



Following the recent discovery of mysterious anonymous manuscripts, missing for centuries or kept in the greatest secrecy, the Accademia Vinciana offers a unique glimpse of historic events in the Renaissance, events that the wildest imagination would have had difficulty in creating....

An insanely ambitious and violent family succeeds in arriving at the Papacy, and attempts to gain control of the whole of Italy as its private domain. The political balance of the whole of Europe vacillates.

Will the ingenious strategy of the richest banker and merchant of the time, at the service of one of the most powerful and unscrupulous Popes that the history of the Church has ever seen, succeed in avoiding the siege of his city and in calming the thirst for power, pursued through armed action, intrigue and trickery by an ambitious and bloodthirsty Duke?

An astute diplomat is called on to carry out a spying operation and weave a subtle political plot....

A man of huge artistic genius, who is both the ultimate student of all time and a great and expert architect, is called on to organise the entertainment, with a stimulating and astute programme of encounters, giving rise to the most strategic, far-reaching and secret chess match ever conceived....

A brilliant and absorbing masked ball, as an opportunity for subtle and noble diplomacy: games, spectacle, adventure, triumphs and allegories, jousting, duels and challenges....

These are just some of the elements giving rise to the most mysterious of academies, recalling an even older and more famous school....

Now you are invited to that historic masked ball:
Everyone is called on to bring their own mask.

And you are asked to place your bet:
Is it all a dream or concrete reality,
imaginative fiction or real history?

We take on the most difficult challenge: documenting the fact that all this is reality, that it corresponds with the most authentic history that we have ever known.
The celebrations to which you are invited are inspired and reconstructed on the basis of the events taking place in the woods and valleys not far from Siena, one night early in summer 1502.

A journey begins, in which history and geography interweave: from the creation of the world to Jerusalem in the year 33, to Rome, to then look back towards Athens and even further to ancient Egypt.

We are guided symbolically by the Metamorphoses (the Golden Ass) by Apuleius: like Lucius (Lucignano), remaining an ass for a long time (Asinalonga) we are searching for the mountain of Isis in order to find new light (Lucignano d'Asso). (The names represent real places in the Tuscan countryside).

It is also an opportunity to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the discovery of other unknown lands beyond the ocean, and the imagination of another world, outside known history, allows us to dream of new faces, new animals and plants, new cities, temples and buildings, new languages, foreign coins, tools and objects and works. What will the ships of our intellect gather when travelling across this unknown ocean of ideas from the New World?

The celebrations take place over three days, in different villages and villas. On Saturday evening the host is Agostino Chigi, an emerging banker and entrepreneur from Siena, illuminated lover of art and culture. He has invited a number of families from the city, the Petrucci, Saracini, Piccolomini and Contucci families, while the guest of the evening will be the new Duke Cesare Borgia il Valentino, accompanied by his personal guard, arriving on horseback from the marshes of the Chiana area, invited and accompanied by Niccolò Machiavelli, who brings the greetings of the Florentine Republic. Chigi has also charged certain illustrious friends with preparing special theatrical sets and performances: Luca Signorelli, Bernardino di Betto, known as Pinturicchio, and some of his pupils, including Rafael, a young painter from Urbino and Antonio Bazzi, known as Sodoma. Baldassarre Peruzzi, Francesco di Giorgio Martini and Bramante are also illustrious architects. These same architects and painters are the actors, wearing their own masks: it is a question of guessing who they are impersonating from the dialogue.

One should not forget Egidio da Viterbo, theologian and philosopher, Tommaso Inghirami, man of letters and humanist, Alberto Aringhieri, Rector of the Opera del Duomo in Siena, and many others. However, it will be above all a mysterious figure, a military engineer and mapmaker, whose face is unknown in Siena but whose name is recognised, who will entertain the guests with games and wonders. With his riddles, rebuses, aphorisms and questions he challenges everyone to participate in games and wagers: solving the enigma in order to lift the veil of Isis, becoming the first disciple of all-embracing Mother Nature, enveloping all imaginary and possible worlds.

These figures begin to distribute the Word Cards. Each person is called on to solve the Enigma. After answering the initial question, we move on to chess matches, rebuses, riddles, stories, aphorisms, letters, drawings, maps, globes, both ancient and new, with constellations of words.

To enter this dream the mysterious creator and wizard invites us to the desks of the Scholè that he has prepared.

