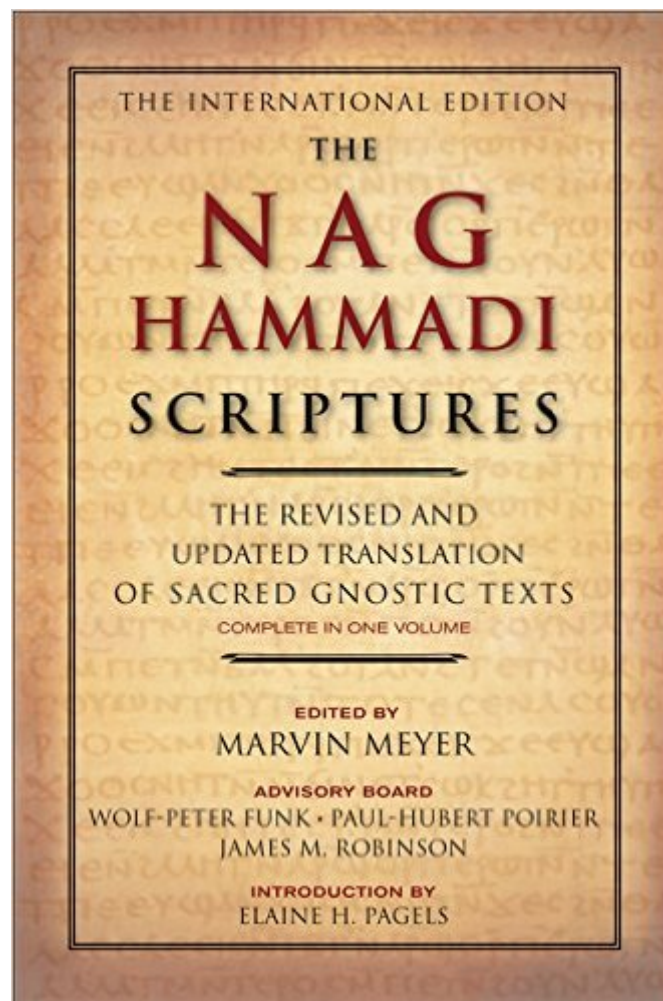


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The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The Revised And Updated Translation Of Sacred Gnostic Texts Complete In One Volume



Synopsis

The Nag Hammadi Scriptures, edited by Marvin Meyer, is the most complete, up-to-date, one-volume, English-language edition of the renowned library of Gnostic manuscripts discovered in Egypt in 1945, which rivaled the Dead Sea Scrolls find in significance. It includes the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Mary, and the recently discovered Gospel of Judas, as well as other Gnostic gospels and sacred texts. This volume also includes introductory essays, notes, tables, glossary, index, etc. to help the reader understand the context and contemporary significance of these texts which have shed new light on early Christianity and ancient thought. The compilation of ancient manuscripts that constitute The Nag Hammadi Scriptures is a discovery that challenges everything we thought we knew about the early Christian church, ancient Judaism, and Greco-Roman religions.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

For the title of this review I chose an excerpt from "The Dialogue of the Savior" which belonged to NHC III,5. On my quest to better understanding 'gnosticism' I first read Andrew Phillip Smith's book titled, "The Gnostics". His brief treatise on the overall scope of what gnosticism is really all about provided me with a more concise understanding of this exhaustive, scholarly translation of the Nag Hammadi text. This book is by far the most complete and in-depth translation to date and will probably never be equaled. Scholars such as Marvin Meyer, Elaine Pagels, Madeleine Scopello, Einar Thomassen and John D. Turner are just a few of the names involved with the translation of the Nag Hammadi scriptures. There is an array of backgrounds involved which ultimately provide very different interpretations of the text, but this diversity only helps the reader to draw his/her own

conclusions as to interpretation. One positive aspect to this book is decision NOT to guess what the translation might have been. Quite frankly, much of the text within certain tractates were severely damaged and/or missing. Instead of guessing or including what the text may have said, Meyer and others, merely let the reader know that much of the text itself is missing. This is, of course refreshing, as many modern translations of either other Gnostic or Essene texts, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, authors will simply insert modern lexicons assuming that it follows suit to what we have today. Meyer and company don't do this, instead they provide a well documented, heavily footnoted, scholarly work.

This book finds an honoured place on my shelves, next to the older edition of the Nag Hammadi scriptures assembled under the direction of James M. Robinson, who provides the preface (and much underlying research). According to Robinson, 'The Nag Hammadi Scriptures is a collection of thirteen papyrus codices - bound books, not scrolls - that were buried near the city of Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt most likely in the second half of the fourth century CE.' The texts contained here are a fascinating collection, bringing to light literally dozens of texts that had previously been unknown for over a millennium, although about ten of them are in such fragmentary form that it still cannot be said that these have been recovered. It is supposed by many scholars that this is a collection that was buried by Gnostics, but this is not without controversy. This text has as a leader over the title the phrase 'The International Edition', for good reason. There have been three different projects, one in English, one in French, and one in German, over the past generation, the fruits of which have been brought together here in one volume. The representatives from each team are James M. Robinson, Wolf-Peter Funk, and Paul-Hubert Poirier, for the English, German, and French research projects respectively. The introduction is provided by Marvin Meyer and Elaine Pagels, both names known to people who study Gnostic and early biblical texts. In the introduction, Meyers and Pagels offer the caution that the title 'Nag Hammadi Scriptures' cannot imply a canon of scriptures similar to the Bible or Quran - these are texts that were less a sacred (and closed) collection and more of a general gathering of pieces that were considered inspired and inspirational.

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