

Preface

It's been nearly 20 years now since I first read about *Le serpent rouge* ('The Red Serpent') in *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*¹. From the onset I was rather intrigued by the poem in this secret document of the Prieuré de Sion ('Priory of Sion') and the extraordinary riddle it contains. Little did I know that it would eventually urge me to travel thousands of miles and have me guessing for many years.

After obtaining the entire document in 1998, I could purposefully and systematically fine-comb the stanzas for clues and research every single one. With each visit to the areas mentioned therein, I found answers to some of the clues, and slowly but surely the solution began to unfold. Finally, nearly 40 years after the document was first published, the final breakthrough came about.

Of all the secret documents relating to the Rosicrucian Order, the Prieuré de Sion, *Le serpent rouge* is undoubtedly the one of the finest quality. The riddle woven into the poem is also of the highest order. Contrary to the fictional riddle in *The Da Vinci Code*², which is also linked to the Prieuré de Sion, this riddle relates to an authentic Prieuré document. I have also consulted significant French documents and genealogies that, to the best of my knowledge, have never appeared in an English publication. The translation of the original poem from French, as well as the translations from other French sources, are my own.

According to the poet, the riddle will ultimately lead one to the new temple of Solomon, wherein a treasure of incalculable worth is hidden – evidently nothing less than the temple treasures of Jerusalem. Although it had not been my intent to find the treasure, but rather to solve the riddle in the poem, the climax of my research was when I discovered the actual highly secret keystone to which all the clues in the riddle lead and that has been present in a secret location for many centuries.

In view of the extremes the relevant secret groups had gone to to devise the riddle over literally centuries – even the St. Sulpice Church in Paris had been laid out according to the geometry of the area in which the keystone had been hidden – this discovery will undoubtedly have far-reaching political and religious implications.

I trust that the journey through the stanzas of the poem, up until the solving of the riddle, will captivate the reader as much as it did me.

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