A close-up photograph of a magnifying glass held over a scroll of ancient Hebrew text. The scroll is made of yellowish parchment and features several lines of text written in a dark ink using a cursive script. The magnifying glass is positioned in the lower right, with its lens centered over a portion of the text, creating a sharp focus on the characters while the rest of the scroll and the background are blurred. The lighting is warm, highlighting the texture of the parchment and the metallic rim of the magnifying glass.

BIBLICAL  
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REVIEW

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT • DEAD SEA SCROLLS EBOOK

The Dead Sea Scrolls  
**Past, Present,  
and Future**

# THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

## 2 Introduction Megan Sauter

### PAST

## 5 A Short History of the Dead Sea Scrolls and What They Tell Us Lawrence H. Schiffman

From their discovery to interpretation, the Dead Sea Scrolls are remarkable texts that illuminate the biblical world and composition of biblical texts.

## 14 BAR's Crusades: Publishing the Dead Sea Scrolls Hershel Shanks

A scholarly monopoly had held the Dead Sea Scrolls hostage for decades, but the Biblical Archaeology Society helped free and publish the scrolls.

## 18 A View from the Caves Sidnie White Crawford

Who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls? An archaeological examination of the caves and the nearby settlement of Qumran helps answer this question.

**ON THE COVER:** The Dead Sea Scrolls are one of the most significant archaeological finds of the last century. Dating from the third century B.C.E. to the first century C.E., they represent the earliest collection of biblical manuscripts. Here, a researcher examines one of the Psalm scrolls in the Israel Museum.

PHOTO: EYAL BARTOV /  
ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

## PRESENT

- 29 **Searching for the “Original” Bible: Do the Dead Sea Scrolls Help?**  
Emanuel Tov  
Sometimes ancient biblical manuscripts differ from one another, but the Dead Sea Scrolls elucidate some early readings.
- 37 **The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament**  
James C. VanderKam  
Although the Dead Sea Scrolls and New Testament were composed by separate religious groups, they shed light on each other’s worlds.
- 48 **The Lost World of the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls**  
Andrew B. Perrin  
Some Dead Sea Scrolls were written in Aramaic, the common language of the day, and illuminate Judaism and early Christianity.
- 56 **Secrets of the Copper Scroll**  
Joan E. Taylor  
Written on metal and containing a list of treasure, the Copper Scroll is unique among the scrolls. Who wrote it and when?

## FUTURE

- 65 **From Dirt to Decipherment: An Interview with the IAA’s Joe Uziel**  
Nathan Steinmeyer and Joe Uziel  
BAR’s Nathan Steinmeyer interviews Joe Uziel of the Israel Antiquities Authority on the documentation and conservation of the scrolls.
- 74 **Missing: Have You Seen These Scrolls?**  
Årstein Justnes and Signe M. Hægeland  
Numerous Dead Sea Scroll fragments have gone missing since their discovery 75 years ago, but this team is tracking them down.
- 77 **Artificial Intelligence Identifies Scroll Scribes**  
Mladen Popović  
Artificial Intelligence (AI) assists epigraphers in identifying the handwriting of different scribes who penned the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- 80 **Reading the Invisible: Virtual Unwrapping of the Dead Sea Scrolls**  
Christy Chapman and W. Brent Seales  
With advanced digital restoration techniques, researchers can now read the interiors of rolled-up scrolls without even unwrapping them.

## EXTRAS

- 85 **Authors**
- 87 **Notes**
- 90 **About the Biblical Archaeology Society**

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## Introduction

**THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS** are considered by many to be the most significant archaeological find of the 20th century. This year, 2022, marks the 75th anniversary of their initial discovery. From 1947 to 1956, thousands of scroll fragments were uncovered from the caves near Qumran, located on the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea. Over the following decades, teams of scholars pieced these scrolls together to reconstruct an amazing library of texts from the third century B.C.E. to the first century C.E.

