



The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

For the lay reader, this crystalline, well-documented work offers substantive evidence that for more than 40 years a small coterie of Catholic scholars established a stranglehold on access to the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were discovered in the Qumran caves east of Jerusalem in 1947. Baigent and Leigh (*Holy Blood, Holy Grail*) claim that the elite group had direct links to official Vatican propaganda offices, that at least two among them were outspoken anti-Semites, and that they suppressed material that connects early Christianity to the Qumran community as well as to the zealous defenders of the fortress of Masada. Drawing on the findings of independent Dead Sea Scrolls scholar Robert Eisenman of California State University, the authors advance startling theories that should change the way we view ancient Judaism and nascent Christianity. They argue that the Essenes, Zealots and Nazorenes or early Christians in first-century Palestine weren't different Jewish sects but were, rather, various sobriquets for members of a broad messianic nationalistic movement dedicated to upholding the Law of Moses and determined to violently overthrow the Roman occupiers. The authors also amass evidence that the Habakkuk Commentary and other Dead Sea Scrolls refer to the same events as those recounted in Acts, in Josephus and in the works of early Christian historians; that Paul was sent forth by the hierarchy in Jerusalem for the express purpose of recruiting an army, and by preaching a new religion, he was depoliticizing and emasculating the militant movement; and that Paul might have been a Roman agent or informer. Baigent and Leigh demonstrate the perfidies of clandestine, cliquish scholarship that isn't accountable to the public and make urgent the forthwith publication and translation of all Scrolls material. Photos. BOMC and QPB selections.

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From Library Journal

This emotional account of the events surrounding the discovery and translation of the scrolls attempts to uncover the theological and political efforts by individuals, governments, and religious institutions to keep controversial documents unpublished, ostensibly to preserve orthodox interpretations. The English authors, Baigent and Leigh, base their study on the work of Robert Eisenmen and other religious scholars who maintain that a conspiracy of consensus led to stagnant reinterpretation of old doctrine, rather than true research which would contest preconceived notions with newly discovered evidence. New theories by Eisenmen and others, which challenge the roots of Christianity as well as New Testament doctrine and history, are discussed. Standard works such as John M. Allegro's *The Dead Sea Scrolls & the Christian Myth* (LJ 6/1/84), Roland De Vaux's *Discoveries in the Judean Desert* (Oxford Univ. Pr., 1977), and Geza Vermes's *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Viking, 1988. rev. ed.), and many others are preferable to this acrid introductory "expose." -- Paula I. Nielson, Loyola Marymount Univ. Lib., Los Angeles

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Review

Newsweek A lively tale of one controversial interpretation of the scrolls.

Antiquity (U.K.) An engrossing read....A racy tale of archaeological sins, religious bigotry, academic megalomania, misconduct and possible criminality, along with bizarre political intrigue.

Publishers Weekly Crystalline, well-documented....Baigent and Leigh advance startling theories that should change the way we view ancient Judaism and nascent Christianity....

John Leonard New York Newsday A wonder of savage detail....The reading of the archaeological, historical

and analytic-textual evidence is always ingenious.

Chicago Tribune Not for the theologically faint of heart.

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From reader reviews:

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