

The Da Vinci Code

A house of cards that collapsed

Björn Are Davidsen and Öivind Benestad

This text has no copyright. It can be freely copied, translated and distributed in any form without permission. It is written by Björn Are Davidsen and Öivind Benestad, benestad@bigfoot.com. The former is the author of a Norwegian book called *Da Vinci Decoded* and has led 60 seminars and meetings about the novel during the last couple of years.

Who's fooling who?

The Da Vinci Code is without question a thrilling novel. Unexpected codes and tremendous action pulls the reader along. Has Western civilization been fooled by a gigantic church cover-up operation for 2000 years?

The Da Vinci Code addresses important issues regarding religion, power, feminism, history and truth. It is positive that such issues are being investigated. However, a thriller novel filled with undocumented suggestions and made-up sources is of no use for those who want new insight and reliable knowledge.

In *The Da Vinci Code* it is being stated that the book's theory and allegations are based on research done by known historians. The novel thereby passes itself off as being scientifically based when it most certainly is not. The fact is that it would be hard to find even one serious historian willing to verify the historical constructions and theories of *The Da Vinci Code*. This pertains to all scholars, be they atheist, agnostics, Christians and others.

Dan Brown has a vivid imagination and writes thrilling books. As a guide in the Western world history as well as in church history, he is unreliable. This text will explain why.

Ace = Priory of Sion?

The story in *The Da Vinci Code* is built around the secret Priory of Sion and the documents that are supposedly being hidden by this priory. "The Priory of Sion – a European secret society founded in 1099 – is a real organization." (Statement on the FACT page in front of *The Da Vinci Code*)

The truth is that the book's claims regarding the Priory of Sion are pure fiction. The priory was never in existence before it was established as a paper-organization by the Frenchman Pierre Plantard in 1956. He is the person who made up the entire history of the priory. In the 1960's Plantard tried to create a myth about himself as the last Grand Master of his invented priory. He produced false documents and actually fooled the authors of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, the book in which Dan Brown found many of the theories that he uses in *The Da Vinci Code*. Plantard's fraud was exposed in the 1980's. When interrogated under oath by the police in 1993, he admitted that the whole thing was a hoax. On www.priory-of-sion.com you will find solid information regarding Pierre Plantard and his imaginary Priory of Sion.

Secret documents?

"In 1975 Paris's Bibliothèque Nationale discovered

parchments known as Les Dossiers Secrets, identifying numerous members of the Priory of Sion, including Sir Isaac Newton, Sandro Botticelli, Victor Hugo and Leonardo da Vinci.” (Statement from the FACT page in front of *The Da Vinci Code*)

The truth is this: Pierre Plantard and a couple of friends produced the collection of parchments known as Les Dossiers Secrets. The false documents were deposited in the archives of the library. The deception was exposed, and Plantard confessed the fraud.

The house of card collapses

When you realize that the Priory of Sion is a product of Plantard’s imagination and that Les Dossiers Secrets is a forgery from the 1960’s, the historical allegations stated in *The Da Vinci Code* collapse like a house of cards. Leonardo da Vinci was never a leader of the Priory of Sion, because the priory did not exist. Therefore, he could not have known about secret documents regarding Jesus and Mary Magdalene. The claims of *The Da Vinci Code* regarding the Holy Grail, “gigantic chests” containing documents from the time of Jesus, secret codes in Da Vinci’s paintings, etc., are pure fantasy and fiction. These claims could be considered creative elements in a fictional novel, but as historic information, they have absolutely no value.

King = Jesus?

“Jesus’ establishment as ‘the Son of God’ was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea. (...) Until that moment in history, Jesus was viewed by his followers as a mortal prophet ... a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless. A mortal.” (Chapter 55, *The Da Vinci Code*)

These and many other allegations in *The Da Vinci Code* conflict with clear historical facts. Jesus was worshiped as the Son of God from the beginning of church history. There are numerous documents and thousands of quotations in the centuries before Constantine that prove this. The statement that Christians viewed Jesus as an ordinary human being up to the

Council of Nicaea in 325 AD is historical fraudulence contrary to all facts.

The Da Vinci Code states that Constantine commissioned and financed a new, revised Bible. “The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up and burned” (chapter 55). This is all false, as is so much else in the novel. Constantine had nothing to do with the discussions about the content of the Bible, and he never burnt or revised it. The truth is that we have a number of Greek Bible manuscripts from the two centuries before Constantine. It is from these texts that our Bibles are translated – not from imaginary revisions invented by Dan Brown.

The Da Vinci Code describes the Gnostic gospels (the gospel of Mary, of Philip, etc.) as being more trustworthy than the 4 gospels in the Bible. This claim does not correspond with historical facts. Virtually all scholars are in agreement that the biblical gospels were written while people of Jesus’ own generation were still alive. The Gnostic gospels were, on the other hand, written 100–200 years after Jesus’ death.