The scrolls' discovery is remarkable on several counts. First, it is quite unusual for ancient scrolls—usually written on parchment or papyrus—to be preserved in the archaeological record. The organic nature of such writing materials causes them to decompose quickly. Yet the arid environment of Qumran in the Judean Desert allowed these texts to survive. After two millennia, they are still legible!



Second, they illuminate the Bible's composition. Prior to their discovery, the earliest surviving copies of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) dated to around 1000 C.E. The Dead Sea Scrolls are a millennium earlier. Scholars are able to see continuity between the Dead Sea Scrolls and later biblical manuscripts. Yet they also have found some variation. For example, some scrolls of Exodus and Samuel from Qumran preserve passages that were absent from later biblical manuscripts. These might represent different traditions that were circulating at the time of the scrolls' writing—or scribal errors that crept into some manuscripts. The Dead Sea Scrolls are,

thus, instrumental in reconstructing biblical texts.

Third, they provide a window into the world of their authors. The scrolls did not just rewrite the history of the Hebrew Bible's development; they rewrote the history of Judea in the late Second Temple period. These texts were written when the Second Temple still stood in Jerusalem; when Jewish sects, including the Pharisees and Sadducees, argued about the correct interpretation of the law; and when the Greeks, Hasmonians, and then Romans—with Herod as a client king—ruled over the region. Written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, the Dead Sea Scrolls preserve both religious and sectarian texts.

There is debate about the authors' identity, but many connect them with the Essene community, another Jewish sect, who lived at Qumran. The scrolls, then, would have been their library. As noted above, Qumran is arid; although it was more fertile in antiquity than today, it still would not have been the most comfortable place to live. Yet it was well suited for the Essenes, who sought to remove themselves from society to live pure, righteous lives in accordance with a strict interpretation of Jewish law. One of the documents uncovered among the scrolls, the Community Rule, gives some insight into life for the Qumran community—if indeed they were the authors of the scrolls. We see from other texts that this group was anticipating

eschatological events. They believed that the promised messiah would soon return, overthrow corrupt society, and usher in the kingdom of God.

The Dead Sea Scrolls help us recreate this historical moment. We learn about the varied religious landscape of Judaism during this period—from which emerged early Christianity. For it is during this time, in the first century C.E., the final century of the Dead Sea Scrolls' composition, that Jesus of Nazareth launched his ministry.

The Qumran settlement was abandoned around 70 C.E., along with the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, and their library forgotten—that is, until 75 years ago.

This eBook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Past, Present, and Future*, looks back on the scrolls' discovery, around at their contribution to biblical and historical scholarship, and forward to their conservation and future research endeavors. It pulls articles published in *Biblical Archaeology Review*, written over the past two decades by leading scholars and players in the field—including one by our late editor and founder, Hershel Shanks, who helped free the scrolls from the scholarly monopoly that had held them captive for decades. It also gathers new cutting-edge research on the scrolls.

We hope that you enjoy this compilation, and we look forward to another 75 years of scroll research.

**—MEGAN SAUTER, BAR MANAGING EDITOR**

The image shows three large, white, earthenware jars with lids, displayed in a museum setting. The jars are made of a light-colored, textured material, possibly clay or plaster. They have rounded bodies and flat, circular lids. The jars are arranged on a bed of small, light-colored stones. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The word "PAST" is overlaid in large, bold, black letters across the center of the image.

# PAST

Photo: Megan Sauter /  
Biblical Archaeology Society

# A Short History of the Dead Sea Scrolls and What They Tell Us

**LAWRENCE H. SCHIFFMAN**

**I WANT TO SAY HERE AND NOW** how grateful I am to the original team of Dead Sea Scroll scholars who failed to publish the bulk of the scrolls for nearly 40 years and refused to let other scholars see them in the meantime.\* But for them, I would never have had the exciting life I have led as one of the first generation of scholars to study the full corpus of the scrolls after their release.

The earliest discovery of Dead Sea Scrolls occurred some six months before I was born. I became fascinated by the study of the scrolls in the 1960s when they were a little-known and underappreciated group of documents. I remember a comment someone made to me: “Why do you want to go into a field where you can’t see all the materials?”

