

The Last Supper of Leonardo da Vinci - Hidden Scenes of the Gospels and Hidden Criticism of the Pontificate

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Abstract

Besides Leonardo da Vinci's drawing "Vitruvian Man" the author was also occupied with da Vinci's painting "The Last Supper" (performed between 1494/1495 and 1497/1498) and discovered several hidden information of the Gospels in it. Besides various scenes and quotations from the Gospels also connections to an early Renaissance painting are presented.

Furthermore one can find aspects of hidden criticism referring the Popes, the first Representatives of Jesus Christ on earth especially for many Catholics. These Popes are of interest who lived at the time of Leonardo da Vinci.

Missing Reproduction Image

Because of possible missing rights referring the Reproduction Image and therefore possible legal complaints this report is presented without an Image of the Painting *The Last Supper* of Leonardo da Vinci! This is regrettable, but nevertheless the reader can get an impression about the information given in this report!

One can find many images of *The Last Supper* in the Internet, so the reader can look at an image for example at the web site wikipedia while reading this report.

After Leonardo da Vinci's performance of *The Last Supper* at the Dominican Monestary *Santa Maria delle Grazie* in Milanese a part of the concerned wall was reconstructed to insert a door^[1]. Furthermore the original painting had been dilapidated and recovered over the following centuries^[1]. To see how the appearance of the entire original mural painting had been in its entirety, please click on Giampietrino's copy of the Last Supper on the wikipedia.de entry "Das Abendmahl (Leonardo da Vinci)"^[1].

Reference to the Painting *The Holy Trinity* of Masaccio

The Painting "The Holy Trinity"^[2] (between 1425 and 1428) was performed by the early Renaissance Painter Masaccio (1401-1428). In this painting, the Trinity is depicted on a vertical line by the Holy Father, the Holy Spirit (represented by the white dove) and Jesus Christus on the cross.

That the motif "The Holy Trinity" is also found in the painting "The Last Supper" will be explained later.

What does this painting have to do on first sight with Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper"?

In this context, the arched ceiling decoration of the spacious back room with its 36 or 48 (6 times 6 or 6 times 8) coffers in Masaccio's painting is worth mentioning (see Image of literature [2]).

In Leonardo da Vinci's painting, which also possesses a far-reaching ceiling, 36 (6 by 6) coffers are depicted, but at the painting *The Last Supper* the ceiling is flat.

Is it a coincidence that at both paintings shapes of coffers appear?

I don't think so, especially since the Holy Trinity can also be found in Leonardo da Vinci's painting!

Remarkable: the number three (trinity) times the number twelve (apostles) results in the number 36 (of coffers).

Hidden Scenes of the Gospels at the painting *The Last Supper*

If the reader possesses his/her own Reproduction Image of *The Last Supper*, it is advantageous to take the part in the vertical direction of the image from the lower end of the painting to the upper end of the ceiling girder. After doing that one covers the image by a 4x4-grid net, by that the eyes of Jesus are located in the vertical grid mid and the mid of his head is located in the horizontal grid mid.

This "grid net"-image allows to emphasize and distinguish the vertical positions of the different persons at the painting.

The result of the just described performance with the grid-net is called **Figure 0**.

Jesus Christus:

As one can see at Figure 0, Jesus is the central person of the painting.

The height of the eyes of the Apostles Nos. 1 to 3 and Nos. 10 to 12 (from left to right; see Names of all the Apostles on page 8) in vertical direction corresponds nearly to the eye level of Jesus. That means, that the eyes of these six Apostles and also of Apostle Thomas (with his index finger pointing upwards) are almost on a horizontal line.

Jesus' appearance, including his clothing, visible above the table, forms a triangle with its peak pointing upwards.

The triangle symbolizes the Holy Trinity: the Father (at the peak of the triangle), the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The words faith, love and truth are set against the names of the Holy Trinity, which is shown at Figure 1.

The Father or God, respectively is contrasted in the triangle with the expression Faith.

The Son or Jesus Christ, is contrasted with the expression (unconditional) Love.

The Holy Spirit is contrasted with the expression Truth (to be proclaimed by the Apostles).

