

The priory of sion revealed: dan brown's secret society a secret no more

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Dan Brown's bestselling novel "The Da Vinci Code" rocked not just the literature community, but the entire world that up to this day, his bestselling book has been the topic of much criticism and debate.

What made his book one of the most controversial books of the twenty-first century was that, in his book, Brown introduced the claim that contrary to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, Jesus Christ had married Mary Magdalene and through her, fathered a royal bloodline that extends to the modern day by introducing in his novel the Priory of Sion, a secret society whose main purpose was to protect not just this secret that the Roman Catholic Church has exhaustively aimed to purge throughout time, but also the descendants of Christ and Mary Magdalene.

This caused officials from the Roman Catholic Church to vocally oppose the information presented in his novel and an increase of tourists flocking to the various landmarks mentioned in the novel such as Louvre in Paris, France and the Rosslyn Chapel in Scotland (Brown 260-61; "Da Vinci Code Summary"; Putnam and Wood 18).

This paper would present the Priory of Sion as presented in Dan Brown's novel as well as the research done by historical experts on the existence of such a secret society and the beliefs the society protects and how through the research made it was concluded that just like the novel of Dan Brown, the Priory of Sion was nothing more than a product of the wild imagination of a humble French man. The novel "The Da Vinci Code" centered on the quest of Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveau to discover who murdered Sophie's stepfather at the Louvre Museum.

His death plunged Langdon and Neveau into the thousand year old conflict between the Roman Catholic Church and the Priory of Sion, a secret society that, according to the novel, was founded in 1099 by King Godefroi de Bouillon, a French king who conquered Jerusalem during the same year. To ensure that the secret entrusted to him would not be lost after his death, he created the Priory of Sion to pass the secret on from generation to generation (Brown 167).

The Priory of Sion, Langdon and Neveau discovered, was headed by a number of notable geniuses in the fields of the arts and sciences. Some of the most well-noted leaders of this secret society were Sir Isaac Newton, Botticelli, Victor Hugo and, of course, Leonardo da Vinci. For many years, the secret society had remained quiet throughout history. This all changed in 1975. Parchments known as the Les Dossiers Secrets were discovered at the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, France (Brown 1; Putnam and Wood 18).

Although Brown created the novel as a fictional literary work, by adding this information at the beginning of the book, he utilized the love of the public of conspiracy theories and as such, conditioned the minds of the readers of his novel that a huge number of his readers had actually believed that the novel was not entirely fictional in nature. This sparked a quest to determine just how close the information presented by Brown's novel was to the facts by a number of experts.

This allowed them to discover that in fact, Dan Brown borrowed much of the information presented in his novel from the book "The Holy Blood and The Holy Grail" which was published in 1982 by Michael Baigent, Henry Lincoln

and Richard Leigh. In this book, the authors discussed the story of how Mary Magdalene fled to France and how the lineage of the kings of France were traced back to her and to Jesus Christ. In their research for documents and other forms of evidence to support the details presented in their book, they came across the discovery of documents pertaining to an Order of Sion that came into existence during the twelfth century.

They were able to link this order that they have introduced in their book as the Priory of Sion to various episodes in French history, the Knights Templar, Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry and other secret societies (Brown 167-170; Putnam and Wood 18). Perhaps the most interesting information discovered by the authors of "The Holy Blood and The Holy Grail" in their research was the list of the Grand Masters of the Priory of Sion. It included the names of the most notable figures in the arts and sciences throughout human history.

One of these figures mentioned was Leonardo da Vinci. While biographers of these noted figures of history were not able to find any evidence of their involvement, the authors have speculated that because of the nature of the society that they were associated with and the sensitivity of their responsibilities in this society, great care was taken to ensure that no documents would link them to the society (Putnam and Wood 18).

During their research, the authors of "The Holy Blood and The Holy Grail" discovered that, as a result of the requirement of the French government that all groups and societies must be recorded in the weekly publication called "Le Journal Officiel," a notice of registration of a society called the Priory of Sion was published on July 20, 1856. This information led them to

Pierre Plantard (Putnam and Wood 18). After the resounding success of Dan Brown's "The Da Vinci Code," the information used by the authors of "The Holy Blood and The Holy Grail" was placed under scrutiny.

Based on the information discovered, experts and critics discovered that the Priory of Sion was not a secret society that guarded a secret that would cause the very foundations of the Roman Catholic faith to crumble. Instead, it was the creation of a very unusual man named Pierre Plantard who believed that he was a direct descendant of the Merovingian kings of France. In order to support his claim, he enlisted the help of his friend Philippe de Cherisey to create parchments which composed the fifteen documents of the Dossier Secrets.

In these documents, Plantard included a genealogy of the Merovingian kings that were compiled by Henri Lobineau. This genealogy contained eight genealogical tables in order to trace the line of the Merovingian kings to Pierre Plantard and his family as well as a collection of letters, maps, newspaper cuttings, coat of arms and the list of the Grand Masters of the Priory of Sion. Plantard's in-depth knowledge of the middle ages had allowed him to create a seemingly believable compilation of documents which many experts have now come to call as the "Plantard Invention" (Putnam and Wood 18).

The success of Dan Brown's book had shown that even today, people are still fascinated with mysteries and conspiracies. So much so that despite the various forms of entertainment available, the conspiracy presented by Brown in his novel was so compelling that it had caused people, young and old

alike, to sit down and read a book, turning Dan Brown into a best-selling author. His novel "The Da Vinci Code" not only provides its readers a finely crafted work of modern-day literature, it also proved that despite the advancements of societies today, people remain gullible to accept claims regarding various long-standing accepted truths.

One of which is religion. Because of the various gaps in the documentation of certain events in the life of a religious figure, it opens a door for much speculation and the conception of conspiracies. Such was the case of the life of Jesus Christ in the Roman Catholic religion. Since there has been no documentation on his life between the time he was found by his parents in the Temple at the age of 12 and his baptism at the age of 30, conspiracy theorists have argued that in this long period of time, so many things may have occurred in his life.

This included the possibility that he may have married and had a family. In closing, the discovery that the documents and the origins of the Priory of Sion proved that these were the products of a rather curious man named Pierre Plantard should keep the readers of novels that are based on a conspiracy theory to remain grounded and not to believe all the information presented at face value. After all, the novel "The Da Vinci Code" was written as a fictional novel created for entertainment purposes.