

# BOOK PRESENTATION

# The Traveling Anatomist

Nicolaus Steno and the Intersection of Disciplines  
in Early Modern Science

by **Nuno Castel-Branco**

Published by The University of Chicago Press, 2025

**Tuesday,**  
**14.4.2026**  
**at 4:00PM**

*The Medici Archive Project*  
*Palazzo Alberti, via de' Benci 10, Florence*  
*education@medici.org*

## Program

*Chair:*

**Gaston J. Basile** (The Medici Archive Project)

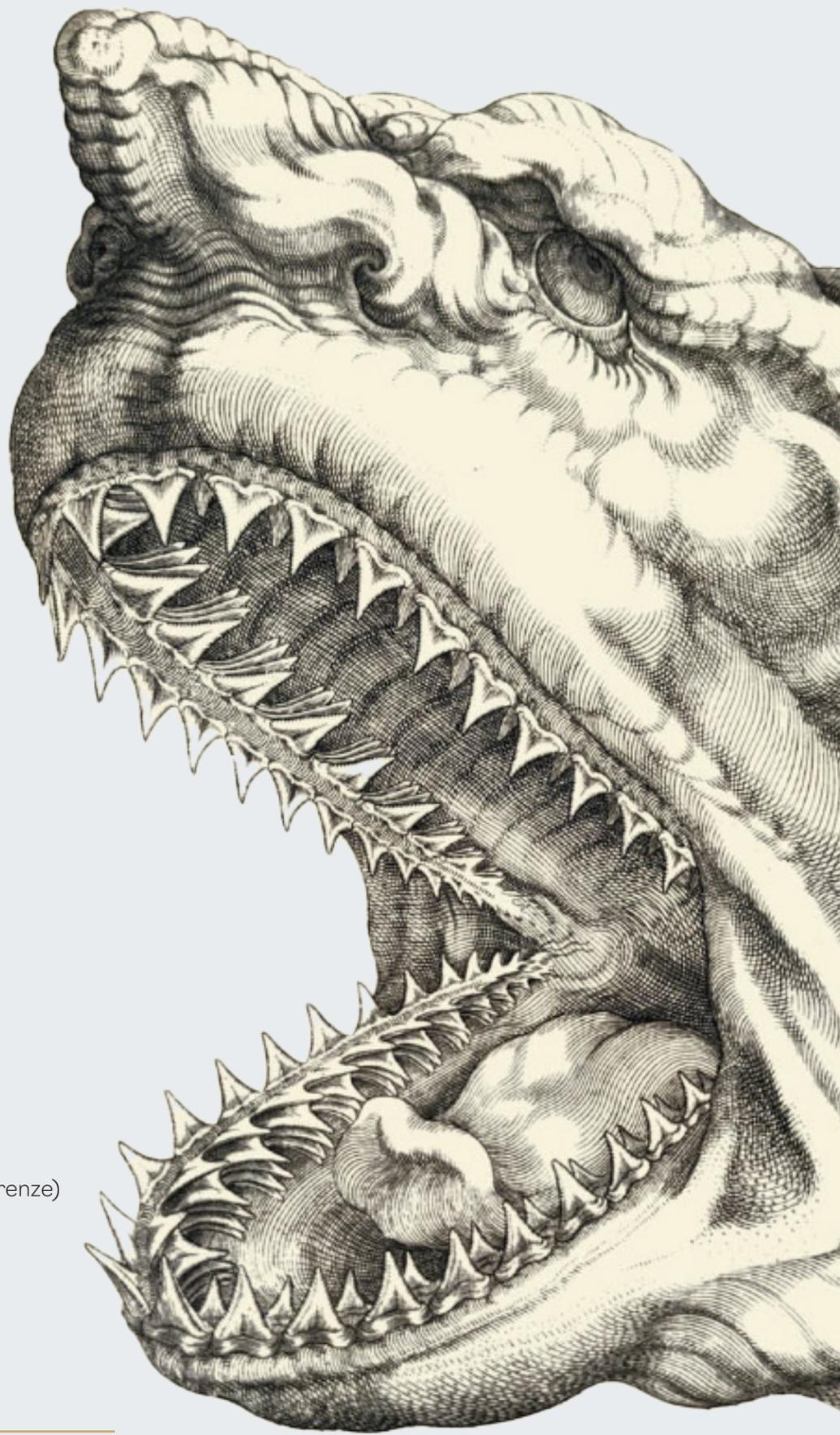
*Discussants:*

**Stefano Dominici** (Museo di Storia Naturale, Università di Firenze)

**Abram Kaplan** (Villa I Tatti, Harvard; St. John's College)

*Featuring the Author:*

**Nuno Castel-Branco** (All Souls College, Oxford)



**Nicolaus Steno** (1638–1686) was a renowned anatomist in his lifetime. He reformed the anatomical understanding of glands, argued that the heart was a muscle, renamed the so-called female testicles as ovaries, and developed a mathematical model for understanding muscle contraction—discoveries that were fundamental to the fields of anatomy and physiology. However, other aspects of Steno's life have come to define him: his claim that mountains' strata reveal the history of the Earth and his conversion to Catholicism as a practicing scientist. This excessive attention to his geological discoveries and to asking whether science and religion are compatible, Nuno Castel-Branco argues, has obscured his significant accomplishments as an anatomist. *The Traveling Anatomist* thus restores Steno to his rightful place as a crucial figure in early modern science.

