



Secret Societies in Fiction

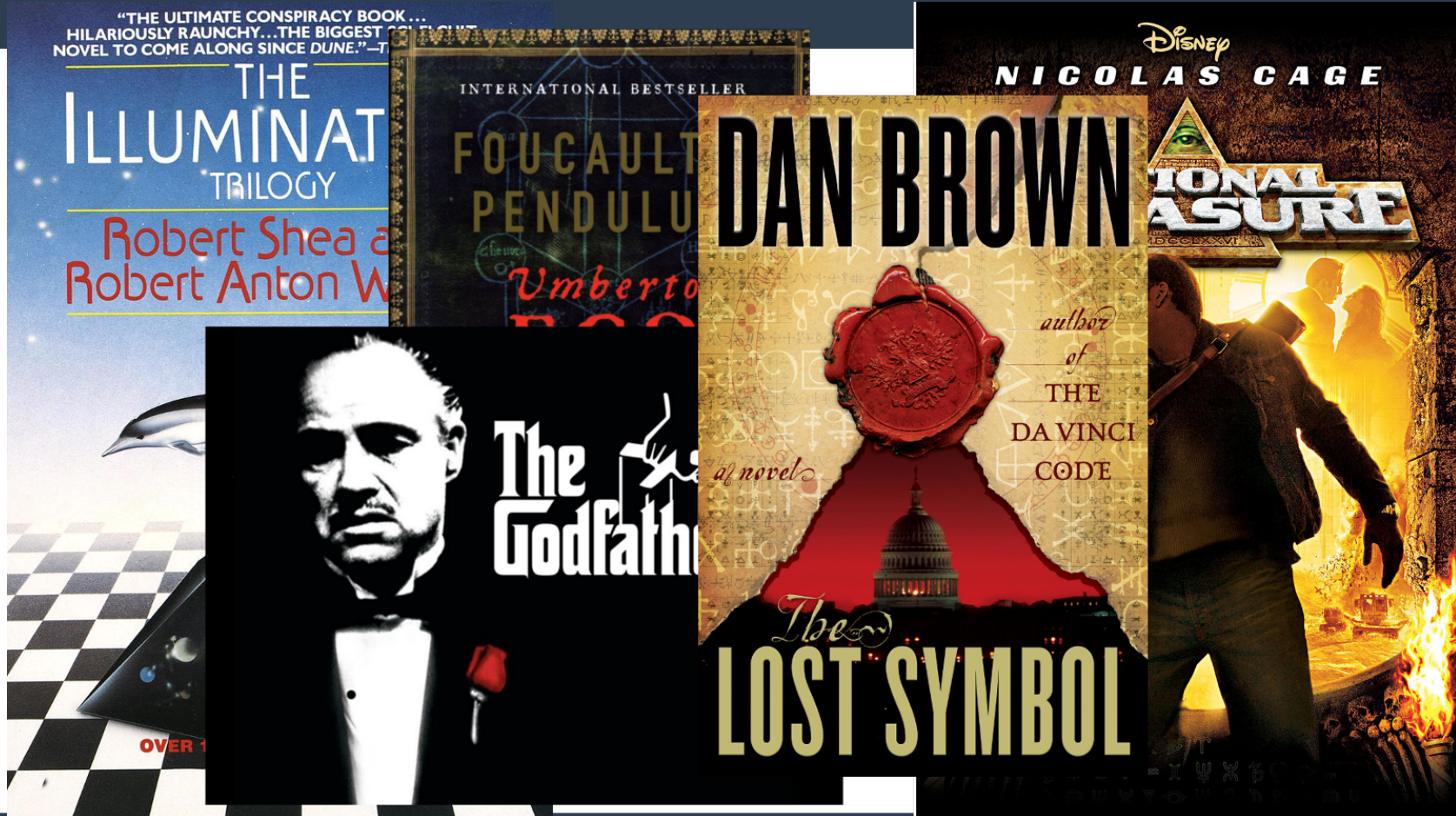
Erik L. Arneson

What is a Secret Society?



