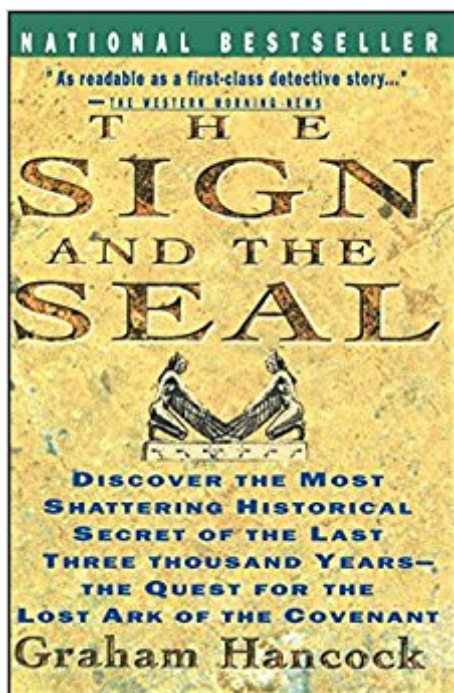


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Sign And The Seal: The Quest For The Lost Ark Of The Covenant



Synopsis

The fact of the Lost Ark of the Covenant is one of the grand historical mysteries of all time. To believers, the Ark is the legendary vessel holding the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments. The Bible contains hundreds of references to the Ark's power to level mountains, destroy armies, and lay waste to cities. The Ark itself, however, mysteriously disappears from recorded history sometime after the building of the Temple of Solomon. After ten years of searching through the dusty archives of Europe and the Middle East, as well as braving the real-life dangers of a bloody civil war in Ethiopia, Graham Hancock has succeeded where scores of others have failed. This intrepid journalist has tracked down the true story behind the myths and legends -- revealing where the Ark is today, how it got there, and why it remains hidden. Part fascinating scholarship and part entertaining adventure yarn, tying together some of the most intriguing tales of all time -- from the Knights Templar and Prester John to Parsival and the Holy Grail -- this book will appeal to anyone fascinated by the revelation of hidden truths, the discovery of secret mysteries.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

English journalist Hancock retells the circumstances and thoughts that led to his discovery that the Lost Ark of the Covenant really exists. (Note that the subtitle is not How Indy and I Raided the Lost Ark.) Hancock was in Ethiopia in 1983, having been hired by the Ethiopian government to write and produce a coffee-table book extolling that country. He was greatly surprised when told that Ethiopia's Falasha Jews did not exist, and that many people could land in jail, or worse, if he went around photographing such nonexistents. Even so, off he went to Axum, deep in the desert, to see

the temples and statuary of the Black Jews of Ethiopia. What he found was a sect that claimed to have the original Ark of the Covenant. Refused entrance to the sanctuary of the jealously guarded Ark, Hancock went home--and saw Steven Spielberg's Raiders of the Lost Ark, which inspired him to investigate the history of the Ark. Built at the foot of Mount Sinai, Hancock tells us, it "was deposited [around 955 B.C.] by Solomon in the Holy of Holies of the First Temple." Later, Hancock says, it was stolen by Solomon's outcast son and carried south to Ethiopia and kept there for 800 years by a Judaic cult. Then it apparently was seized by the Knights Templar, who thought that it was the Holy Grail. The Knights converted the Jews, who kept the Ark in a great church. And to protect the Ark, all of the churches in the cult have their own replicas of the Ark: The original is never seen, even on the holiest days of the year. In 1991, during the Gulf War, Hancock returned to Axum to see the Ark--and was refused. Not as much fun as might be hoped as Hancock digs through literary and biblical texts while convincing himself that the Ark exists. (Sixteen pp. of b&w photographs--not seen.) -- Copyright ©1992, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The Western Morning News As readable as a first-class detective story...The Seattle Times Anyone who likes a great intellectual detective yarn will plunge into The Sign and the Seal and not come up until the end.

