



ITALY

DANTE

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Hologram reproducing the original representation of Dante's face, created through 3D modelling on the basis of the Poet's most famous iconographies and death masks, at the Casa Dante museum located in the former home of the Alighieri family in Florence.

On the occasion of the seven hundredth anniversary of his death, Italy celebrates the cantos and key places of the great poet

Seven hundred years on from the death of Dante Alighieri, on 14 September 1321 after he contracted malaria in the wetlands of Comacchio whilst travelling back to Ravenna from Venice, we return to the places where this great poet spent much of his life.

Places which inspired the cantos of his Comedy, which became “divine” after Boccaccio made a posthumous addition. From Inferno (Hell) to Paradiso (Heaven), via Purgatorio (Purgatory), there are many references to places and works of art, starting from his home city of Florence, moving on to the valley of Casentino where he was a knight that fought on the front line during the Battle of Campaldino; then to the La Verna monastery, where Francis, a saint who Dante cared for greatly, received the stigmata, before going all the way up to Verona and Ravenna, his last home where the Byzantine mosaics were a source of great inspiration for him, as Professor Ivan Simonini explains in his book *I mosaici ravennati nella Divina Commedia* (The Mosaics of Ravenna in the Divine Comedy).

In Ravenna, the Franciscan monks hid his bones on two separate occasions: the first was so as not to give them to the Florentines who, on the approval of Pope Leo X, tried to lay claim to them, the second was during World War II, because they feared that the Germans would steal them and take them to Germany.



Fabrizio Bergonzoni, owner of the Scattisparsi bookshop in Ravenna which sells various ancient books, with two versions of the Divine Comedy, one of which is written in the dialect of Bologna.



One of the entrance gates to the fortified village of Gradara. The castle inside was the setting for the tragic love story of Paolo and Francesca sung by Dante in his *Divine Comedy*. Dante put the unfortunate lovers in hell because they were guilty of a very serious sin, but he had them wander together so that in addition to the punishment, they would not also have the punishment of eternal solitude. The Canto dedicated to them is one of the most famous in Dante's entire poem.



Piazza dei Signori in Verona's historic city centre and the statue of Dante which is currently being restored.



The Castello dei Conti Guidi (Castle of the Guidi Counts) in Romena (built in the 10th century), where the Guidi Counts hosted Dante during his exile. The Guidi Counts took the fate of Dante, exiled from Florence, very much to heart and hosted him in their castles in the Casentino valley: Romena, Porciano and Poppi.



The refectory in the Camaldoli monastery. Mentioned in *Purgatorio* (Purgatory), the Archiano River 'takes its rise among the Apennines, above the Hermitage', in amongst a dense thicket of beech. On his travels, Alighieri often sought out contemplative and mystical atmospheres in which to practice that granite-like faith which, in the last cantica, enabled him to become a pilgrim in heaven, to recognise the profiles of divine beings and, above all, to meet Beatrice once again.



The painting by Annibale Gatti, entitled *Dante in Exile* (1956), being exhibited this year to mark the anniversary at the Franciscan cloisters in Ravenna.



Dante's bust outside the Castello dei Conti Guidi in Poppi (Poppi Castle), in the valley of Casentino. The Conti Guidi (Guidi Counts) took the fate of Dante, exiled from Florence, very much to heart and hosted him in their castles in the Casentino valley: Romena, Porciano and Poppi. It is said that in the latter of these castles, Poppi, where he resided for a year as a guest of Count Guido Simone da Battifolle, the Florentine poet composed the *Inferno's* XXXIII Canto.



The mural by street artist Millo in Ravenna. On the left, the poet with a toy from Devilman, a manga created by Japanese master Gō Nagai, which in turn was inspired (also) by the Divine Comedy.



Florence, the statue of Dante by Emilio Demi in the courtyard of the Uffizi galleries.



Verona Arena. There is no real proof it was actually a source of inspiration for him, but looking at the internal structure of the Arena, it's impossible not to think of the structure of concentric rings in Dante's *Inferno*. The more respected sources suggest that Dante started writing his masterpiece immediately after having spent time in Verona and, almost certainly, after seeing the Roman amphitheatre.



The mosaic of the baptism of Christ on the dome of the Battistero degli Ariani (Arian Baptistery) in Ravenna. Professor Ivan Simonini published the book *I mosaici ravennati nella Divina Commedia* (The Mosaics of Ravenna in the Divine Comedy), in which he points out various analogies between the mosaics and Dante's cantos. The mosaic depicts both the baptism by immersion and by aspersion; in the Earthly Paradise, in the waters of the Lethe River, Dante similarly experiences a double baptism.



