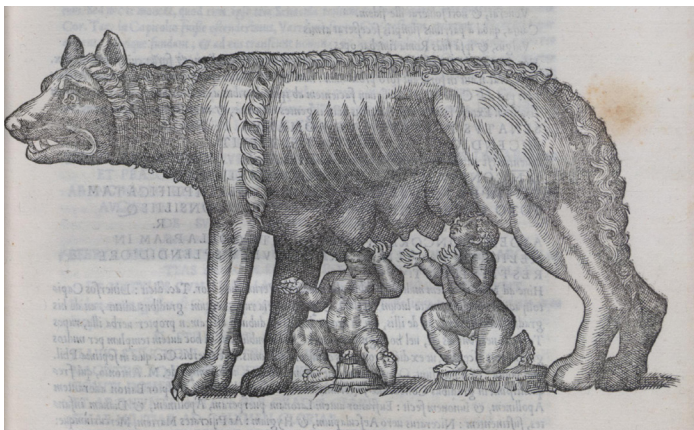
Explore the Record of European Life and Culture

About Collection 2

Collection 2 contains early printed volumes from the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze (the National Central Library of Florence). The selection of works focuses on four collections of particular historic and bibliographic importance within the library's holdings from this period:

The Nencini Aldine Collection: More than 770 editions printed by the Aldine Press, founded by Aldo Manuzio the Elder (also known as Aldus Manutius) in Venice in 1495, and continued by his wife, son and grandson until the 1590s. The Aldine Press was one of the most historically significant institutions in the early history of printed books, with numerous innovations – including the first use of italic type and the adoption of the smaller, more portable octavo paper size.

Manutius was a scholar of Ancient Greek, and the Press was central to the Renaissance revival of Greek learning: he enlisted Greek scholars, editors and typesetters to produce important “pocket classics” editions of Aristotle, Homer, Sophocles and others, along with Greek grammars and dictionaries. His press also published Latin texts by Martial, Ovid, Virgil and others, and Italian literary texts such as Petrarch's lyric poetry and the first portable edition of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The Aldine text formed the standard edition of Dante until the late 19th century, and the second Aldine edition (1515) was the first to include the famous woodcut diagram illustrating the circles of Hell.



Marginalia: A collection of 64 16th- and 17th-century volumes which have been identified for the importance of the postillati, or marginal annotations. Researchers will be able to read marginal notes written by Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) on his own personal copies of works by Euclid, Petrarch, Ariosto, Tasso and Horace.

Incunabula: Almost 1,200 volumes, including rare first editions of the works of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio, and 100 volumes by the controversial preacher Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498).

Sacred Representations: 783 16th- and 17th-century editions of *sacre rappresentazioni*, popular verse plays depicting Biblical scenes, episodes from the lives of the saints and Christian legends, which were originally performed in Florence and elsewhere in Tuscany and are considered by scholars to form the foundations of Italian theatre. Although many of the texts are anonymous, those by named authors include Castellano Castellani's *Figliuol prodigo* and Lorenzo de' Medici's *Rappresentazione di San Giovanni e Paolo*.

