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Before The Da Vinci Code  
JS Tyson

EcceNova ([www.eccenova.com](http://www.eccenova.com))  
Pb, £5.99/\$9.95, 48pp, ISBN 0973534176

The results of Janet Tyson's seven-year research into the contentious theory – which Dan Brown blasted into public awareness – that Jesus survived the Crucifixion and had a child with Mary Magdalene was published as “Jesus, King of Israel, Samaritan Blood and the Kingdom of Shiloh” (EcceNova 2005), of which this is “a more palatable synopsis”.

Tyson argues that Jesus and his faithful disciple Lazarus (whom she identifies as Joseph of Arimathea) travel to Shiloh to establish a royal priesthood there. With them is Mary Magdalene, the wife of Lazarus and also the mother of Jesus's child. At Shiloh, Lazarus becomes the regent for Jesus's son after Jesus is buried with the Ark of the Covenant somewhere in the vicinity.

He authority is a little known gospel called “2 Esdras”, composed at the end of the first century AD in Greek and included in the Apocrypha of the King James Bible. It records, apparently, the visions and prophecies of Ezra (whom Tyson identifies as Jesus), a descendant of Aaron, and describes, she maintains, the “Jesus, Mary and Child” scenario. Tyson shows no sign of being daunted by the caution advised by the JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA, which says of “Esdras”: “it bears every mark of a true “midrash”, in which the facts are warped to suit the purpose of the writer.”

Bob Rickard

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