Now this game reappears in our times, having reconstructed the path and identified the places, awaiting new courageous players who wish to participate in the celebrations of the illustrious protagonists of the Renaissance. The valleys, villages, woods and villas of Siena are still there, waiting to welcome those who intend to discover the path that points towards the West, going back in time to dream, devise and create the New World of the future.

It awaits courageous students who wish to win the keys to the historic room, commonly known as the Stanza della Segnatura, carefully guarded by the protagonists of this story themselves, who keep eternally open the Scholè known to history as the School of Athens, evoked by them and created in that night of dreams.

There are two courses available:

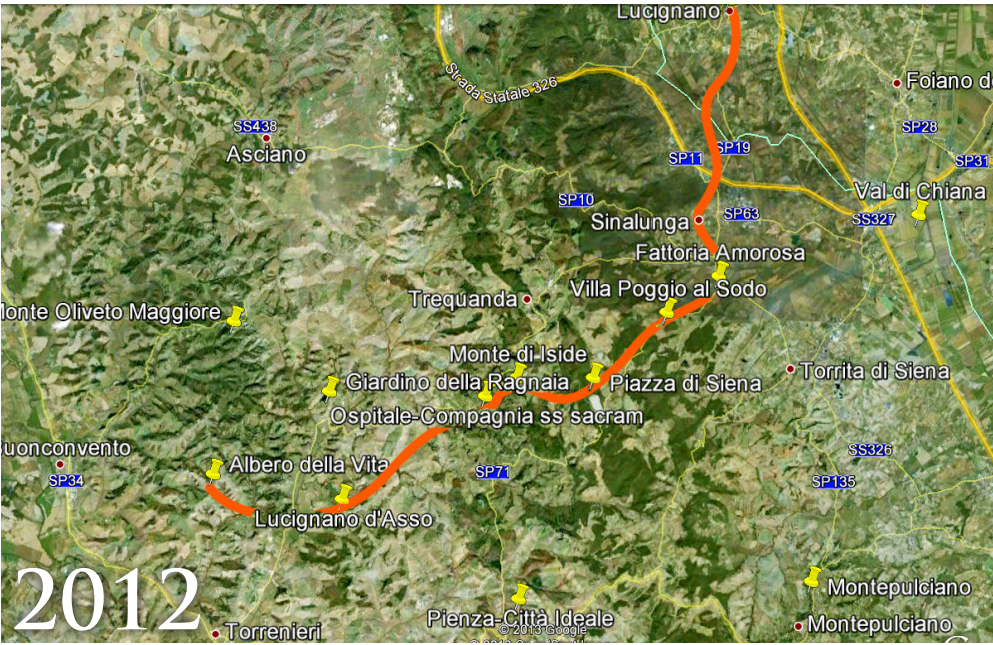
- Introduction to the Scholè: this provides an initial introduction to the historic and geographical background of the invitation to the masked ball, followed by an initial general overview of the philosophical ideas illustrated pictorially in the Schools of Athens, illustrating some of the methodological elements and experimenting with learning methods through the Game of Idea Cards.
- Club: a more in-depth and complete programme on the practices, content, themes and texts, organised and prepared with preliminary training consultancy on a project basis.

The programme at Villa Poggio al Sodo goes from Tuesday afternoon to Sunday afternoon:

- Half-board accommodation for 5 nights in double room.
- Wednesday and Thursday are free days, allowing the participants to explore the surrounding area independently, using the guide and materials included in the offer.
- The specific training programme begins on Friday afternoon: training sessions with university lecturers and experts in training dynamics from Parola Italiana.
- On Saturday morning there is another four hour training session.
- Lunch break included.
- On Saturday afternoon there is another five hour training session with video film documenting the process and progressive setting up of the multimedia encyclopaedia. Opportunities to meet the illustrious guests of the Accademia.
- On Saturday evening, aperitif and buffet from 7 pm, with music and games. Evening open to the public, up to a maximum of 70 participants.
- On Sunday morning transfer to the garden of the Scholè, Bosco della Ragnaia, 18 km away: personal exploration of a phantasmagorical contemporary art work inviting participants to meditate and synthesise the programme.
- Return to the villa for lunch at 1 pm.
- Conclusions and greetings, terminating by 5 pm.

