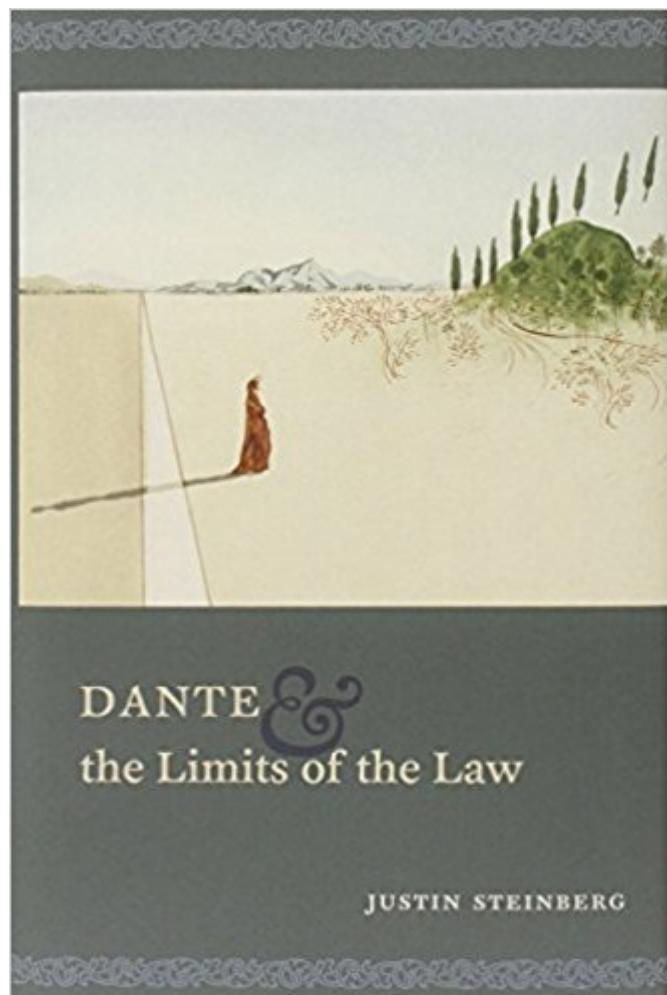


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Dante And The Limits Of The Law



Synopsis

In *Dante and the Limits of the Law*, Justin Steinberg offers the first comprehensive study of the legal structure essential to Danteâ™s *Divine Comedy*. Steinberg reveals how Dante imagines an afterlife dominated by sophisticated laws, hierarchical jurisdictions, and rationalized punishments and rewards. He makes the compelling case that Dante deliberately exploits this highly structured legal system to explore the phenomenon of exceptions to it, crucially introducing Dante to current debates about literatureâ™s relation to law, exceptionality, and sovereignty. Examining how Dante probes the limits of the law in this juridical otherworld, Steinberg argues that exceptions were vital to the medieval legal order and that Danteâ™s otherworld represents an ideal âœcosystem of exception.â• In the real world, Dante saw this system as increasingly threatened by the dual crises of church and empire: the abuses and overreaching of the popes and the absence of an effective Holy Roman Emperor. Steinberg shows that Danteâ™s imagination of the afterlife seeks to address this gap between the universal validity of Roman law and the lack of a sovereign power to enforce it. Exploring the institutional role of disgrace, the entwined phenomena of judicial discretion and artistic freedom, medieval ideas about privilege and immunity, and the place of judgment in the poem, this cogently argued book brings to life Danteâ™s sense of justice.

Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: University Of Chicago Press (December 22, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 022607109X

ISBN-13: 978-0226071091

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.1 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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Very dense. I'm an academic but this was even too dense for me. You have to be very very interested in parsing words. It just wasn't for me.

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