

A number of readers responded to my post about whether Jesus and Mary Magdalene were intimate by pointing out that the non-canonical Gospel of Philip sure does seem to *say* they were! So, what do I have to say about that?

I've dealt with the issue on the blog before, but a lot of you were just a twinkle in our eye at the time, so here I'll deal with it again. I have a reasonably full discussion of the relevant issues in my book Peter, Paul, and Mary Magdalene. In the book I put the discussion in the context of - yes, you guessed it - Dan Brown's Da Vinci Code, the one source many people turn to for the Gospel of Philip (!). Few people who talk about the relevant passage have actually read the book. It strikes many readers today as unusually strange. But in any event, this is what I say about the book and the Kissing Passage there.

Some of the historical claims about the non-canonical Gospels in the Da Vinci Code have struck scholars as outrageous, or at least outrageously funny. The book claims, for example, that some of these Gospels were discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls. That of course is completely wrong: the Dead Sea Scrolls do not contain any Gospels, or any Christian writings of any sort. They are Jewish texts, which never mention Jesus or any of his followers. And the novel claims that Jesus' marriage to Mary Magdalene is frequently reported in the Gospels that did not make it into the New Testament. On the contrary, not only is their marriage not reported frequently, it is never reported at all, in any surviving Gospel, canonical or non-canonical. I'll have more to say about this in a later chapter. For now I want to consider the Gospel of Philip, which is the Da Vinci Code's star witness for the case that Jesus and were husband and wife.

To see the rest of this juicy post, you need to belong to the blog. If you're not a member, you (literally) don't know what you're missing! It won't cost much to join, and every penny goes to charity. So go for it!

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