

most extensively. The Ancient Mysteries of the Mediterranean, the Tantric secrets of Hinduism and Buddhism, the mysticism of the Sufis in Islam, the doctrines of the Kabbalists – all are obscured from non-initiates by strict secrecy and the language of symbolism.¹⁴³

What cannot be argued however is that Freemasonry at the very least mimics a Gnostic-style initiatory system akin to the Ancient Mysteries. One of the Brotherhood's most celebrated mystical writers, Walter Wilmhurst, defines the aim of this initiation with symbolism that would please Dan Brown:

There remains a way of regaining consciousness of that higher world and life. It is by bringing into function a now dormant and submerged faculty resident at the depth and centre of his being. That dormant faculty is the Vital and Immortal Principle which exists as the central point of the circle of his individuality.

In writing *The Lost Symbol*, Dan Brown could have had Robert Langdon searching for all manner of material treasures associated with Freemasonry: the body of Jesus, the Ark of the Covenant, the Elixir of Life. It is a credit to him that instead he focused on the 'spiritual treasure' of the Craft. One of Brown's primary sources, the esoteric scholar Manly P. Hall, once wrote that Freemasonry is "a science of the soul." In his earlier Robert Langdon books, Dan Brown explored the tension arising out of the dichotomy of science and religion; in *The Lost Symbol* he may just have resolved it. By putting that 'science of the soul' back into the public consciousness, perhaps it will inspire millions of readers to explore Freemasonry and other offshoots of the Ancient Mysteries, and maybe even to embark on their own process of initiation and pursuit of the divine within.

APPENDIX 1



THE CODES ON THE COVER

In late 2003 it was pointed out to me that the dust cover of Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* contained a number of curious 'anomalies': map co-ordinates in 'mirror writing', bolded letters hiding odd messages, and more. The reason for these strange inclusions became clear when Dan Brown announced in an interview that clues about the sequel to *The Da Vinci Code* were hidden on the cover of the bestselling book. By solving these puzzles and ciphers – and being conversant with many of the topics and resources Brown was likely to use in writing the sequel, I was able to write a complete primer on the as-yet unpublished book in late 2004 (the progenitor of this book you are holding now). In this very early 'guide' to the contents of *The Lost Symbol* – originally titled (and self-published) as *Da Vinci In America* – I gave background information on many of the topics that I surmised would be in the new book: Francis Bacon and the transmission of Rosicrucian philosophies, the history of Freemasonry, how 'the Craft' influenced America's Founding Fathers, and the esoteric landscape of Washington, D.C. (including such exotic locales as the Scottish Rite's "House of the Temple").

When the cover artwork for *The Lost Symbol* was released in July 2009 I received the first confirmation that my research was on the right track. Though only the front cover and spine design was released prior to publication, it was enough to show that various locations in the American capital which I had written about were important to the new book. The cover featured a ‘torn parchment’ theme similar to the cover of *The Da Vinci Code*, though with Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. as the focus rather than the Mona Lisa, and the Washington Monument hidden away on the spine. Also prominent was a wax seal emblazoned with a double-headed eagle and the number 33 – a direct confirmation that Freemasonry, in particular Scottish Rite Masonry - would play a major role in the new book.

Not so noticeable on the cover though were the various symbols imprinted upon the parchment, taken from astrology, alchemy and other esoteric fields – and therefore offering the perfect vibe for a Dan Brown book. But on closer inspection, something else became apparent. Once again, Dan Brown had hidden some codes on the cover of his latest novel!



Double-Headed Eagle Emblem of Scottish Rite Freemasonry

Firstly, randomly spread between the front cover and the spine, were letter-number combinations. Above the R of “Brown” we find “B1”. On the left, above “a novel”, there is another: “C2”. And also, on the far right of the cover, “J5”. Meanwhile, at the top left of the spine we find “E8”, and just above the keyhole at the bottom of the spine is “H5”.

Thus, from a scan of the front cover and spine the following codes had been collected: B1, C2, E8, H5, and J5. However, the alphabetical nature of the letter-number combinations – B, C, E, H and J – suggested that at least five more were missing: A#, D#, F#, G# and I# (which would complete the first ten letters of the alphabet, A to J). Without the back cover, the code was unbreakable. Or was it?

