

DANTE

# THE INFERNO

MS. Holkham misc. 48, p. 53

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ABANDON  
ALL HOPE  
YE WHO  
ENTER  
HERE



# DANTE ALIGHIERI

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- Born in Florence, May, 1265.
- His family was old and of noble origin,
- But no longer wealthy. He probably spent a year or a part of a year at the University of Bologna as part of his education.
- The *trivium* and the *quadrivium* were typical of Medieval curriculum.
- As customary, Dante had an arranged marriage in his youth to Gemma Donati, daughter of Manetto Donati.



# BEATRICE

- Dante's great love, and the greatest single influence on his work.
- He met her when he was nine, she eight, at his father's home.
- Most likely at a May Day festival.
- She was his angel,
- And from that day on his life and work were dedicated to her.
- He could not touch her. This was the age of Courtly love.
- Beatrice married about 1287, and died in 1290 at the age of 25.

# DANTE 1530 ARTIST UNKNOWN

An  
Allegorical  
Representation.





# BEATRICE

Dante's muse,  
Inspiration, the female  
Aspect behind the  
Genius.

SHE IS THE DIVINE  
LIGHT OF LOVE.



Bernardino dei Conti  
1500.

# DANTE' S MEDIEVAL WORLD

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- His world was threefold:
  - The world of politics,
  - The world of theology,
  - The world of learning.
- His *Comedy* utilizes all three; these areas are
  - Interdependent, so that
  - It is impossible to say
  - That one was more important than the other.
- The middle ages was dominated by the struggle between the papacy
- And the empire.
- Both thought that they were of divine origin, and indispensable to the welfare of mankind.



# THE PAPACY

The Vatican,  
Rome, Italy.



One of the few remaining city-states in the world.



CONSTANTINE

# The Empire



WHERE CHURCH AND STATE  
WERE FIRST TIED UP.

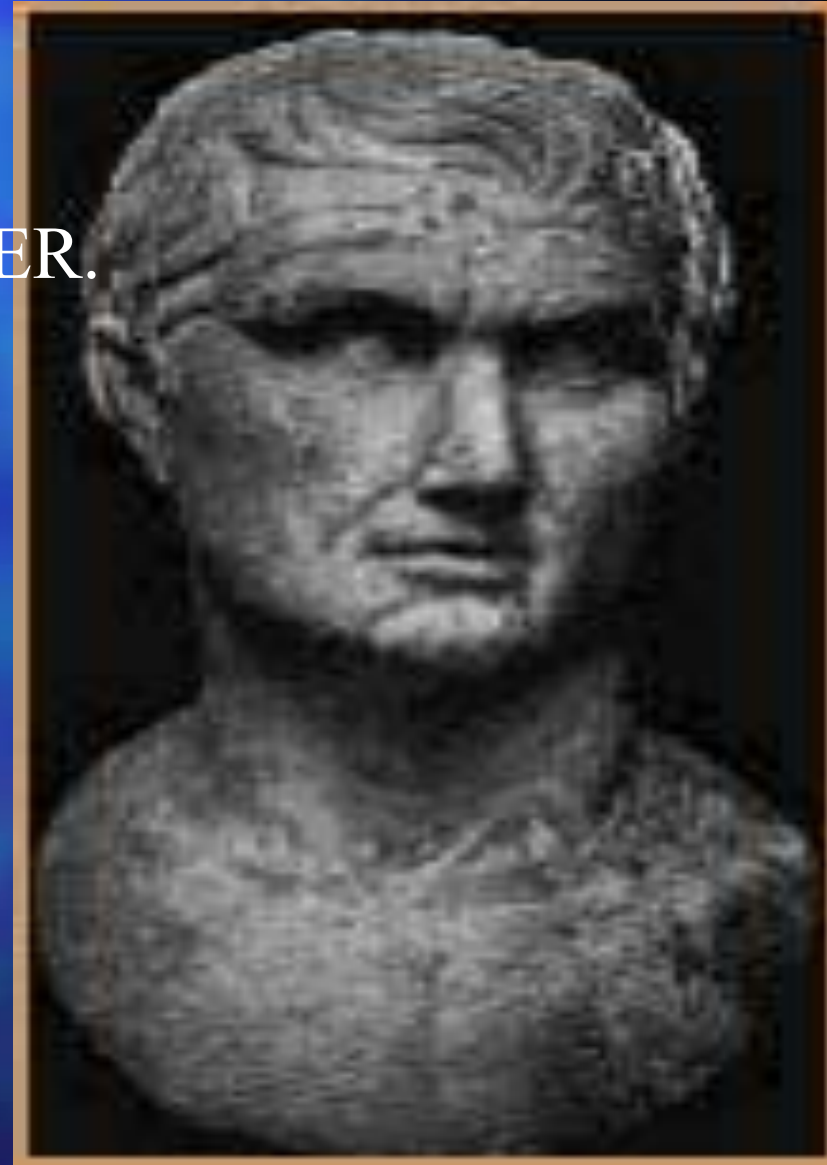


# CAUSE OF THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN PAPACY AND EMPIRE

- THE PAPAL CLAIM TO TEMPORAL POWER,
- JUSTIFIED BY THE FORGED
- “DONATION OF CONSTANTINE” IN THE 8<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY, STATED THAT THE EMPEROR, BEFORE LEAVING FOR BYZANTIUM HAD GIVEN POWER TO THE BISHOP OF ROME
- POPE SYLVESTER I,
- POLITICAL DOMINION OVER
- ITALY AND THE WESTERN EMPIRE.
- THIS CLAIM CREATED
- GREAT STRIFE AND DISCORD IN
- THE
- EMPIRE. NOTHING NEW BETWEEN RELIGION AND
- POLITICS.