I really liked this book, since I learned a ton of stuff. It is like a historical treasure hunt. There is a lot to say, but one thing that really stands out to me for modern implications is his commentary about what happened to the Templars. In fact, I sent this next paragraph to my friend after reading it:My Comment (to be read after the article... wont allow links, but do an internet search for "Modern-Physics-and-the-Shamir.htm" and check the link on chabad dot org, then read the paragraph below):How was the Shamir utilized if it was alpha radiation? Meaning, the builders could not just hold it, right? Seems like they would have needed to construct a holder of lead or something. Because if you held it directly in order to cut stone, it would go right through your fingers...right?I have heard that the Knights Templar had the Shamir when they built the stone churches at Lalibela, Ethiopia in 1185-1209. See pages 155, 369-370 of "Sign and the Seal" by Graham Hancock. Since the Scottish Freemasons and Portuguese Order of Christ inherited anything left of the Templars (ibid, page 167), I suggest that one of these two groups (or both) may even today possess the Shamir. Maybe they are waiting for the appointed time to share this with the true builders of the Third Temple (T3).Also, check out "Temple" by Robert Cornuke for compelling

reasons to suspect that T3 will not be on the Temple Mount, but in the City of David...where he believes T1 and T2 actually stood. This has stunning implications.

I first read "The Sign and the Seal" back in the really 90's and was just blown away. As an Orthodox Christian I knew roughly what Graham Hancock was talking about, but it wasn't until I read his book that my general understanding about the Journey of the Ark of the Covenant was clarified and a much bigger and clearer story of it's journey was established. Mr. Hancock presents a facts based evidence driven account of how the Ark of the Covenant went from Jerusalem, to Egypt and finally down to Ethiopia, and is currently revered and protected by the Holy Ethiopian Orthodox Church. I strongly recommend "The Sign and the Seal" for all who are interested in this story of of the Ark's journey, and the Providential Hand of God in protecting His Ark and placing it in the hands of Humble and Faithful servants down in Ethiopia.

This book was recommended to me prior to a trip to Axum, Ethiopia. To be precise, a senior executive of a successful Ethiopian business recommended it to me, saying: "If you read that book you will understand us." That was perhaps too optimistic, given how complex Ethiopian society is, but the book does explain a great deal about Ethiopia and some key aspects of Ethiopian identity. Meanwhile, archeology has moved on and some of Hancock's key assumptions -- most important that there was no advanced civilization in Ethiopia at the time of Solomon -- have been cast in doubt. Modern scholars now believe that the Sabeian culture moved north from Ethiopia to Yemen, not the other way around. At all events, the great obelisks at Axum have been carbon dated to around 1,000 BC -- the age of Solomon. So there may be very much more to the Ethiopian legend than even Hancock suggests. The strengths of this book are Hancock's ability to describe Ethiopia -- its landscape, people and legends. For anyone interested in that fascinating country, it is well worth the read, and the entire search for the Ark of the Covenant becomes secondary.

I purchased this to read before my upcoming trip to Ethiopia. It was well-written and interesting, and I learned a lot about the country and its history. The only thing I didn't like was one part later in the book where the author speculates on some controversial theories of how advanced knowledge was transmitted and spread throughout the ancient world. To me, this distracted from the book and the author's fascinating, if not obsessive, search for the Ark of the Covenant. If you can get beyond that part, I highly recommend this very readable book.

I was introduced to Graham Hancock's work in the late 90's with Fingerprints of the Gods. This work was his first real venture into "fringe" archeology and history. If you have seen the documentary loosely based on this work, this book will fill in a lot of the holes. As the story fleshes out, there are some interesting coincidences. He follows in the footsteps of James Bruce, an 18th century Scottish explorer who was apparently the first person to explore the claim that the Arc of the Covenant is in a church in Auxum, Ethiopia. Bruce also brought a full text of the Book of Enoch to the west for the first time in over a thousand years. Hancock found that he was distantly related to this man. It is still very hard to believe that the Arc exists today in a small church in Ethiopia. The tales of its coming there come from "The Glory of Kings," a book of scripture used only by Ethiopian Christians which was probably put together a thousand years ago or less. It seems like a wonderful improbable historical novel. Yet there is something in that church in Auxum that is prematurely aging and killing the young monks chosen for the dubious honor of being the keeper of the arc. Hancock has met three of the keepers in a period of around twenty years. These are men in their twenties who are developing thick visible cataracts from daily contact with the Arc of the Covenant. There is an account of one young monk who ran off when he found he was supposed to be the next keeper of the Arc. It is understandable; the keepers die of cancer after a few years of service. I have to agree with the author. It is probably better that it stays where it is. Still, who would not just a little peek at it?

This is easily one of the most interesting books I've ever read. This is not Indiana Jones! It is a thought provoking look at the character of Moses and the greatest treasure of the Jewish nation and what may have become of it. It's a fascinating read, as Hancock's other work often does, it will make you question what you thought you may have known.

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