Inside the triangle it is written the expression Eternal Life, which Jesus many times mentioned.

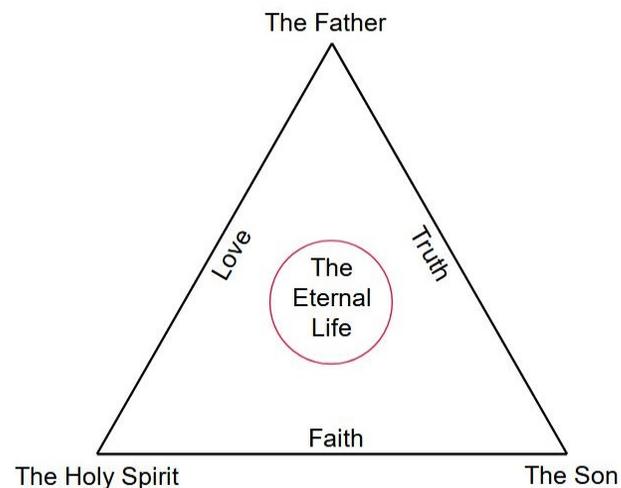


Figure 1: The Triangle of Trinity

According to Jesus, only by faith in God a person is capable of true, unconditional love to the next and to profound truth.

It also refers to the belief, that a part/piece of God exists by his/her soul in every human being. When a person is in perfect connection with his/her soul, incredible things are possible. As Jesus said in the Gospel Johannes 14,12: "Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do, and greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father."

The triangle surrounding Jesus can also be interpreted as the letter A. The initial letter of the Latin word "Amor" is A, and Jesus Christ represents love like no other person.

The triangle, reversed, can be interpreted as the letter V. The initial letter of the Latin word Veritas (in English truth) is V and Jesus Christus, as we know, stands for the truth like no other person.

In the background of the scene are two windows and a door (broader than the windows), which leads outside and by which the daylight is able to shine in. The author's impression has always been that the Last Supper took place in the dark, or at least at dusk. Isn't written in Johannes 13,30: "When Judas had taken the bite of bread, he went out immediately, and it was night."

The painting must be primarily oriented to the north, as the setting evening sun (directly in the west at this time of year, i.e., spring because of the Passover) makes the right side of the painting brighter than the left side because of the two open windows and the open door in the background.

In front of Jesus at the table is a large, flat plate filled with a white substance (clear water or salt) or just covered with a white, brightly cleaned base, reflecting the purity and truth of Jesus Christ. If the plate had been completely emptied - as stated in some literature - a light background should be visible at least on the left plate partly filled with fish^[3] (in front of the Apostle Andreas).

Apostle Johannes or Maria Magdalena?

The space between Jesus and Johannes (who sits to his right or left at the painting, respectively) again forms the letter V, which may represent Veritas or truth, respectively.

According to several sources, Apostle Johannes is supposed to represent Maria Magdalena, who might have been the lover or even the wife of Jesus. In the author's opinion, this was the truth for Leonardo da Vinci, and he incorporated it into his painting.

Noteworthy: the figure of Johannes or Maria Magdalena has a lighter complexion than the others Apostles, and his/her hands are drawn rather pale. This can also be seen in the copy of the painting *The Last Supper*^[1] by Giampietrino and further in the copy of the painting in the Tengerlo Abbey^[4].

The painter Bernardino Luini (1481-1532)^[5], who certainly knew the painting by Leonardo da Vinci, had already taken up the theory regarding Maria Magdalena and implemented it in his three-part version of the Last Supper (painted after 1500) (see picture 39 on page 70 of literature [6]). Here, Johannes, or Maria Magdalena, leans on Jesus' right shoulder. The Apostle Thomas also points upwards, and the Apostle Petrus is depicted similarly - leaning forward with his hand gesture - as in the painting of Leonardo da Vinci.

Furthermore, one must also consider the biblical passage Johannes 17,25-27: According to this Gospel Maria Magdalena and Apostle Johannes were present at the execution of Jesus. The pale hands of Johannes and Maria Magdalena, respectively, folded in prayer, may express their compassion at the act of Jesus' execution, during which Jesus' Followers (apart from Johannes, only female Followers were present at the execution) may have prayed.