- Rite of initiation or oath – paying subscription isn't enough
- Some level of secrecy
- Must make conscious effort to join
- At least one of the following intents:
 - Transfer secret or teaching
 - Behave fraternally or benevolently
 - Support each other

Secret Societies are Everywhere (in Fiction)

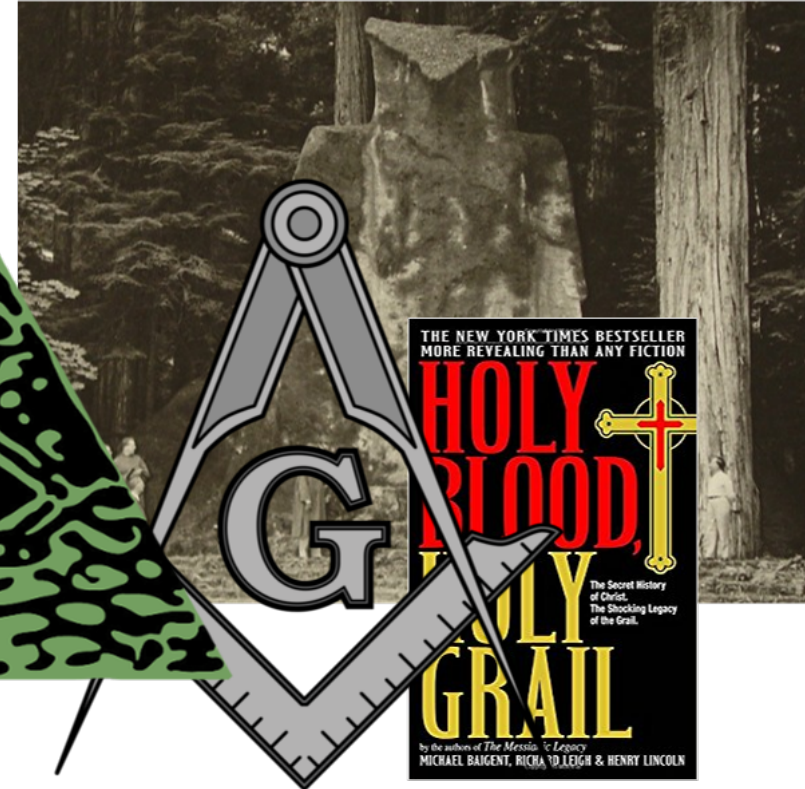


Legendary Histories!



© Chinese National Geography

Conspiracy Theories!



The Rosicrucians: From Fiction to Reality

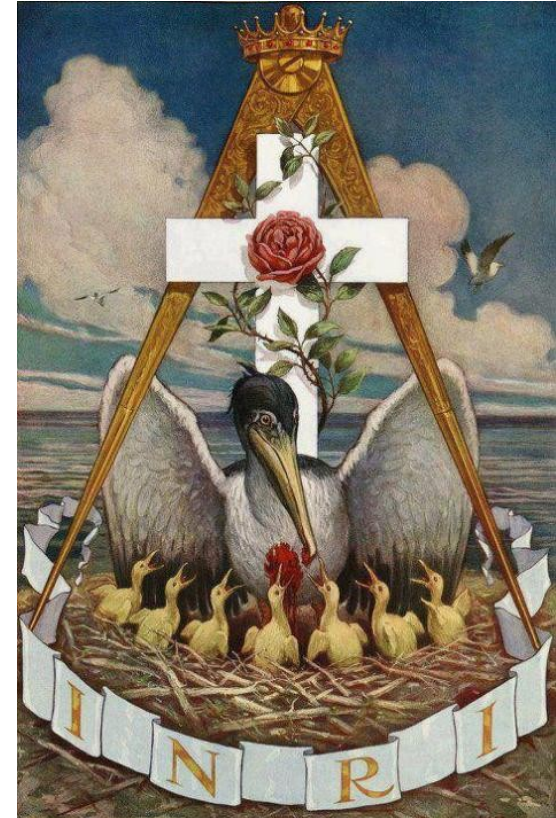
- *Fama Fraternitatis RC* (c. 1607)
- *Confessio Fraternitatis* (c. 1615)
- *Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz* (1616)
- Johannes Valentin Andreae



