

Secret Societies

The Knights Templar

1. The Order of the Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon.
 - a. Founded c. 1118
 - b. Nine French crusader knights took vows to protect pilgrims in the Holy Land.
 - c. The King of Jerusalem gave them quarters in his palace on Temple Mount and the Canons of the Holy Sepulchre provided stables in the same area.
2. Won approval as new Order in 1128.
 - a. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who had a relative in the original nine founders, wrote the rule.
 - b. St. Bernard hoped these warrior-monks would counterbalance the brutality and pride of worldly knights.
 - c. The Templars wore the white mantle of the Cistercians. The pope added a red cross in 1147.
 1. Brown nudges the reader to see the Templar sign as special—“symbolic of balance and harmony” and gender balance. (145)
 2. All the major Knightly Orders had similar “cross formy,” or equal-armed cross. **(Picture of Templar Cross and picture of Latin Cross)**
3. A papal bull of approval in 1139 made them independent of local bishops.
 - a. Under papal authority, not a “law unto themselves.” (159)
 - b. Other Knightly Orders had the same relationship to the Church.
 - c. The Knight Templars was headed by the Grand Master of the Temple of Jerusalem.
4. Growth and affluence.
 - a. Great gifts of money and property were bestowed upon the Templars.
 - b. In Paris (and London) their organization became a depository for noble and royal funds. They provided a banking network for the wealthy.
 - c. They also witnessed great growth in their early years.
5. The Templars fortunes changed when the Crusaders were finally ousted from the Holy Land in 1291.
6. This gave Philip IV (the Fair) of France his opportunity.
 - a. France was near bankruptcy.
 - b. King Philip took advantage of the Templars’ secret rite of initiation to charge them with heresy.
 1. Philip arrests every Templar in the French kingdom (1307)
 - c. Browbeating Pope Clement V—who resided in Avignon, France and not Rome—Philip was able to get the Pope to dissolve the Order (1314).
 - d. Philip killed much of the Templars leadership.

Templar Myth

1. Esoteric writers have credited the Templars with doing many things.
 - a. Lived on as a secret organization in Scotland.
 - b. Won the Battle of Bannockburn for Robert the Bruce in 1314.

- c. Discovered the New World.
- d. Found Freemasonry.
- e. Spread the mystic wisdom from Atlantis, Egypt, Phoenicia, the Essenes, the Gnostics, the Cathars and every occultic idea you can think of.

Brown's use of the Myth

1. Secret knowledge (gnosis) about Christ and Mary Magdalene.
2. Connection to pagan religion.
 - a. "cross formy"
 - b. "round churches"
3. Pope orders the destruction of the Templars.

The Priory of Sion

1. The Priory of Sion was revealed to English speakers by the 1982 best seller *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, co-authored by Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln.
 - a. Leigh Teabing (anagram of Baigent)
 - b. Brown completely borrows his thesis from this book.
2. Pierre Plantard founded the Priory in 1956.
3. But his big break came when he appeared on BBC television in 1979.
 - a. He came to the attention of Michael Baigent and his partners.
 - b. The books followed.
 - c. Plantard died in obscurity in 2000.
4. His views have been repudiated on British and French television.