# THE IMPORTANCE OF VIRGIL

IN THE MIDDLE AGES  
VIRGIL WAS REGARDED  
AS A SAGE AND NECROMANCER.  
HIS POEM'S WERE OPENED  
IN A MANNER OF DIVINATION  
CALLED *SORTES*. THE BOOK  
WAS OPENED AT RANDOM  
AND A VERSE SELECTED  
AS AN ANSWER TO A  
QUESTION. THE BIBLE IS  
STILL USED THIS WAY.





# VIRGIL 70 B.C.E. 19 B.C.E

- He was the greatest of the Roman poets.
- His *Aeneid* provided the pattern for the
- Structure of Dante's Hell. However, Virgil was chosen as Dante's guide through hell
- Because Dante saw him as his master and inspiration for Dante's
- Poetic style.
- Virgil is also revered as the poet of the Roman Empire.
- The *Aeneid* tells of the Empire's founding. Virgil also wrote in his fourth eclogue
- Of the coming of a Wonder Child who will bring the Golden Age,
- Interpreted in the Middle Ages as the coming of Christ.

# STRUCTURE OF THE COMEDY

- DANTE'S WORLD WAS ONE THAT BELIEVED IN MYSTICAL
- CORRESPONDENCES
- NUMBERS, STARS, STONES, EVENTS OF HISTORY—CONTAINED A MYSTICAL SIGNIFICANCE.
- DANTE'S NUMERICAL SYMBOLISM:
- 3 A SYMBOL OF THE HOLY TRINITY;
- 9 THREE TIMES THREE.
- 33 A MULTIPLE OF 3;
- THE 7 DAYS OF CREATION;
- 10 CONSIDERED IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD A PERFECT NUMBER;
- 100, THE MULTIPLE OF 10.



THIS PLAN WAS CARRIED OUT WITH CONSUMMATE  
PRECISION.

THERE ARE THREE MAJOR DIVISIONS OF SINS:

1. INCONTINENCE
2. VIOLENCE
3. FRAUDULENCE

EACH DIVISION HAS 33 CANTOS, A TOTAL OF 99.

THE FIRST CANTO OF THE INFERNO IS AN INTRODUCTION  
THAT MAKES 100 CANTOS IN ALL.

HELL IS NO PLACE FOR THE WISHY-WASHY, AS WE SHALL  
SEE.

BEFORE WE ARE DONE, EVERYONE WILL KNOW WHAT  
CIRCLE OF HELL THEY MAY FIND THEMSELVES IN!!!

# THE SPIRALING INFERNO

- DANTE'S HELL IS A HUGE FUNNEL SHAPED PIT.
- THE CENTER IS LOCATED BENEATH JERUSALEM.
- ITS REGIONS ARE ARRANGED IN A SERIES OF DESCENDING CIRCULAR STAIRCASES
  - THAT DIMINISH IN CIRCUMFERENCE
  - THE DEEPER THAT VIRGIL AND DANTE TRAVEL.
  - THE NINE REGIONS ARE DESIGNATED FOR A PARTICULAR SIN.
  - THE HIGHER UP A SINNER, THE LIGHTER THE SIN, THE DEEPER THE SINNER, THE DARKER AND MORE TERRIBLE THE SIN.



# CONCEPT OF DIVINE RETRIBUTION

- PUNISHMENTS IN HELL ARE REGULATED BY THE LAW OF RETRIBUTION.
- THESE PUNISHMENTS ARE RELATED TO THE SINS EITHER BY ANALOGY OR ANTITHESIS.
- AS ONE SINNED IN LIFE, SO HE OR SHE IS PUNISHED IN DEATH.
- WE WILL SEE THIS CONCEPT
- NUMEROUS TIMES
- IN
- THE INFERNO.

VESTIBULE: UNCOMMITTED

ACHERON

CIRCLE I (LIMBO) VIRTUOUS UNBAPTIZED

CIRCLE II: LUSTFUL

CIRCLE III: GLUTTONOUS

CIRCLE IV: PRODIGAL, AVARICIOUS

CIRCLE V (STYX); THE WRATHFUL

WALLS OF THE CITY OF DIS (CAPITOL OF HELL

CIRCLE VI: HERETICS

CIRCLE VII: VIOLENT AGAINST NEIGHBORS;

VIOLENT AGAINST THEMSELVES; VIOLENT AGAINST

GOD, NATURE, ART.

