



The Divine Comedy: Volume 3: The Paradiso

Dante Alighieri

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The Divine Comedy (Italian: *Divina Commedia*), written by Dante Alighieri between 1308 and his death in 1321, is widely considered the central epic poem of Italian literature, and is seen as one of the greatest works of world literature. The poem's imaginative and allegorical vision of the Christian afterlife is a culmination of the medieval world-view as it had developed in the Western Church. It helped establish the Tuscan dialect in which it is written as the Italian standard. The work was originally simply titled *Commedia* and was later christened *Commedia Divina* by Giovanni Boccaccio. The Divine Comedy is composed of over 14,000 lines that are divided into three canticas — *Inferno* (Hell), *Purgatorio* (Purgatory), and *Paradiso* (Paradise) — each consisting of 33 cantos. The Divine Comedy can be described simply as an allegory: Each canto, and the episodes therein, can contain many alternative meanings. Dante's allegory, however, is more complex, and, in explaining how to read the poem, he outlines other levels of meaning besides the allegory (the historical, the moral, the literal, and the anagogical). The structure of the poem, likewise, is quite complex, with mathematical and numerological patterns arching throughout the work, particularly threes and nines. The poem is often lauded for its particularly human qualities: Dante's skillful delineation of the characters he encounters in Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise; his bitter denunciations of Florentine and Italian politics; and his powerful poetic imagination. Dante's use of real characters, according to Dorothy Sayers in her introduction to her translation of "L'Inferno", allows Dante the freedom of not having to involve the reader in description, and allows him to "[make] room in his poem for the discussion of a great many subjects of the utmost importance, thus widening its range and increasing its variety."

Durante degli Alighieri (May/June c.1265 – September 14, 1321), commonly known as Dante Alighieri, was a Florentine poet of the Middle Ages. His central work, the *Divina Commedia* (originally called *Commedia* and later called *Divina* ("divine") by Boccaccio hence *Divina Commedia*), is often considered the greatest literary work composed in the Italian language and a masterpiece of world literature. In Italian he is known as "the Supreme Poet" (*il Sommo Poeta*). Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio are also known as "the three fountains" or "the three crowns". Dante is also called the "Father of the Italian language". The first biography written on him was by Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375), who wrote the *Trattatello in laude di Dante*. - Wikipedia

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