

CELEBRATING DANTE ALIGHIERI *"THE FATHER OF THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE"*



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In September, 2021, Italy is commemorating the "Year Of Dante" on the 700th Anniversary of the death of Dante Alighieri, considered the "Father of the Italian Language"

Dante was born in Florence, Italy in 1265 and died in 1321. Throughout its history, Italy has produced many outstanding writers, but the greatest name in Italian literature and one of the giants of western Literature, Dante Alighieri, emerged in the 1300's.

His great masterpiece, "La Divina Commedia" - The Divine Comedy, details his fictional journey through Hell {Inferno}, Purgatory {Purgatorio}, and Paradise {Paradiso} as he encounters figures from history and legend along the way.

Dante wrote his masterpiece in the Tuscan language at a time when Latin was the language of the educated. His work achieved widespread popularity and served as a unifying influence in Italian society at a time when Italy was fractured by political strife.

His work helped establish Tuscan as the official language of Italy at a time when many dialects were more commonly spoken.

The famed writer T.S. Elliot once wrote, "Dante and Shakespeare divide the modern world between them. There is no third."

Dante's birthplace, "The Museo Casa di Dante" is located in Florence's medieval center and is typical of a 13th century tower house. While Dante's has a tomb in the Church of Santa Croce in Florence where Michelangelo and other notable Florentines of Italian history are buried, his tomb is empty. He is buried in Ravenna where he had taken exile during a political dispute.

Dante's image can be found today on Italy's 2 Euro coin as depicted in a painting by Renaissance master, Raphael.

Students of the Italian language can also celebrate Dante for making the beautiful Tuscan language the Italian they are learning today.

