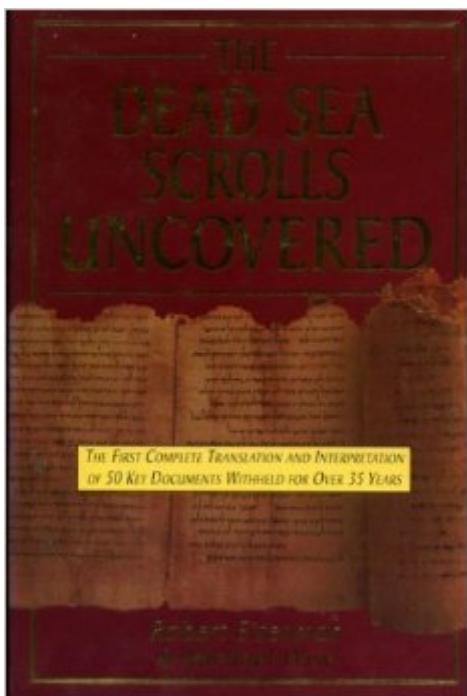


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The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered: The First Complete Translation And Interpretation Of 50 Key Documents Withheld For Over 35 Years



Synopsis

The first scholar--aside from those at the Huntington Library in California--to have access to the Dead Sea Scrolls translates seventy-five of the most important manuscripts into Hebrew and English and includes a short analysis of each piece.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book contains fifty short texts recovered from the Qumran caves, all fragmentary and some much worse than others. The texts are grouped thematically into chapters, each chapter beginning with an introduction explaining the genre of text in question. For each text, the authors/editors give you a discussion/analysis, touching on relevant context and highlighting ideas that appear in the text, the Hebrew transliteration of the text (in contemporary Hebrew characters), and a translation. In addition, the center of the book contains a series of black and white photos, some of the area (Wadi Qumran and its caves, Masada) and some of the scroll fragments. I've casually cross-checked the 50 texts in this volume against my larger edition of the Scrolls (Geza Vermes's translation), and many -- perhaps all -- of the fifty are also contained in the larger edition. What's different here, and what makes this book valuable, is the different translation (designed to emphasize, by vocabulary choice, points of commonality with the Jamesian Christian writings of the New Testament) and the commentary. The fragmented texts reveal a community that was xenophobic, nationalistic, militant, pro-Maccabean and wildly apocalyptic. In addition, certain specific doctrines are clearly illuminated, including the resurrection of the dead and a single (as

opposed to dual) Messiah. The authors therefore paint a different picture of the Qumran community from proponents of the "Essene Theory" (like Geza Vermes). This makes for interesting reading of the texts in this book and also informs alternative understandings of other Dead Sea Scrolls texts. Very, very interesting.

Eisenman and Wise have put together a phenomenal collection of some of the most significant missing scrolls. Each translation is accompanied by commentary and reproduction in the original Hebrew or Aramaic. Photographic plates of several of the actual scrolls are included. Scrolls such as "The Messianic Apocalypse" and "Chariots of Glory" are particularly impressive. Through the reading of these scrolls, one begins to understand that the Qumran library presents an entire spiritual system of faith, prophecy, and revelation. This is certainly THE "apocalyptic Judaism." Excellent material.

DSS Uncovered was first published in 1992 shortly after the embargo on the Scrolls had been broken. Eisenman and Wise played key roles in those events. Unfortunately DSS Uncovered will be largely remembered for its sensational aspects. Chief among these is the "pierced messiah" text, Eisenman's interpretation of 4Q285. (On this matter Eisenman has since recanted according to none other than Wise who wrote this in The Dead Sea Scrolls on page 292.) This is not to fault the translations. I have no particular problem with the translations offered by E&W. For example, in 4Q521 E&W suggest "resurrect the dead" for VMTIM YCHYH. Perhaps a more literal translation might be "enliven the dead." However is there that much difference between raising from the dead and enlivening a person? In the thinking of the people of the place and time of the DSS, one raised a person from the dead by enlivening them and enlivening them "raised" them from the realm of the dead. As a digressive thought, I might warn that the reader ought to be aware that fragment and column numbers, and sometimes scroll numbers, change from book to book. There are changes between the two books by Garcia-Martinez on the DSS texts. This is just a hazard of DSS studies. Hopefully the above matters will not overshadow the usefulness of this book. There are transliterations, translations, and most of all...commentaries on 50 different DSS texts. E&W are quite right to point out that their 50 texts compares favorably with the volume of DSS texts which had been published up to that time. Also the commentaries point out to the reader esoteric allusions, interrelationships between the texts, and the beauty of some of the texts as well. The real and enduring value of DSS Uncovered is in its commentary.

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