Giulio Calegari, palethnologist and visual artist together with Cristina Ansaloni. During lockdown he recreated a series of historical figures depicted in an imaginary war against the virus. In the photo dressed as Dante Alighieri "Calegadante manda il virus all'inferno" (Calegadante sends the virus to hell).



The beech wood that surrounds the La Verna monastery where St Francis of Assisi received the stigmata. This location is mentioned by Dante in *Paradiso* (Heaven): *'On the rude rock 'twixt Tiber and the Arno from Christ did he receive the final seal, which during two whole years his members bore.'* (*Paradiso XI*).



The Franciscan monks from the La Verna monastery walking in procession towards the chapel where St Francis of Assisi received the stigmata. This location is mentioned by Dante in Paradiso (Heaven): *'On the rude rock 'twixt Tiber and the Arno from Christ did he receive the final seal, which during two whole years his members bore.'* (Paradiso XI).



The artist Enrico Mazzone in his house in Turin surrounded by his drawings on the theme of Dante. As a tribute, on the 700th anniversary of Dante's death, he created a colossal illustration of the Divine Comedy, simulating the technique of lithography, on a sheet 97 metres long and 4 metres high. The work was created and exhibited in recent months on the floor of the Mercato Coperto in Ravenna, the city where Dante spent the last years of his life and where his tomb is located.



The Veja bridge is a natural arch of about 40 metres, the result of the natural evolution of a cave. It seems that Dante, visiting the place during his exile in Verona, was inspired by it when writing Malebolge, the description of the terrible eighth circle of Hell.



Msgr. Bruno Fasani, head of the Biblioteca Capitolare di Verona (Capitular Library of Verona), almost certainly frequented by Dante, flicking through a number of ancient parchment manuscripts belonging to the library, one of which is *Trésor* by Brunetto Latini, Dante's tutor. Dante places him amongst the sodomites in the third ring of *Inferno's* VII circle (Canto XV), despite the fact no other sources attest to Latini's homosexuality.



A farmer with cows belonging to the monks of Camaldoli. In the Purgatory the river Archiano is mentioned, which has its source right above the hermitage.



A projection with recitation of parts of the Divine Comedy in the Casa Dante museum, located in the former home of the Alighieri family in Florence.



The stained-glass windows of Dante's studio in Palazzo Poldi Pezzoli (now a museum) in Milan. Dante, Beatrice (on the right) and Mathelda (on the left).



Father Francesco Brasa, the guardian of the Franciscan monastery of La Verna where St Francis received the stigmata and is quoted by Dante in Paradise, shows a papal bull of Pope Boniface VIII, Dante's archenemy, who places him in Hell among the simoniacs, those who make a vile market of sacred things.



Each evening as night falls, a person reads some cantos from the Divine Comedy in front of Dante's tomb in Ravenna. The tomb is a small Neoclassical temple created by the architect Camillo Morigia around 1780-81. Because of its shape, the people of Ravenna have nicknamed it "la zuccheriera" (the sugar bowl).



View across the plane around Pistoia. The city's cathedral is mentioned in the Divine Comedy and Dante adds Vanni Fucci to the bolgia of those who transgressed the "thou shalt not steal" commandment. He was a particularly aggressive Black Guelph with no morals, responsible for ransacking the cathedral which he boasts about to Dante and Virgil.



Riccardo Starnotti, tourist guide and expert on Dante, dons the poet's robe as he recites a canto from the *Divine Comedy* in the celebration room of the Poppi Castle where Dante was hosted by the Guidi Counts. Riccardo has created a walk that takes in Dante's key locations in the Casentino valley and has developed the first e-learning platform to make learning about the *Divine Comedy* accessible to all.



Lecture: "Dante teologo e profeta della libertà" (Dante, theologian and prophet of liberty) in the Franciscan cloisters library in Ravenna.



Florence, Dante's souvenirs on sale in a shop near the house where Dante was born.



Dante never went to Sicily, but in the Divine Comedy he mentions "la bella Trinacria" or "island of fire" and in particular Etna, in the 14th canto of the Inferno where the god Vulcan forges lightning for Jupiter. *'If Jove should weary out his smith, from whom he seized in anger the sharp thunderbolt, wherewith upon the last day I was smitten, and if he wearied out by turns the others in Mongibello at the swarthy forge, vociferating, "Help, good Vulcan, help!"'* (Inferno, Canto XIV, 54-60).

Parallelozero, via Donatello 19/a, Milano Italy
info@parallelozero.com - www.parallelozero.com
+39 02 89281630

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