



Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Reader From the Biblical Archaeology Review

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A groundbreaking anthology that demolishes the myths -- and reveals the true significance -- of the greatest archaeological discovery of our time.

Ever since their initial discovery in 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls have aroused excitement, jealousy, and not a little dread among some who feared their contents might undermine the foundations of Judaism and Christianity. For more than 35 years the majority of scroll texts remained the intellectual property of an exclusive coterie of scholars. Recently, however, the Biblical Archaeology Review succeeded in breaking that monopoly.

This path-clearing volume is an illuminating assessment of what these texts reveal about a lost era in the history of two world religions, Christianity and rabbinic Judaism. Were the Dead Sea Scrolls written by the Essenes, an ascetic sect of Jews that may have included John the Baptist among its members? Is the Copper Scroll a secret map to the treasures of the Jerusalem Temple? In what way do these books prefigure the teachings of early Christianity? Additional chapters address the controversies surrounding the Scrolls' discovery and their long suppression -- including the possible role of the Vatican and charges of anti-Semitism on the part of a former chief editor of the official scroll publication team.

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