Non-Fictional Rosicrucians



- Invisible College (Royal Society?!?)
- Masonic Rosicrucians
- Fraternitas Rosæ Crucis (FRC)
- Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn
- Ancient Mystical Order Rosæ Crucis (AMORC)
- *And dozens more!!*



The Freemasons – Just the Facts



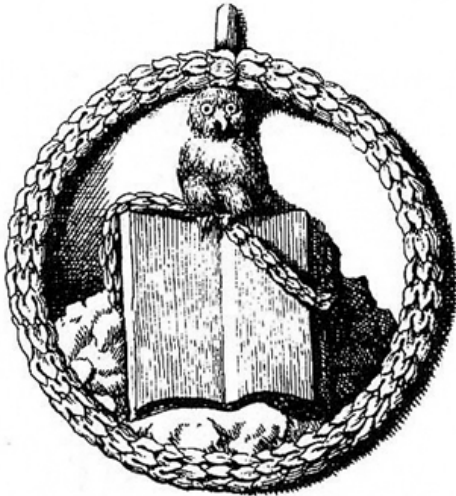
- Who are they?
- Where did they come from?
- Why are they here?
- Are they really _____?



The Bavarian Illuminati – Just the Facts



Illuminaten



Neue und vermehrte Auflage.

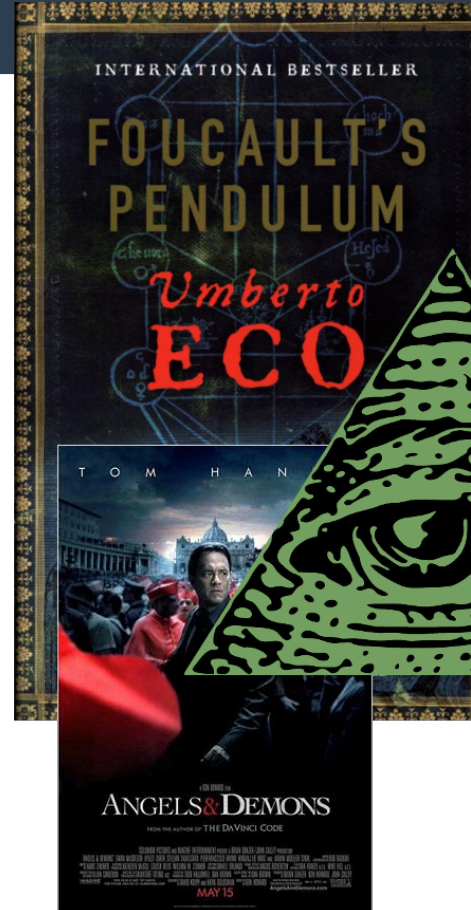
Frankfurt und Leipzig,
in der Grattenauerischen Buchhandlung. 1788.

- Founded May 1, 1776
- Adam Weishaupt and Franz Xaver von Zwackh
- 1780 – Baron Adolf von Knigge joins
- Expansion across Germany

The Bavarian Illuminati – The Fiction (Some of It!)



- Why are the Illuminati so unpopular?
- Who started this annoying fad?
- Why does it persist?
- Are *They* really watching you?



The Bavarian Illuminati – Back to Reality (Sort of?)



- The Illuminati wanted us to build a rational, democratic society.
- Modern Illuminati groups probably just want your money.
- You're better off with the Rosicrucians!

