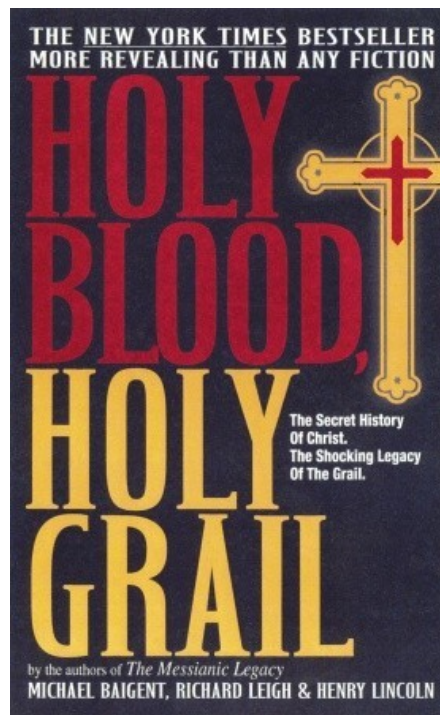




Holy Blood, Holy Grail

Michael Baigent , Richard Leigh , Henry Lincoln

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Holy Blood, Holy Grail Michael Baigent , Richard Leigh , Henry Lincoln

A nineteenth century French priest discovers something in his mountain village at the foot of The Pyrenees which enables him to amass and spend a fortune of millions of pounds. The tale seems to begin with buried treasure and then turns into an unprecedented historical detective story - a modern Grail quest leading back through cryptically coded parchments, secret societies, the Knights Templar, the Cathar heretics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and a dynasty of obscure French kings deposed more than 1,300 years ago. The author's conclusions are persuasive: at the core is not material riches but a secret - a secret of explosive and controversial proportions, which radiates out from the little Pyrenees village all the way to contemporary politics and the entire edifice of the Christian faith. It involves nothing less than... the Holy Grail.

Holy Blood, Holy Grail Details

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Sarah says

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Lorena says

It's been a while now since I read this book out of curiosity after reading the Da Vinci Code. I admit that when I read the Da Vinci Code did possess a historical background gained by the school books, encyclopedias, and usual historic books that I could borrow in the library.

I heard many thoughts and rumors about this book which helped me have my own opinion about it. Nevertheless I have to say that I don't blindly believe every letter written on this work.

Firstly I think that the authors did an enormous research, mostly unbiased and they deserve to be appreciated about that. Secondly, during the reading I was confused several times with the names of the people and the events, and sometimes I thought that this book is leading me nowhere into a further comprehension. Even the authors themselves seemed confused for what were they talking about, and there was a lot of guessing, which is always doubtful and increases the suspect in a scientific research.

My constant inquiries led me to some conclusions while finishing the book. As a person with the complex of skepticism, I try to logically explain most of the events that occur, and honestly in the history school books there are lots of ridiculous information (can't call them facts) for which I feel pity that kids are obliged to learn them. I always like to mention the example of the crusades and the Medieval history, about which we hardly know more than 3-4 lines of explanation/definition (except the list of the European rulers).

Basically history is supported by the facts, and so far I agree. Although I have to think twice in order to define the word fact itself. Facts should support the theory, and theories are what this book is made of mostly, but the fact is the theory itself in which the historians community agreed upon, and approved it as reliable. Thus, what the historians community considers reliable should absolutely be such for us? It is necessary to take into consideration the fact that historians are like the usual bank employees. They do a great work, but not always in their interest. Obviously I am skeptical about the historians as well.

Going back to the content of the book above, I think that the three authors/researchers developed a critical way of thinking about the historical events by using logic and being constructive. Even that they possessed almost nothing except some suspicious data about certain people and places, there were strong conclusions, logically reliable in their work. For example the Grail is not described only as a chalice which held the blood of Jesus during his crucifixion, but also as a metaphor for the womb, symbol for the fertility etc. Thus there are several images related to the Grail, and everyone is free to choose which one to believe unless he/she doesn't have another theory about it (which would be even better though).

People, (including me) sometimes ask a lot from everything, we complain a lot, we are never fully satisfied with what (in this case) we read, and we tend to be often grumpy. In support of that, it comes to my mind the phrase: "Don't you like the cake I prepared? - No! - Okay than, make your own cake!"

The best way to "cure" these tendencies to be grumpy I think would be if we free our minds, try to use logic more often, and be constructive as well. Don't simply blindly believe everything, but take into consideration everything that we need in order to form/construct an opinion/theory/else.