A number of (very smart!) people who were working on cracking this code noted that in the previous ‘Da Vinci Code Webquest’ competition participants were asked to ring the numbers (212) 782-9920 and (212) 782-9932. These numbers seem to be part of a phone number allocation to publisher Random House in New York, whose main number is (212) 782-9000, with the first seven numbers (212-782-9###) being consistent.

The reader has probably already noted that the new cover codes fit this phone number ‘template’ perfectly. Arranging the five known codes in alphabetical order (ABCDEFGHIJ) gives (#12) #8#-#5#5. Using the known Random House numbers as a base allowed some educated guesses at four of the other letter-number combinations: A2, D7, F2 and G9. This just left I# as the only unknown (212-782-95#5); ten possibilities, easy enough to brute force if someone was willing to call each one.

It turns out a number of people did, but they were met with Random House offices and answering machines – no competition hotline though. This despite confirmation from a newly activated ‘Symbol Quest’ on Dan Brown’s website – in which the participant had to answer 33 consecutive riddles based

on various symbols – that, once completed, featured a recording of Dan Brown stating that there were codes on the cover of *The Lost Symbol* which would decode to a telephone number, via which 33 lucky contestants would receive a signed copy of his new book.

As it turns out, the decoding guess was correct – it was just done too quickly! Random House had not ‘turned on’ the competition phone response at such an early stage. Persistent callers found late on the 14th of September (the day before publication of *The Lost Symbol*) that the competition had gone ‘live’ on the number (212) 782-9515. A new message was available, from Brown’s editor Jason Kaufman, asking contestants to submit an email to a certain address; if they were one of the first 33, they would receive a signed copy of *The Lost Symbol*.

Once released on September 15, the back cover of the book confirmed the decoding: the letter-number combinations A2, D7, F2, G9, and I1 are all found there. It is likely then that anybody that solved the phone number code after buying the book (and seeing the back cover) would have been too late – it’s probable that the first 33 emails were received before *The Lost Symbol* even hit bookstore shelves.

But that’s not all. There were more codes on the front cover than just these letter-number combinations. On the front cover, just on the inside and outside of the left hand side of the faint circle surrounding the Scottish Rite seal, two sets of numbers can be found:

Outside: 22-65-22-97-27

Inside: 22-23-44-1-133-97-65-44

At first glance, the most notable aspect of this number sequence was the non-random appearance of repeated numbers: 22, 44, 97 and 65. This suggested that the numbers were to be substituted

for letters in two words, with 22, 44, 97 and 65 being repeated letters. Further, these repeated numbers in a sequence echoed a code found on the back page of Dan Brown’s 1998 book *Digital Fortress*: 128-10-93-85-10-128-98-112-6-6-25-126-39-1-68-78. The solution in that case was that each of the numbers referred to a chapter, and taking the first letter of each of those chapters yielded (after using a further decipher with a ‘Caesar Box’) the secret message “We are watching you.” If this new code used the same deciphering method, it seemed that it could not be solved until the book was published and the first letters of the various chapters known.

Once again, however, brute force deciphering techniques came to the fore. Assuming that the numbers do indeed stand for letters, brute force decoding by substitution analysis can be done by taking into consideration the repeated ‘letters’, as well as regular English-language use of certain letter combinations and their positions within words. This narrows down the number of possible words that can be represented significantly. Some people are good enough (and have enough spare time!) to do this with paper and pencil, but in the modern age we can be more efficient by utilizing computers to do the job. For example, by converting the number sequence into an equivalent letter sequence – preserving the order and the repeated elements (e.g. ABACD AEFHGCBF) – we can use an online tool such as “Decrypto” (<http://www.blisstonia.com/software/WebDecrypto/index.php>) to do the work for us. In just 0.022 seconds Decrypto returns only 15 possible word combinations, and for anybody familiar with the content of *The Lost Symbol*, one in particular stands out: “POPES PANTHEON”. John Russell Pope is famous for being the architect behind a number of prominent buildings in Washington, D.C., including the National Archives, the Jefferson Memorial, the West Building of the National Gallery of Art, and the Scottish Rite’s “House

of the Temple”. Furthermore, some of these buildings were influenced by the architecture of the Pantheon in Rome, perhaps most prominently the Jefferson Memorial.