For a better understanding of this section the reader has to imagine the reflection of the Apostle Johannes at the reproduction image on the reflection line, which is exactly the right, vertical frame edge of the left window. If doing this, only reflect the outline of the Apostle Johannes including the praying hands.

The author doesn't remember if he saw this reflection in any literature or if it was originated in his imagination. Until recently he wasn't familiar with the aforementioned painting by Bernardino Luini, which is reproduced in a small scale on page 70 of Leonhard Selleck's book called *The Key*^[6].

By this reflection the head of Johannes or Maria Magdalena rests on the shoulder of Jesus. And the space between the Apostle Johannes and his reflected version - as also depicted by Bernardino Luini - again forms the letter V, which again may represent the word Veritas or Truth, respectively.

The relatively large V-shaped space on the painting *The Last Supper* can therefore be seen as a placeholder for another person, namely Maria Magdalena. By the image reflection she would occupy a seat between Jesus and Johannes. Why this theory is not unreasonable will be explained below.

Astonishingly a head of a man with beard can now be seen revealed by the reflection of Johannes's reddish robe. Furthermore, the reflection of the robe reveals the shape of a wing resembling the one of a butterfly. Between the chin and the clasped hands of Johannes - or Maria Magdalena, respectively -, a small blue triangle with its edge pointing upwards can also be seen.

According to literature [1], the painting has been restored several times. By that the question arises, whether this part of the painting had also been restored, and if so, whether the contours of this area have been unintentionally changed.

A bird shape (symbolizing the Holy Spirit by a dove) with outstretched wings and a dove's tail can be seen, framed by Johannes' blue robe. By the reflection of the Apostle Johannes the dove is directed toward Jesus' head. The bird's head can be seen between the thumb and index finger of the Apostle Petrus. A part of the bird's tail is shaped within the green-grey robe of the Apostle Judas.

Without the reflection performance, that means on the original painting one can see the dove shape given by the outline of Apostle Johannes' blue robe facing upwards to the space between the Apostles Petrus and Johannes.

Theory: The Divine Trinity "Father - Holy Spirit - Son" is only visible by the reflection performance of the Apostle Johannes. By that the Trinity is represented in diagonal form towards the head of Jesus.

The full head, that appears by reflection is visible on a Reproduction Image from „bockala/Shotshop.com“. Without reflection only half of the head is visible, which is nearly impossible to notice or which one can only notice by knowing the reflection.

It may be the case that with another Reproduction Image the head is not visible!

The landscape in the background and the open door behind Jesus:

One reason or the reason, why the landscape was illustrated per daylight or at the onset of dusk could be based on the following statements by Jesus:

Johannes 11,7: Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door to the sheeps."

Johannes 11,9: I am the door; whoever passes through me will be saved; he/she will go in and out and find meadow.

And the meadows wouldn't be visible at the painting if it were dark outside!

The seating arrangement to the right and left of Jesus:

According to the biblical text Markus 10,37, the sons of Zebedeus, the brothers Johannes and Jakobus, ask Jesus for a place to his right and left in his (non-earthly) kingdom. And in the painting of Leonardo da Vinci the two brothers are sitting besides Jesus.

Jakobus (to the left of Jesus, but to the right in the painting) is determined to defend his place at all costs. He stretches out his arms and puffs himself and his robe to prevent others getting a place besides Jesus. He looks at Jesus' left hand and realizes that it is not in Jesus's hand (power) to allow him to sit next to Jesus in the kingdom of God (Mark 10,40). Furthermore, Jakobus realizes with horror that he and his brother Johannes, like Jesus, will drink the goblet and receive martyr's death (Jesus is referring to their martyrdom; see Markus 10,39).

Jesus, who also looks at his left hand, which is pale and bloodless, sees with a devoted gaze how this hand is pierced by a nail. But he might also see, that he will show the pierced hands to the Apostles after his resurrection.

Apostle Thomas:

As one can read by several literatures: The Apostle Thomas raises his hand and his index finger vertically upwards in a warning gesture. According to Johannes 20,24-39, Jesus later asks him to place the same finger into his side (into his wound).