Alex Lindner says

The book Holy Blood, Holy Grail is a book that presents many points of evidence showing fallacies in the Christian religion. It mainly delves into the depths of the secrets of the Knights Templar and the order of Sion, who allegedly created and later broke off from the Knights Templar. "Could 'ET IN ARCADIA EGO' also perhaps be an anagram? Could the verb have been omitted so that the inscription would consist only of certain precise letters?" (Baigent, 46). The authors use mechanics like this to make the reader think more on the subject and keep them engaged, which I really liked.

One of the features I enjoyed the most is how it's set up. There's a table of contents in the beginning splitting the book into parts, chapters, and sections. The titles of each piece is descriptive enough to let you know exactly what's contained. Some of them, such as "The Grail and Cabalism" catch your eye and make you want to know what's inside. The book follows a loose chronological structure depicting how their research and findings proceeded.

Overall, the book is very controversial and also very interesting. While most books that argue against a group or idea are merely propaganda, this book backs up all of its claims and ideas with facts and primary sources of evidence. I also applaud the efforts of the authors because of how much time had to go into researching this. Some of the sources they had took them months to locate and acquire.

Greg says

This book is a great example of academic dishonesty. The first half of the book is very well documented, and sets the reader up for the idea that the two authors are dealing with hard facts. When the conjectures and meat of the book begin though the sources stop getting cited, and assumptions are made which have no basis except for the authors fantastical logic. (Saying things like, of course this is well documented (but where?), or setting up as a premise something that they admit is unknown, and then turn the unknown into a truth later in the book, with no basis). Not that I'm shocked by their more controversial conjectures, or find the ideas contained in this book as absurd, just that they do a grave misjustice to the readers trust in the way they present the information.

K J Bennett says

I first read this about 15 years ago. It seems that **Dan Brown** may also have done so.

The original book, and the revised edition I read several years later, put forward compelling arguments in favour of an alternative history of the established religious version propounded in canonical teaching. Although cleared of plagiarism, Dan Brown appears to have drawn heavily on much of the source material as did the authors of '**Holy Blood, Holy Grail**'.

The authors at no point claim that their theories are fact. They make it clear that they are putting forward a hypothesis regarding what *might* have taken place, based on many esoteric sources as well as sources accepted to be established historical fact. The amusing part is that although it is a well researched and well written thesis, it reads more like a thriller than any fictionalised accounts that followed - '**The da Vinci Code**' included.

Reading '**Holy Blood, Holy Grail**' led me to several other books -

- '**The Bible**' (most people who claim to have read it have not - they have read sections of it, often as directed by a minister).
- '**The Nag Hamiadi Scrolls in English**' (translations of the so-called Gnostic Gospels)
- '**Jesus the Man**' by by **Barbara Thiering** (alternative theories by a biblical scholar about where and how the story of Jesus took place, based on learnings from the '**Dead Sea Scrolls**').
- to name but three.

I would say that those three books, along with '**Holy Blood, Holy Grail**' are essential reading for anyone who wishes to read up on and understand the origins of Christianity - for most people, the history will prove to be far stranger than most fantasy plots.

Juli says

The fact that I read horribly written books about templars, and things of that ilk, is one of my shameful secrets. I don't believe a word that I've read, but they suck me in.

That part in the Dan Brown book (don't remember if it was DaVinci or Angels) where he was listing off the books in that guy's library? I have all those books...Oh the shame :)

This book, as all similar books, could be about 200-300 pages shorter as they restate their theories in multiple ways. They also all seem to use the same source material, as the mostly contain the same info. This is one of the better written, however.

Tamra says

I read The Da Vinci Code and it made me want to read Holy Blood, Holy Grail, which was apparently the only book Dan Brown based his own research on.

Only problem with all the "research"? Holy Blood, Holy Grail is at best laughable. They'll tell you something like, "Person A knew Person B who was at a play that Person C also attended, though we have no knowledge they actually knew each other. Furthermore, Person B was born in Italy and from all that we know that Person C passed on essential information to Person A about the nature of Christ." It makes so much sense!

I expected, at any chapter, for them to suggest that really aliens had come down and given vital information to a certain individual and that's the real secret. Come on, people! Were you taught no critical thinking skills?!!

If you like conspiracy theories, have at it. I would think that anyone who read the Da Vinci Code would feel compelled to see where Dan Brown got his information. The fact that almost all of it is from this book? Not a good point for Dan Brown and his best-seller.

Lisa says

I read this book and ate up every last bit of speculation, theory, and downright invention. The photos creeped me out, and I daydreamed about the possibility that the Knights Templar really had links to Jesus Christ, and that the Freemasons were more than just a bunch of weird old guys that did some boring, yet secret, junk in an old building downtown. Years later, a Freemason mistakenly left a lengthy message on our answering machine in Palm Desert, California. He gave intricate, specific details about the intended receiver of the message's duties at an upcoming Freemason funeral. Wish I'd transcribed it. What I wish even more is that I went ahead and wrote a work of fiction largely based on it. Boy, would I be rich now.