Almost all of what is written in *The Da Vinci Code* regarding the Gnostic gospels is wrong. According to the novel “these documents speak of Christ’s ministry in very human terms” (chapter 55). The truth is exactly the opposite. The Gnostic gospels contain, for the most part, conversations between Jesus and the disciples after the resurrection and before the Ascension – consequently a highly divine Jesus. These gospels contain almost nothing about His ministry. The Gnostic gospels portray Jesus as an exalted and unapproachable teacher who is far from ordinary people’s lives.

It is only in the 4 gospels of the Bible that we get to know a human Jesus who acts, eats, weeps, becomes angry and tired – and who cares about the weak and rejected. It is only in the gospels of the Bible that we meet Him as a trustworthy man and as a merciful Saviour.

Queen = Mary Magdalene?

“Jesus was the original feminist. He intended for the

future of His church to be in the hands of Mary Magdalene.” (Chapter 58, *The Da Vinci Code*)

The main characters in *The Da Vinci Code* assert the following: 1. Jesus’ plan was to marry Mary Magdalene and father children. 2. Mary Magdalene was appointed by Jesus as the leader of the church and as a goddess. 3. She was to be the icon for the “sacred feminine” in Christian theology and worship. 4. Ritual intercourse was a central element in Jesus’ teaching. “Through intercourse (...) the man could find spiritual wholeness and communion with God.” (*The Da Vinci Code*, chapter 74; see also chapters 28 and 60.) According to *The Da Vinci Code*, Jesus was not able to organize his planned sex-cult before his crucifixion. A pregnant Mary Magdalene had to flee to France. The child Sara was born there, and the descendants later married into the French royal family.

According to *The Da Vinci Code*, the Priory of Sion is the guardian of thousands of pages of secret documents. These documents prove the real plans of Jesus – and Mary Magdalene’s role as the church’s leader and goddess. The church has suppressed all these secrets about Mary Magdalene for nearly 2 000 years. Some day the documents will be made public.

All this may serve as a creative conspiracy theory for a fictional novel. However, as a description of historical realities, it is nonsense. There is no historical evidence, and no sources. It is pure speculation and a figment of the imagination. And as stated earlier, no Priory of Sion exists to guard these kinds of secrets ...

Knight = Leonardo da Vinci?

Leonardo da Vinci accepted “hundreds of lucrative Vatican commissions” and he “incorporated in many of his Christian paintings hidden symbolism that was anything but Christian.” (Chapter 8, *The Da Vinci Code*)

Many of the claims in *The Da Vinci Code* regarding Leonardo da Vinci are without historical basis. Da Vinci undertook only one commission for the Vatican, not “hundreds”, as told in the book. And Leonardo was not a rebel against the church or its beliefs.

For instance, *The Da Vinci Code* tells that Leonardo named the painting Mona Lisa based on two Egyptian god-names. That is not the case. The painting was only named 31 years after the artist’s death.

Since the Priory of Sion did not exist, Da Vinci had no knowledge of all the alleged secrets that Dan Brown speculates about. The codes and symbols that Dan Brown finds in his art are, therefore, only his own imaginative interpretation and without basis in Da Vinci’s life. Isn’t it naïve to believe that a novel writer has greater insight in Leonardo Da Vinci’s art than all art experts during the last centuries?

One example is the painting “The Last Supper”. Dan Brown asserts that the person to the right of Jesus is a woman. For 500 years everybody has known that it is the youngest of the disciples – John. At the time of Da Vinci it was common to paint very young men with feminine features. The Renaissance gives us many examples of this. And where is John, if Mary has taken his place? For many different reasons there can be only one conclusion: Dan Brown is wrong about the person sitting on Jesus’ right side.

Ten = Any more?

The Da Vinci Code is an unusually creative and thrilling novel. But it is nothing more than that. The theories and speculations in the book don’t turn into truths because the story takes place in historical buildings. Those who interpret the speculations in the book as historical realities will be building their understanding of Western civilization and Christian history on legends, falsifications and non-existing sources.

Oskar Skarsaune is a well-known Norwegian professor of early Church history and an expert on the theories and history behind *The Da Vinci Code*. After publishing a book about the novel, he was asked by a journalist if most of the historical claims in Dan Brown’s novel are incorrect. He answered: “I will put it even stronger: Nothing of what Dan Brown claims regarding historical events in the early church or in the medieval times is correct. Nothing.”

Documentation

Do you want more information or more thorough documentation? Visit the following websites:

- 1) www.leaderu.com/focus/davincicode.html
- 2) http://www.reference.com/browse/wiki/The_Da_Vinci_Code
- 3) www.priory-of-sion.com