Thesis: The Apostle Thomas's gesture seems to be communicating to Jesus: "Master, I know that in the end, you will show us your final miracle by ascending upwards into the Kingdom of Heaven, to the Father."

The upwards-pointing finger may also indicate that the ultimate truth is found in the Kingdom of Heaven, at God.

Jesus and Judas:

Jesus's right hand appears to be reaching for the glass of wine, while Judas's hand appears to be reaching for a loaf of bread. Jesus will later dip his loaf of bread in wine. Between the hands of Jesus and Judas is a small bowl full of clear or unused water, symbolizing clarity and truth. And only the two of them know the truth about the traitor at this time point. According to Matthäus 26,23, Jesus replies: "The one who dips his hand with me into the bowl will betray me." This image depicts the scene before Jesus and Judas dip their hands together into the water bowl.

Judas:

Judas is the only one in the room looking diagonally upwards and slightly backwards. He doesn't do this solely to eavesdrop on the conversation between Petrus and Johannes (or Maria Magdalena). The author believes that he is looking out the window. At this moment (when his betrayal becomes known), he wishes to be outside the community and the room. He is also the first one leaving the room. Looking upwards, he sees himself hanging on a beam or on the branch of a tree (see Matthäus 27,5). Furthermore, overlooking Jesus, he senses how Jesus will suffer his martyrdom while crucified.

It is common knowledge that Judas holds the purse (containing the 30 silver pieces) in his right hand. He has spilled a small bowl of salt with his right wrist. Salt is spread out on the table in front of him (which is also common knowledge!). At that time, salt was considered as a valuable, long-lasting foodstuff that also preserved other foods. With his betrayal, Judas betrayed - i.e., dirties - not only Jesus, but also the community of Apostles sitting at the same table with him. One of the group fell over and it was him!

Furthermore, Judas is the person whose head is the lowest one by leaning back, making him appear to be the smallest - the most minor - person in the room. Please see Figure 0.

Petrus:

Petrus (fourth from the left behind Judas) pushes to Johannes's ear to whisper to him that Johannes should ask Jesus about the traitor (Johannes 13,24). This interpretation can be read in many literatures.

Petrus is bent forward as described by Lukas 24,12, when he looked in the empty tomb without Jesus' body. With his left hand, which might lie on Johannes' shoulder, and his fingers pointing at Johannes' neck, he appears to be trying to grab Johannes, or rather Mary Magdalena, in a way, which may not understandable for the observer. Some literature suggests that Petrus was not pleased with the relationship between Jesus and Maria Magdalena or with the female Followers in Jesus' company.

Or might Leonardo da Vinci tell the following to the observer: Petrus was jealous about the strong and heartfelt friendship between Jesus and Johannes, his favourite Apostle or Maria Magdalena, respectively.

Petrus right hand, which is drawn very darkly - between Andreas and Judas - is holding a wrist whose hand is gripping a dagger. This hand with the dagger doesn't seem to belong to anyone!

If Petrus knew about the traitor "Judas," would he have stabbed him - even from behind?

Petrus cut off the ear of the servant Malchus with his sword (Johannes 18,10). Was it the enraged man, the Satan in Petrus, who wielded the sword (dagger) against the servant with his dark, "satanic" hand? Jesus continues to say to Petrus, according to Johannes 18,11: "Put up your sword; the goblet the Father has given me - shall I not drink it?"

The hand holding the knife cannot belong to Petrus right arm; the hand is bent too sharply (at a right angle). Furthermore, the joint between the hand holding the knife and the forearm does not fit together. If the right arm is bent so that the outside of the forearm points to the observer and the forearm is directed downwards, then the inner palm faces away from the observer and thus the thumb points downward – unlike the drawing. Every reader can examine this arm position on their own body.

Leonardo da Vinci would certainly have noticed this inconsistency. Wasn't he the most knowledgeable artist about human anatomy in his time? One can therefore assume that he depicted this detail intentionally.

The author of the website^[7] also noticed this inconsistency, but here the additional hand is attributed to a 13th astrology constellation.

According to Markus 8,27 Jesus rebuked Petrus, saying, "Get out of my sight, Satan! For you, you are not thinking about the desires of God, but about the desires of men."