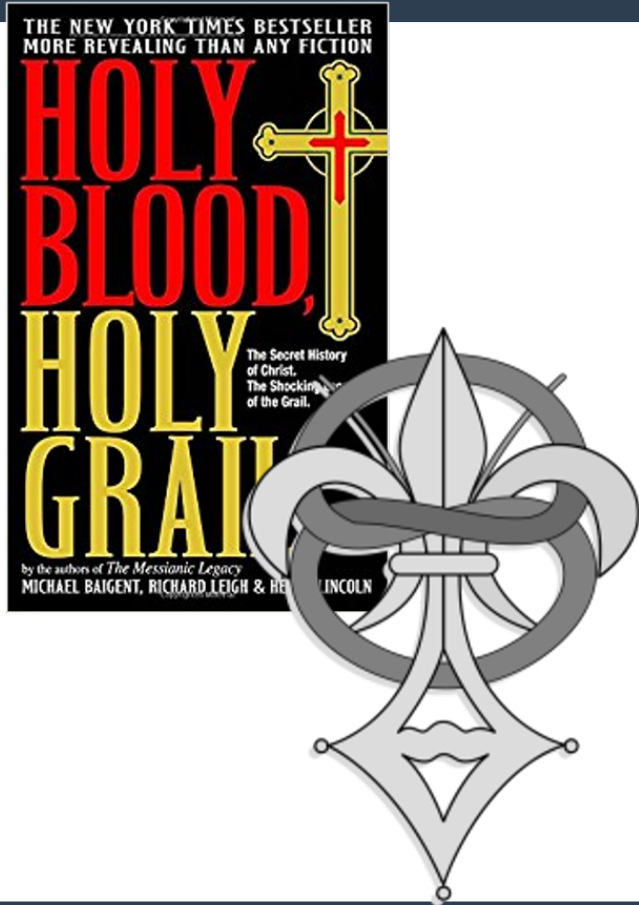
The Taxil Hoax (or Freemasons Go Fictional)

- Léo Taxil (1854-1907), anti-Mason and anti-Catholic
- Popes published 17 anti-Masonic encyclicals between 1738 and 1902
- Associated Masonry with Satanism, Baphomet, all kinds of bad stuff



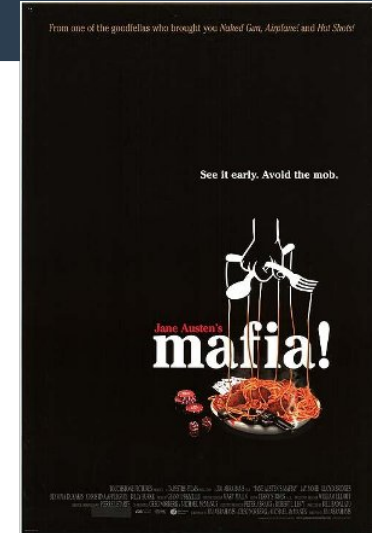
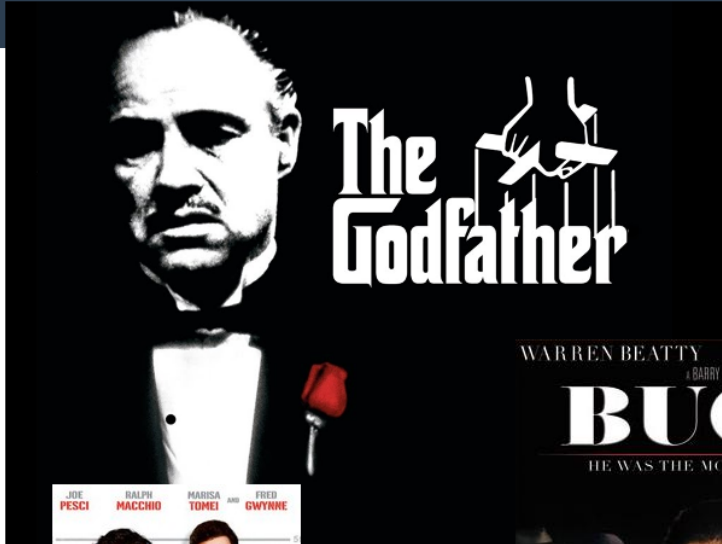
Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Priory of Sion (or Holy Blood, Holy Cow!)



- Invented by Pierre Plantard (1920-2000)
- Became key in the mystery of Rennes-le-Château
- Expanded by pseudo-historical best seller *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*
- Exploded in popularity with Dan Brown's *The DaVinci Code*

Cosa Nostra (I mean, the Mafia)



What's *Your* Favorite Fictional Secret Society?





Thank You!

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