5 day introduction to the Scholè: 2.500 euro - Teaching material: 100 euro
Club programme consultancy: from 5.000 euro

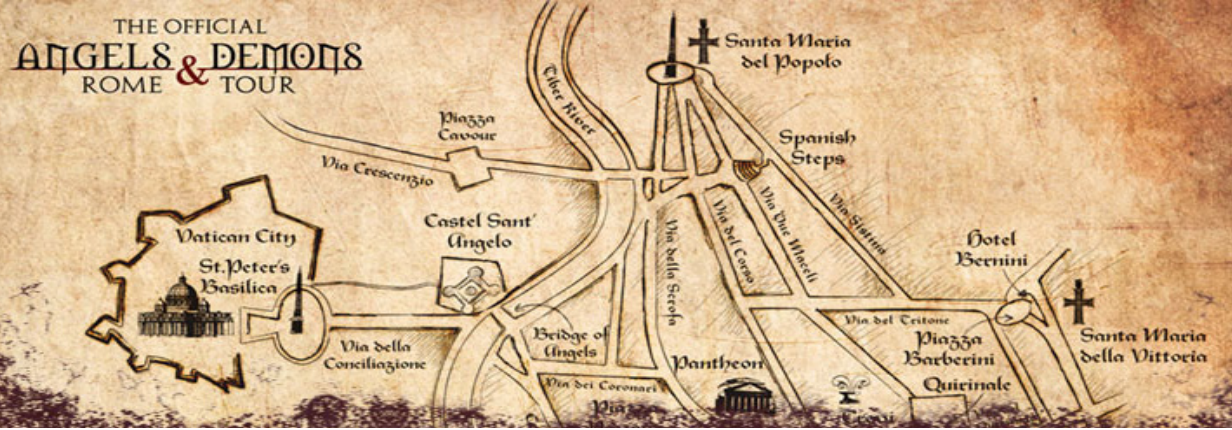
For further information on booking and training courses, please write by e-mail in order to receive the most suitable proposal for your needs, in relation to the discovery of a Tuscany with a wealth of mysteries just waiting to be explored.



ANGELS & DEMONS: STRAIGHTFORWARD NOVEL OR SYMBOLIC ALLEGORY?

Angels & Demons: just a novel, or a symbolic allegory that hides and at the same time reveals a more literal truth? The works of Dan Brown are not just novels, but also a much wider communication project that to date few have been able to understand fully, with a deeper and hidden scope in editorial and communication terms. To point out just a few elements: Leonardo Vetra is a very clear reference to glass (vetro in Italian). Glass was the only material, in the Renaissance era, which could be crossed by light, or rather that was capable of being transparent to light, rather than opaque like material. Thus the destiny of Leonardo Vetra in relation to the invention of an anti-matter, anti-opaque device is already indicated in his name. The only known form of anti-matter, namely the Mirror, as it succeeds in offering an image of anything made only of light, hence without matter, the opposite of what happens outside the mirror, is likewise and even more significantly made of glass. Hence the symbolic and scientific sense of the anti-matter device that is discovered and used. It is also clear who Leonardo Vetra is in metaphorical terms: Leonardo da Vinci. He is also described as a priest (sacerdote in Italian), from sacer, related to sacred, and Leonardo considered nature as something sacred and alive, in line with Neoplatonist ideals. So he is a priest not so much in the ecclesiastical sense, but in terms of his spirit and attitude towards the sacred. He is also a physicist, a scientist who investigates the fundamental laws of nature. In this sense he is a physicist capable of understanding the phenomenology of nature in the scientific sense that we intend. He is therefore a “secular” priest who investigates natural law with an observatory-analytical method, just as Leonardo always understood his method of experimentation into any natural phenomenon. Leonardo has no children, as a priest he cannot have any, yet he has an adopted and therefore symbolic daughter. So what will the symbolic daughter of “da Vinci” be called? Here too the equation is very simple: Vittoria, so another clear reference to Vinci (the imperative of to win in Italian), interpreting the origin of Leonardo in a sense that only the Italian language can convey, Vinci in the sense of the urge to win, and Leonardo arrived at his Vittoria (victory).

