



# Treasure, Treason and the Tower: El Dorado and the Murder of Sir Walter Raleigh

*Paul R. Sellin*

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In this remarkable book, the oft-told narrative of Sir Walter Raleigh is blown apart through the chance discovery of hitherto neglected Dutch correspondence found in a Swedish archive. Following an exciting paper-trail through Jacobean history to modern-day Venezuela, Professor Sellin makes a convincing case for Raleigh's innocence of the charges that led him to the block in 1618. Spurred on by these documents, Sellin undertook two excursions up the Orinoco river in Raleigh's wake, using Raleigh's 1596 book *The Discoverie of Guiana* as a guide. These trips convinced him that, far from being a fanciful blend of fact and fiction, the *Discoverie* is a remarkably accurate and verifiable document, which allowed him to locate Raleigh's gold lode on Cerro Redondo, a short distance inland from present-day Los Castillos, Venezuela. In place of a deceitful and scheming Raleigh, Sellin demonstrates how the Duke of Buckingham manoeuvred to have Raleigh executed on trumped-up charges. This left the way open for him to conspire with foreign powers to try to acquire the very mine he claimed Raleigh had invented to justify his actions against Spanish interests in Venezuela. It is rare for a scholarly book to profoundly shake widely-accepted views of so well-known an historical figure as Sir Walter Raleigh, but that is exactly what Paul Sellin achieves here. Crammed with tales of treasure, treason, murder, and international intrigue, this book make us think afresh of one of the greatest Elizabethan heroes. Written in a relaxed and engaging style, it will be of interest not only to specialists of the period but to anyone with a sense of the romance of history.

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