Nandakishore Varma says

I originally approached the book with the idea that even if the "history" was wonky, it will be entertaining to read. I was sorely disappointed. It was uphill all the way, especially in the middle, when you get bogged down in all those dynasties.

However, I'm giving it two stars for the chapters towards the end. The speculations in there have given the myth-lover in me have one more go at the Bible, and the enigmatic figure of the Christ.

Overall opinion? A boring book with some entertaining speculations.

Bryan says

Reading this book is like slogging uphill through a mudslide - after a while you lose track of where you are, and it doesn't seem worth the effort to keep going.

Jason says

Jesus was born of a virgin, raised the dead, turned water into wine, and was resurrected after his crucifixion. OK. BUT SAYING THAT HE HAD CHILDREN IS THE MOST RIDICULOUS THING IN THE WORLD!

I read this book when it was first published and it's speculations have fertilized my thinking since then. Even if the thesis is wrong, the wild, richly detailed landscape you cross with it is thought-provoking and conspiratorially satisfying.

In the '90s some boson claimed to have fraudulently placed the priory of zion 'list' document in the French

library where Baigent did his research, making Baigent's book total fiction. But why should we believe this person's claims over Baigent's? Because he said he did so?

I recommend this book for those who enjoy a fine mystery, a detailed trip through history, an appreciation for art, and who question religious dogma.

For scholarly alternate histories of Jesus I recommend: "The Nazarene Gospel Restored" by Robert Graves & Joshua Podro (yes, they agree that the Rabbi Jesus would have wed); and, "The Mythmaker" by Hyam Maccoby.

If the Holy Grail is your thing I recommend the old, anonymous QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL. Powerful, sad, beautiful moments from this work still linger in my psyche, thankfully.

Robyn says

While much of the evidence in this has been debunked since it's writing, and most of the research has been called into question, this is an interesting book nonetheless, with much more depth, twists and turns than The DaVinci code, which stole many of these author's ideas. There are many concepts in this book, some are very dubious, and others seem downright plausible. If one approaches this with the right spirit; which is to say, with an open mind, but with the desire to do lots of independent research, it can become a wonderful real life detective story. At worst, you could take it as an interesting mockumentary-style story, and still have a pretty gripping tale. (there is a long stretch on geneology in the middle that lags quite a bit, but stick with it, it's worth the payoff.) At best though, it is something that will make you question what you've been told, and try to do a little independent thinking on the matter.

Read this book, absolutely, if you have any interest in religious history, but take it with a grain of salt. I hope to see someone pick these ideas up again, dust them off, and do the work that the authors didn't, giving us a real chance at looking at some of these theories honestly

Paul Dinger says

I wasn't suprised at all that the authors of this book sued Dan Brown over the DaVinci Code. He could have had this book open and used whole sections of it. The plot of this book actually follows the DaVinci Code in many aspects. What I enjoyed about this book is the research. It does take a few chances, and it clearly states that it is speculative history, but it made me see the Gospels in a whole other way. I can't recommend it enough.

Steve says

Alrighty....Here's another tin foil hat conspiracy book. Holy Blood Holy Grail was dragged into English court as part of the authors complaint of plagiarism against Dan Brown's The Manet Code...HAHAHA..Da Vinci.My joke and the lawsuit and the book are all similar to Dan Brown's Oeuvre by being boring and poorly written. That might have been Leigh and Baigent's best argument.

What offends me about this book is that it takes something that is fundamentally interesting (the history of the gospels, the history of the city-state politics of the times of the crusades) and makes it boring and dumb. Pierre Plantard...the basis for this book, in the hope of squeezing yet another Dollar or Franc or Euro out of his fraud...has admitted(that we needed an admission) that the Priory documents were just a goof by irrelevant people exploiting the interest in crappy pulp fiction.

If you like/believe things like "there were no facts, but instead the shape of something that might be trying to call it's attention or form a condition where the facts..."

You'll Love this book.

Manny says

Probably the oldest surviving piece of hot gossip still in circulation: Jesus had an affair with Mary Magdalene, which resulted in a child.

Members of the post-Dan-Brown generation may have trouble believing this, but I hadn't heard a single rumour before I read this book. Really!

