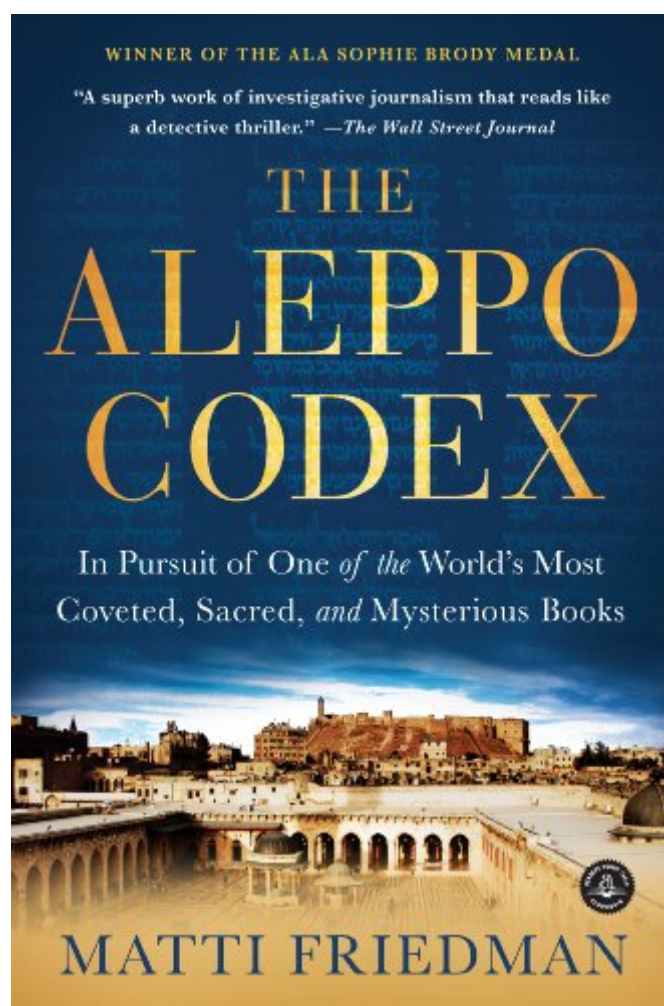


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The Aleppo Codex: In Pursuit Of One Of The World's Most Coveted, Sacred, And Mysterious Books



Synopsis

Winner of the 2014 Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature A thousand years ago, the most perfect copy of the Hebrew Bible was written. It was kept safe through one upheaval after another in the Middle East, and by the 1940s it was housed in a dark grotto in Aleppo, Syria, and had become known around the world as the Aleppo Codex. Journalist Matti Friedman's true-life detective story traces how this precious manuscript was smuggled from its hiding place in Syria into the newly founded state of Israel and how and why many of its most sacred and valuable pages went missing. It's a tale that involves grizzled secret agents, pious clergymen, shrewd antiquities collectors, and highly placed national figures who, as it turns out, would do anything to get their hands on an ancient, decaying book. What it reveals are uncomfortable truths about greed, state cover-ups, and the fascinating role of historical treasures in creating a national identity.

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Customer Reviews

One of the major differences between the Jewish Torah (the first five books of the Bible) and the Christian scriptures (the New Testament) is consistency. Whilst you can find hundreds of versions of the New Testament, some with major differences in the text, any two Torah scrolls from anywhere in

the world will be virtually identical. The reason for this is the halacha (Jewish law) that prohibits reading from the Torah scroll if even the smallest of mistakes is found. As small a mistake as a broken letter (ink not properly joined) or two joint letters. The scroll is closed and is not read from again until the mistakes are corrected. By far the most important and earliest manuscript of the Torah is the Aleppo Codex. Written in the 10th century C.E. in Tiberias, Israel, it is the most authoritative document when it comes to the text of the Jewish Bible, the Tanach. "The Aleppo Codex" (" a ç œ • a " > a "") by Matti Friedman is the story of this document. The Codex was verified and annotated by Aharon Ben Asher, the last member of a dynasty of Hebrew grammarians, around the year 920. The Codex was purchased by a community in Jerusalem and later found its way to Cairo, after being ransomed from crusaders who stole it. The Rambam (Maimonides) himself used it, describing it as a trusted text. From Egypt it found its way to Aleppo, Syria, where it was guarded by the Jewish community there for centuries, hidden in a cave in the synagogue. In 1947, after the UN announced its partition plan for Palestine, rioters burned down the synagogue. From here starts a journey riddled with mystery and intrigue, a journey masterfully described by Friedman in this thrilling book.

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