Since then, everything has changed. No one asks me today why I chose to study the scrolls. Instead they ask me about different aspects of the scrolls—it seems that everyone knows something about them.

The history of the Dead Sea Scrolls did not actually begin with the famous Bedouin discovery in the caves of Qumran in 1947. Rather, two medieval manuscripts now known as the Damascus Document (formerly the Zadokite Fragments) were discovered by Solomon Schechter, then of Cambridge University, in the Cairo Genizah in Egypt in the late 19th century.<sup>1</sup> Schechter identified them as authored by a Second Temple-period Jewish sect.<sup>2</sup> Other copies were later found among the Dead Sea Scroll fragments from Qumran. Only then were scholars able to put these earlier discoveries into context. Schechter was right.

\*This article originally appeared in the May/June 2015 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*.



**ISOLATED AND BARREN.** A dramatic view of Qumran and the caves where the biblical and sectarian texts known as the Dead Sea Scrolls were hidden 2,000 years ago until they were discovered by Bedouin shepherds in the 1940s and 1950s. Overlooking the Dead Sea, the excavated remains of Qumran (center of photo) lie just a few hundred yards from caves where hundreds of scroll fragments were found. (Photo: "Kumrán" by Ondřej Žváček / CC by-SA 3.0)

The first seven Qumran scrolls were discovered by Bedouin in 1947 in what was then British Mandatory Palestine. The Israel War of Independence broke out in 1948. When it was over, Jordan was in control of the West Bank where the Qumran caves are located. The Jordanian Antiquities Department immediately set about identifying the caves where the Bedouin had discovered the scrolls and soon thereafter began excavations of the nearby Qumran settlement. In the 1950s, the Bedouin discovered additional fragmentary scrolls in the caves near Qumran. Subsequently the Jordanian Antiquities Department put together an international publication team to publish and interpret the manuscripts.

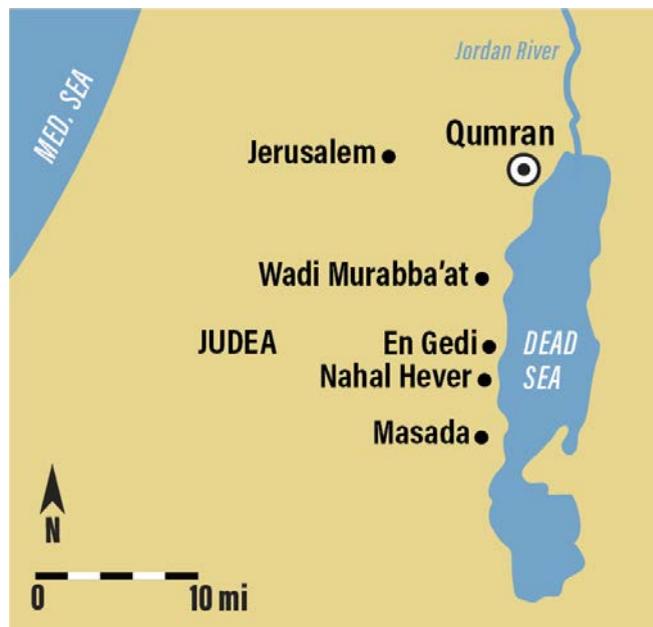
By 1954, the larger, for the most part complete, scrolls from Cave 1 had been acquired by Israel, and much of this collection had been published. The material remaining in Jordanian hands (mostly from the famous Cave 4) was extremely fragmentary, sometimes only 10 percent or less of the original scroll. The Jordanian team assigned to publish them was composed mostly of Catholic priests and Protestants who spent the majority of their time trying to piece together the various snippets into larger pieces of text. They laid out the fragments on long tables and maneuvered them around by matching the parchment and handwriting techniques. They were able to consolidate some 80,000 (sub-)fragments into approximately 20,000 larger fragments.

The team also began publishing the reconstructed scrolls, starting with the easier material, the biblical texts, but they did not have enough manpower or expertise to make much headway. This work proceeded at a snail's pace until 1960, when matters got even worse: Their funding ran out. Most members of the team left Jerusalem and headed back home. Although some had assignments for which they were still responsible, some lost interest, died, or were otherwise unable to complete their obligations. Moreover, some of the assignments were so vast that even the most well-intentioned scholar could not complete the assignment in a lifetime.