Notary Tim says

This book should be under fiction instead of religion, as the conspiracy put forth in it is so obviously a bunch of hookum that anyone who actually reads the book should be able to see that their sole source is playing them for reasons that never become clear. This is the sort of book that brings out the worst sort of conspiracy nuts -- those who will believe it because they want it to be true, not because there is actual proof or overwhelming evidence that it true. It is worth reading ONLY if you want to know where Dan Brown found his big "secret" that made *The DaVinci Code* so upsetting to so many people -- that Jesus and Mary Magdalene may have been married & had at least 1 child is a very old legend that is at the core of this book and of Brown's much-maligned work of fiction. In fact, the authors of this book sued Brown for copyright infringement or plagiarism because their theory makes up such a big part of his book; they lost because the courts said if it was true (as these authors claim), you can not copyright truth. They might have had a better case if they had marketed this as the fiction it is, but then it would not still be in print after all these years, appealing to new generations of conspiracy nuts. (I happen to believe there are conspiracies, just not this one.)

Jennifer says

Speculation, yes. But even the bible contains much speculation (yes, that is my opinion and you don't need to agree with me, that is fine and I am perfectly ok with that). The basis for my opinion is as follows. The new testament wasn't even written until 60 yrs after Jesus' death, by people who most likely never heard him speak. It is really difficult to guess what sort of motives they may have had or whether they were trying very hard to shape the New Testament stories according to the old testament prophecies. Also, the council of Nicea picked and chose what documents could be a part of the New Testament in 325 CE. Would we choose the same books today? In addition, countless re-transcribings of the sacred texts and translations have occurred resulting in uncountable mis-translations and errors.

Did you know:

Mary Magdalene was NOT ever called a prostitute in the bible?

In 1969 the Catholic church issued a Papal Bull recanting the claim they had earlier made that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute. That was news to me. And I was never even Catholic.

Jesus, as a rabbi, would have been EXPECTED to be married and have children according to Judaic custom. Of course this is by no means proof that he did marry and have children, but it is not outside the realm of possibility.

So of course this book is probably 90% speculation. But I stand by my opinion, that lots of things are speculation.

I heard about this book from a friend in church during our Unitarian Universalist bible study group. When I get the time I look forward to reading it.

Excerpt from wikipedia article on Mary Magdalene:

Pope Gregory the Great's homily on Luke's gospel dated 14 September 591 first suggested that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute: "She whom Luke calls the sinful woman, whom John calls Mary, we believe to be the Mary from whom seven devils were ejected according to Mark. And what did these seven devils signify, if not all the vices? ... It is clear, brothers, that the woman previously used the unguent to perfume her flesh in forbidden acts."(homily XXXIII)[14]

In 1969 the Vatican, without commenting on Pope Gregory's reasoning,[15] implicitly rejected it by separating Luke's sinful woman, Mary of Bethany, and Mary Magdala via the Roman Missal.[16]

This identification of Mary Magdalene as a prostitute was followed by many writers and artists until the 20th century. Even today it is promulgated by some secular and occasional Christian groups. It is reflected in Martin Scorsese's film adaptation of Nikos Kazantzakis's novel *The Last Temptation of Christ*, in José Saramago's *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ*, Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, Jean-Claude La Marre's *Color of the Cross* and Hal Hartley's *The Book of Life*.

It was because of this association of Mary as a prostitute that she became the patroness of "wayward women", and "Magdalene houses" became established to help save women from prostitution.[17]

Damien says

A remarkable work of fiction. Just because the authors didn't intend it to be fiction is neither here nor there. It's a thrilling romp all the same, and a gazillion times better than that wretched rip-off, *The Da Vinci Code*.

It's well written and extensively researched. The conclusions that the author's draw from that research are, of course, a little on the zany side. But there's something exquisitely Indiana Jones about the whole thing. If you're a sensitive religious sort, then this probably isn't for you, as there are some seriously far out claims made in the book. However, it is actually possible to learn a lot about theology from reading this book. References to the Early Church fathers, the gnostics, the Cathars, Templars etc are plentiful, and more

importantly these references usually direct the reader to original sources.

It's all thrillingly bonkers, and yet, after reading it, you'll still feel a might sad that the whole thing turned out to be a load of old tosh written by some aged school boys who, unwittingly, got themselves royally punk'd by another aged school boy by the name of Pierre Plantard.

I thought it was a lot of fun.

Terence says

I must have picked this book up around the time it came out, which would have made me a sophomore in high school.

When I became a "real" historian, I came to realize just how much of it was hyperbolic tripe but even as a youth, I understood that 90% was speculation (to put it kindly).

The two things it did do for me were:

1. Reveal a Dark Age world of Europe that I hadn't encountered before.
2. Gave the alternate-history buff in me a whole new set of "what-ifs" to think about.

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