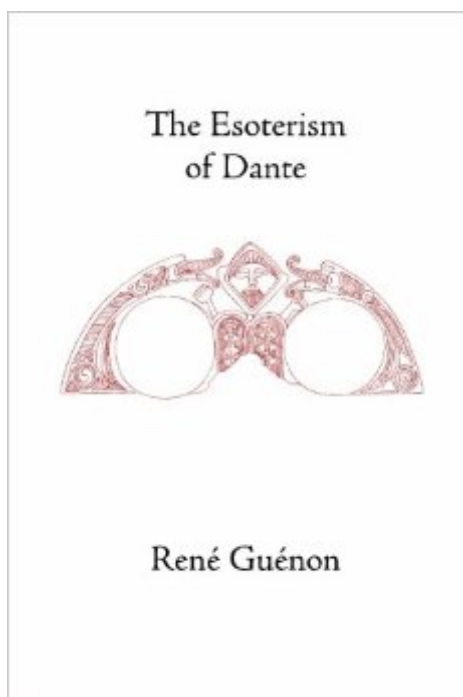


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The Esoterism Of Dante (Collected Works Of Rene Guenon)



Synopsis

Without pretending to be thorough on so inexhaustible a subject, in *The Esoterism of Dante* Guénon nonetheless casts an unexpected light onto a specifically esoteric and initiatic aspect of Dante's work, and above all of his *Divine Comedy*. Dante was without doubt far more than a literary genius, and one is justified in thinking that many treasures remain to be discovered in what Guénon calls 'the spiritual testament of the Middle Ages'. The author undertakes to establish that the three divisions of *The Divine Comedy* represent stages of initiatic realization and testify to Dante's knowledge of traditional sciences unknown to the moderns: the science of numbers, of cosmic cycles, and of sacred astrology. He also touches on the all-important question of medieval esoterism, and corrects the errors of earlier scholars who had only glimpsed the deeper meaning of Dante's work-providing an entirely new explanation of numerous points not previously elucidated. Some of the same themes are further developed in Guénon's *Insights into Christian Esoterism*.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The Esoterism of Dante" is a short book by Traditionalist author René Guénon. The book claims that Dante Alighieri was a member of a secret society connected to the Knights Templar, and that both Rosicrucians and Scottish Freemasons have access to the same esoteric knowledge as Dante himself. Guénon further claims that "The Divine Comedy" contains a secret message similar to Hermetism, Sufism and certain forms of Hinduism. Or, as the author prefers to put it, "paths of

Initiation". I'm not particularly familiar with this theory, but apparently it was relatively common during the 19th century, but later fell in disrepute. In other words, modern Dante experts tend to think that the esoteric angle is so much bunk. Not being a Dante scholar, I cannot really judge the issue. Why is Bernard de Clairvaux the final guide of Dante in Paradise? Who are the mysterious figures clad in white dresses? And why is the bloody cross of Jesus mentioned in this context? The Knights Templar had white dresses with a red cross, and their founder was...well, Bernard de Clairvaux. Interesting. Still, I admit that the whole idea of an unbroken string of "initiatic societies" of the kind envisioned by Guénon strikes me as very unlikely indeed, especially since there isn't any proof that the Templars were heretics. For all we know, they were exactly what they claimed they were: a militarized, Catholic order of warrior monks who *killed* heretics and infidels. They were smashed by the French state for political reasons. Centuries later, the Templar legend was taken up by Masons and Rosicrucians, groups that wanted to show an ancient pedigree they simply didn't possess. But then, who knows?

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