ABYSS

CIRCLE VIII (MALEBOLGE).

GIANTS WELL

CIRCLE IX (COCYTUS):

TRAITORS TO

KINDRED

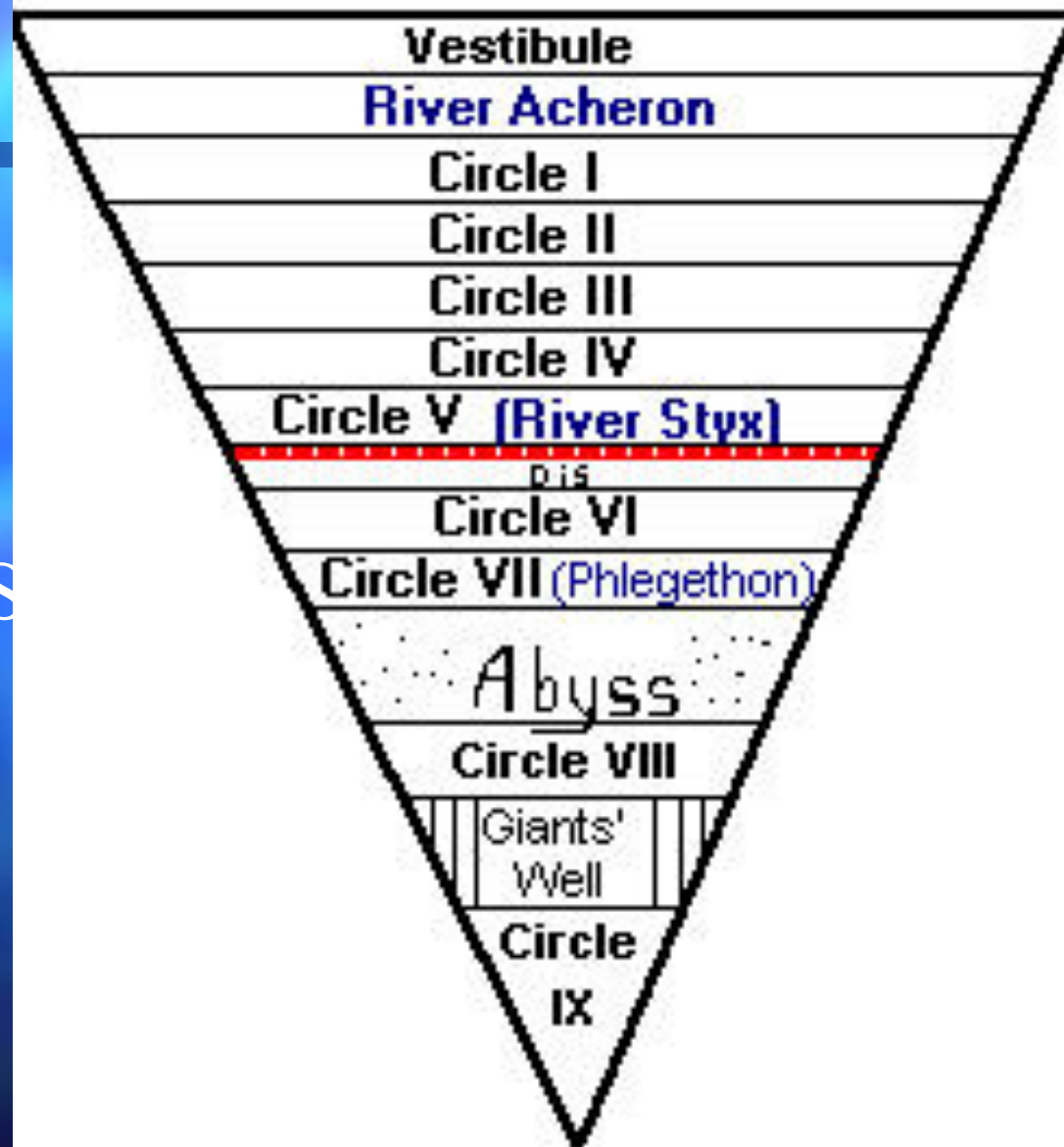
COUNTRY

GUESTS

MASTERS



DANTE'S  
FUNNEL  
SHAPED  
HELL



# AT THE BOTTOM OF THE INFERNO

IS  
DANTE'S  
SATAN.

THE  
EPITOME  
OF EVIL,  
THE FALLEN  
ANGEL.





## POINTS TO REMEMBER

- THE INFERNO IS PART OF A WORK CALLED THE DIVINE COMEDY.
- IN THE MIDDLE AGES COMEDY MEANT SOME HUMAN EXPERIENCE THAT
- BEGAN IN TRAGEDY AND ENDED IN HAPPINESS.
- IT IS ALSO AN ALLEGORY.
- THE MORAL PURPOSE IS TO POINT OUT TO THOSE STILL LIVING THE ERROR OF THEIR WAYS
- AND TO PUT THEM ON THE PATH OF SALVATION.

THE FINAL  
GOAL:

SALVATION  
BY  
THE

CROSS.