By the way: the Hebrew word Satan translated into English is "adversary" or "opponent."

Furthermore, a red shoulder bag with a strap can be seen under Petrus's right forearm.

According to Lukas 22,36, the Bible passage is written: Then he [Jesus] said, "Now whoever has a purse should take it, and also his bag. But whoever has no money should sell his cloak and buy a sword [Note: replaced by a knife in the painting].

Obviously Petrus had previously taken the knife from his shoulder bag.

Petrus and several other Apostles are depicted at an advanced age, some of them, including Petrus, are also rather unsightly. However, Jesus' disciples were in reality Jesus' age or even younger, and they were daring individuals, highly motivated, and full of enthusiasm. Otherwise, Jesus would not have chosen them, since they would continue to spread the message of Jesus Christ for decades. For example, according to literature [8], the year of Petrus death is given as 63 to 67, three decades after the year of Jesus' death, i.e. after the Last Supper.

Why did Leonardo da Vinci depict some of the Apostles in old age and in an unfavourable manner?

Was Leonardo da Vinci opposed to the popes (the successors of Petrus), and did he therefore depict Petrus in an unfavourable manner?

There is a very tiny detail of Petrus at the painting, which is pretty unclear for the observer's eye: it seems, that Petrus tries to grasp with the dip of the middle finger of his left hand to the dress hem of Maria Magdalena (in this situation the Apostle Johannes would not be the person of purpose). Did Leonardo da Vinci want to give a hint about the greedy behaviour of the Popes, who lived at that time and which (their behaviour) is proved by witnesses of that time?

At the time the painting was created from 1494 to 1497, Alexander VI^[9] was the Roman Catholic Pope. By 1482, i.e., before Leonardo da Vinci began his painting, Pope Alexander VI had already fathered seven children (after which he became the father of two more sons). According to literature [9], he is also known for nepotism (granting offices to one's own relatives) with his son Cesare, who was appointed cardinal by his father.

Furthermore, a quote from literature [9] should be cited: Giovanni de Medici, later Pope Leo X, said of Alexander after his election: "Now we are in the clutches of perhaps the fiercest wolf the world has ever seen."

The Pope before Pope Alexander VI was Innocent VIII^[10], who became particularly known for promoting the Inquisition and for witch-hunts with the bull *Summis desiderantes affectibus* from 1484^[10].

A quotation from literature [10] is given regarding the lifestyle of Pope Innocent VIII: Innocent left behind many children (Octo nocens pueros genuit, totidemque puellas; hunc merito poterit dicere Roma patrem – “Eight boys he begot uselessly, as many girls; Rome will rightly call him father”) and his nepotism in their favor was as wasteful as it was shameless.

Could it be that Leonardo da Vinci created a monument in his famous painting as a suitable sign for him to these Popes - the Petri's heirs -, who seemed to be ignoble persons for him?

Leonardo certainly knew the stories surrounding these Popes. Moreover, there were ample examples of higher church officials - cardinals and bishops - with their dishonorable character traits and lifestyles, which Martin Luther would denounce a few years later.

Jakobus the Younger (second from left):

He points to Petrus with the same gesture of his left hand - as Petrus did with his left hand to Johannes. Here, Jakobus the Younger seems to want to place his hand on Petrus's shoulder and then ask him to reveal the traitor. This requires that Johannes tells Petrus about his knowledge of the traitor firstly given by Jesus.

An unusual theory: The fingers of the hand gesture by Petrus and Jakobus the Younger give the impression of an open (crowing) rooster's beak.

Three fingers might be seen on the left hand of Jakobus the Younger. Maybe this hand gesture is a hint from Jakobus the Younger to Petrus that he will deny Jesus three times before the rooster crows?

This theory will become true, if the theory of the Trinity at the painting is completely confirmed by others.

Two Apostles without beards:

As already stated in various literature, there are only two Apostles in the painting who do not possess a beard. These are the Apostles Johannes and Philippus.

Besides that, doesn't the Apostle Philippus bear a certain resemblance to Johannes the Baptist in the painting of the same name (painting *Johannes the Baptist*, 1513-1516)^[11], which was also performed by Leonardo da Vinci?