In the novel, Leonardo Vetra’s Vittoria grows up secretly in an orphanage in Siena as a girl, without parents. So why Siena? We can fully answer this question when we analyse the anonymous manuscript of the invitation to the masked ball, which is secretly set out in the map of the Val di Chiana, again by Leonardo. In other words, the novel constructs the narrative plot by announcing a fundamentalist use of Leonardo’s discovery, which is understood to be in contrast and opposition to the Church, by a presumed biased and sectarian order of the Illuminati. Robert Langdon, on the other hand, is the figure who is involved to avoid Leonardo’s knowledge being used in a distorted and explosive way in relation to the Church, showing how science and faith can be complementary . The explosive device is situated in the heart of the Vatican. Another historic truth hidden symbolically: Leonardo, with his mirror (anti-matter device) is indeed situated in the centre of the School of Athens, in the role of Plato, in the Stanza della Seg-natura, the supreme symbolical and encyclopaedic summary of the Renaissance. He is reached through a path to illumination secretly hidden in some of the iconographic details of the fresco. The book in his left hand, Timaeus, deals with the figure of the Demiurge, or Great Architect, according to tradition: at the centre of the treatise, in the passage from macrocosm to microcosm, the human body, there is a treatise on the mirror. Furthermore a mirror is physically held in one hand by Diogenes and explicitly indicated by Alexander the Great, who represents the initiatory student-apprentice who must cross and go beyond the mirror, held by his companion Diogenes, to continue towards the level of Master.



THE MYSTERY OF ALEXANDER

In the novel the initiatory process called the Path of Illumination begins at the tomb of Agostino Chigi designed by Rafael! Of all the possible monuments in Rome where a path of initiation could begin why choose this one? Is the fact that the name Alessandro and not Agostino is given in the epigraph of the tomb, again in the novel, a printing error? Why Alessandro? Perhaps he intended Fabio Chigi, known as Pope Alexander VII? However, it could not be Alessandro Chigi because the remains of Fabio Chigi are at St Peters. Alessandro is simply the initiatory name of Agostino as an Illuminato: this is the reason for the life cycle of Alexander the Great in the private bedroom of Villa Chigi, now the Farnesina, home of the Accademia dei Lincei. We return to Siena and the protagonists of the masked ball hidden and codified in the Stanza della Segnatura, known as the School of Athens.

A manga dedicated to the war chronicles of Alexander the Great was produced in 1999, in which all the philosophers alive at the time appear: Pythagoras introduces the story, the school of the Pythagoreans is a secret school, while Plato, Aristotle and Diogenes also appear. In an episode in which Alexander asks Aristotle for advice there is a conversation in which there is a discussion of speed. (Interestingly, the same theme is introduced in the letters from Aristotle to Alexander making up the collection of recently found manuscripts). The barrel of Diogenes into which Alexander enters contains a floor that collapses like a mirror placed horizontally.

In the last two years there have also been two television series on the Borgias.

Are we still convinced that all these productions have taken place by chance? Or is a clearer purpose emerging?

THE ACADEMY OF THE ILLUMINATI?

In 2002 Giuliano di Bernardo, Ordinary Professor of the Philosophy of Science at the Faculty of Sociology of Trento University, a mason since 1960 (“I belonged to the Zamponi De Rolandis lodge, the one frequented by university lecturers”), Grand Master of the Grand Orient Lodge in Italy from 1990 to 1993 and subsequently founder of the Regular Grand Lodge of Italy, abandoned his operational role in the masons to dedicate himself to the Illuminati, founding an academy in Italy. He is the grand master who explained to the magazine Panorama the meaning of the initiation rite. “To reawaken this secret society it is sufficient to have the necessary initiatory authority. You do not need any form of permission, in contrast to masonry, in which new lodges develop out of other regular lodges”. So can anyone reawaken the Illuminati? “No, you need to understand their tradition and rituals, which are handed down secretly. They reached me from the United States, where the organisation is more widespread and influential”. So how did it arrive in the USA? “One needs to go back to the times of Elizabethan England, a flourishing period for occult philosophy, from the Christian Cabala to alchemy and hermeticism. This was when Rosicrucianism and esoteric illuminism were born, then transferred to America”. Here, also thanks to a satirical novel in the 1970s, the legend spread that the establishment and the descendants of the main families were Illuminati. Some living former Presidents are thought to have been included, enrolled in secret societies dating back to their university days. “There is always a basis of truth in fables” notes Di Bernardo, who estimates that there are less than 200 Illuminati in America, capable however of governing world finance. At this time of crisis they are apparently particularly active. What about Italy? “There are around fifty of us, without distinction in terms of gender or religion. Our scope is true universality and a project making it possible to improve society”.

So who are our modern day Illuminati? “Men and women of quality who have an internal light and who can illuminate others”. Extract from Panorama 01/06/09

Are these all casual elements or is a deeper plot emerging?