Again, this pre-publication solution was confirmed once *The Lost Symbol* was released. Just as surmised, each number pointed to a chapter, from which the first letter was taken and substituted into the sequence. For example, chapter 22 begins with “Pacing”, chapter 65 “Once”, chapter 97 “Eight”, chapter 27 “Systems”. Using the first letters of each of these and substituting into the first five numbers of the sequence we get “POPES”. Continuing this with the second sequence gives “PANTHEON”. A much easier way to decipher the codes obviously, but you still have to admire the ingenuity of the brute force deciphering before publication! Further confirmation that this code points to the Jefferson Memorial comes in the text of *The Lost Symbol*, with Brown twice referencing the monument as being based on the Pantheon.

However, two further codes could only be deciphered once *The Lost Symbol* had been released – simply because they are only on the back cover. Most prominent is the ‘Masonic Cipher’ (also known as the ‘Pigpen Cipher’) written just inside the verticals of the decorative frame. To ‘read’ the symbols in the correct orientation, rotate the back cover 90 degrees clockwise.

Though this is a well-known cipher method and could be decoded without too much help, Dan Brown offers the actual key on page 197 of *The Lost Symbol* (whilst describing it as “almost infantile”). Each symbol is actually the uniquely shaped enclosure of each letter’s position in the ‘pigpen’ grid.

So to start, we have the top-left grid square corresponding to ‘A’. The next two are the top right grid-square featuring a dot: ‘L’; the first word is “ALL”. Continuing on with this deciphering method reveals the statement “ALL GREAT TRUTHS BEGIN AS BLASPHEMIES”, which is a quote from the Irish playwright

George Bernard Shaw, and which applies neatly to many of the topics that Dan Brown discusses in his novels.

Lastly, perhaps the most novel cipher technique used by Dan Brown in *The Lost Symbol* is the grid square which is decoded using the number layout in the ‘magic square of Jupiter’ found in the 1514 engraving *Melencolia I*, by the Renaissance master Albrecht Dürer. As Dan Brown discusses, adding each row, column, and diagonal in this magic square gives a total of 34 (what a shame that wasn’t 33!).

On the back cover we find there is a grid square containing a number of letters. While again this jumble of letters could be brute-forced if necessary (it baffles Nola Kaye in *The Lost Symbol*, but in reality no C.I.A. analyst would have any trouble with it at all), Dan Brown explains all in the pages of the book. All that is required is to navigate the grid squares in numerical sequence: in Dürer’s square, the number ‘1’ is at bottom right, so in the corresponding square in the cover cipher we find a ‘Y’. Number ‘2’ is third square in the top row, corresponding to ‘O’ in cipher square; ‘3’ equals ‘U’, ‘4’ is “R”. Continuing on, the entire message is revealed: “YOUR MIND IS THE KEY”, which relates well to the content in *The Lost Symbol* concerning the Ancient Mysteries and Noetic Science.

One final thing worth noting is that Dan Brown has said that there are five hidden messages on the cover. Above I’ve mentioned four – so what is the final message? It may be the lines mirrored at the top and bottom of the decorative text frame on the back cover, the well-known Hermetic axiom “AS ABOVE SO BELOW”, although this hardly seems to



*Magic square from Dürer's
Melencolia I*

be a hidden code. Or does this simply reveal a method for solving a fifth code? Or perhaps a final message is hidden somewhere amongst the various symbols found on the cover? Why not grab your copy and see what you can find. And keep your eye on my Dan Brown-related website The Cryptex (<http://www.thecryptex.com>) for further updates.

APPENDIX 2



RESOURCES

I have mentioned a number of worthwhile sources in the text of the book, but below I'll provide a comprehensive resource list for those that would like to explore the topics of *The Lost Symbol* in detail. Here are my suggestions, in no particular order (and please note, by listing them I am not vouching for the information in each book or website, just that they will give you insights into various lines of thinking):

Books on Freemasonry and Secret Societies:

- *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* – Dame Frances Yates
- *Revolutionary Brotherhood* – Steven Bullock
- *Cracking the Freemason's Code* – Robert Cooper
- *The Masonic Myth* – Jay Kinney
- *Solomon's Builders* – Christopher Hodapp
- *Secrets of the Tomb* – Alexandra Robbins
- *Morgan: The Scandal That Shook Freemasonry* – Stephen Dafoe
- *The Mythology of the Secret Societies* – J.M. Roberts
- *A Brief History of Secret Societies* – David V. Barrett