In any case, a raised index finger gesture can also be seen in the painting *Johannes the Baptist*. It seems that he wants to say by this gesture: “By the baptism one gets a better connection to heaven above, to God.”

Table-legs:

The table stands on four legs positioned below the four groups of three Apostles. The table-legs are shaped like the letter A (they are cut off at the top by the tablecloth), which may represent the word "Apostle." In the copy of the painting^[1] by Giampietrino and further in the copy in the Tengerlo Abbey^[4], the four table-legs are depicted; due to a door^[1], that has been inserted into the wall, the two inner table legs are no longer visible.

Side doors on the left:

In Literature [6] on page 66, the theory is put forward that there are three doors between the four tapestries on the left side of the painting and three niches between the four tapestries on the right side of the painting (see the copy of the Tengerlo Abbey^[4]).

And Judas presumably left the room through one of these side doors on the left side of the painting, and not through the door behind Jesus. Then the way through Jesus and through the door behind him leads to the meadows of the sheeps and to salvation (see text on page 3, above), which was not the way of Judas.

Circular segment above the door:

The barely recognizable outline of a circular segment above the door can be interpreted as Jesus' halo. Rotating this profile to the right creates the letter D, which may represent the word Deus (God). Rotating this profile to the left, however, creates the letters C and I, which may represent the words Christus and INRI (Christ and "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews") or CREDO INRI (I believe in Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews).

In the author's opinion, this contour has some significance; otherwise, Leonardo da Vinci would not have depicted it. Every single detail at his painting might have its own significance.

The four groups of three Apostles:

According to literature [6], the four groups of three Apostles are arranged according to Hippocrates' theory of temperament. These are described in literature [6] from left to right as follows:

1st group of three (Bartholomäus, Jakobus the Older, Andreas):	Phlegmatic
2nd group of three (Judas, Petrus, Johannes):	Melancholic
3rd group of three (Thomas, Jakobus the Younger, Philippus):	Choleric
4th group of three (Matthäus, Thaddäus, Simon Zelotes):	Sanguine

This information may be of interest to some readers.

The false picture of the conception that catholic clerical dignitaries may not be married:

Apostle Paulus wrote in the first letter to the Corinthians (first letter 9,5): "Haven't we the right, to bring a believing woman with us [the author: during the travels], as the remaining Apostles and the brothers of the Master and as Kephaz? [Paulus and firstly Jesus named Petrus also Kephaz^[12], which means stone.] According to this statement apparently the married Apostles including Petrus and the bodily brothers of the Master Jesus were accompanied by their wives during their missionary travels.

Before becoming a Jesu' Disciple, Simon Petrus lived with his wife and with his brother Andreas at the house of his mother-in-law according to the Gospels Matthäus 8,14, Markus 1,29 and Lukas 4,38.

One has to imagine: Simon Petrus, the first Apostle and the leader of the group around Jesus Christ was married and also some of the other Apostles!

What is the reason that since centuries catholic clerical dignitaries are not allowed to be married? Is this idea not against the conception of Jesus? If Jesus' wish would have been, that his disciples are unmarried, he would have chosen unmarried men. This is the author's opinion.

This false conception of sexual abstinence brought so much sorrow over an unnumerable number of children and juveniles, who were abused by clerical dignitaries during a time range of centuries.

Under the Followers of Jesus were also women. In the Gospel Lukas 8,1-3 it is written: "In the following time he walked from town to town und from village to village and proclaimed the gospel of God's kingdom. The Twelve accomponied him, further some women, who he healed from bad spirits and from deseases: Maria Magdalena, seven demons had escaped from her. Johanna, the wife of Chuzas, a public officer of Herodes, Susanna and many more. All of them supported Jesus and the Disciples by that, what they possessed."

This Gospel section states that under the Followers was also a married woman, namely Johanna. One has to imagine, what kind of peculiarity it was 2000 years ago in this region of unrestricted Patriarchate. Jesus brought to the world besides the message of unconditional love and of the power of one's soul and faith (for example to enable wonders and resurrection) also the message of women's co-determination.

Literature

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