In 1967, as a result of the Six-Day War, Israel gained control of the area of Qumran as well as the Palestine Archaeological Museum (now the Rockefeller Museum) in East Jerusalem, where the scroll team's fragments had been housed. Nevertheless, the Israel Antiquities Authority left the international team in place and did not interfere in its work. A few members of the team, now headed by Harvard's John Strugnell, became more and more insular, regarding the texts as if they owned them.\* They worked very slowly, saved many of the texts for dissertation topics for their own students and refused to allow outside scholars to see them. By the early 1980s, international pressure convinced them to add a few Israeli scholars to the team.

In 1984, a biblical archaeology conference was held in Jerusalem at which Israeli scholar Elisha Qimron delivered a paper disclosing a few lines of a foundational text known as MMT (for Hebrew *Miqsat Maase ha-Torah*) or "Some Principles of the Law." I will never forget the shock of the audience, myself included, to learn that a text of such great importance had been held back from the scholarly and general public for so many years. It became obvious that there was much exceedingly significant material in the cache of scrolls that was off limits to most of us.

\*Hershel Shanks, "An Interview with John Strugnell," *BAR*, July/August 1994.



(Map: Biblical Archaeology Society)

At a Dead Sea Scrolls conference that I had the privilege of organizing at New York University in 1985, Professor Strugnell gave a paper that similarly disclosed the partial contents of a scroll that others had not been able to see. **BAR** editor Hershel Shanks had attended both the Qimron paper and Strugnell paper. It was after the latter that he initiated campaign to release photographs of the scrolls for scholarly examination and research.\*

Meanwhile other scholars began taking matters into their own hands. Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion professor Ben Zion Wacholder and his student Martin Abegg realized that texts could be reconstructed from a concordance that had been prepared by the team and circulated internally for their own research and to a small group of other scholars.

The concordance listed each word in the context of its preceding and following words. Using a computer, Wacholder and Abegg reconstructed non-biblical texts that they had not been permitted to see, and their results were published in several fascicles by the Biblical Archaeology Society (1991–1995).<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, Professor Robert Eisenman of California State University, Long Beach, obtained photographs of the scroll fragments from an individual who has still not been identified. Eisenman and Professor James Robinson of Claremont Graduate University decided to release them in a facsimile edition, again published by the Biblical Archaeology Society, with an introduction by Shanks.<sup>4</sup> Not long after, William Moffitt, librarian of the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, where a microfilm copy had been deposited for safekeeping, decided to open his copy to the world. The lock had finally been broken.

But Shanks would pay. Professor Qimron had painstakingly prepared a composite text of MMT based on the six partial copies, but he had not published it. Shanks obtained a composite copy and published the Hebrew text in his introduction to Eisenman and Robinson's Facsimile Edition.<sup>5</sup> Qimron sued Shanks for copyright infringement. In 1993 an Israeli court found Shanks guilty and rendered a \$40,000 judgment against him. The decision was subsequently affirmed by the Supreme Court of Israel.<sup>6</sup>

Coinciding with all this pressure for the release of the scrolls, Strugnell gave an offensive anti-Semitic interview to an Israeli newspaper which appeared on November 9, 1990. Amid persistent calls for something to be done, the Israel Antiquities Authority finally decided to remove Strugnell as head of the team, replacing him with Emanuel Tov of the Hebrew University.

Tov's first task was to widen the team to more than 60 international and interconfessional scholars and to reorganize the publication process. Between 1991 and 2002, more volumes of the official *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* series (DJD) were published than in the preceding 40 years. Tov and his associates also produced an accurate catalog of all the scroll materials to serve as the basis of an ongoing process of producing scholarly editions and translations.\*\* By 2002, every scrap of parchment had been published, including unidentifiable pieces. (Some re-editions

\*Hershel Shanks, **BAR**view: "Israeli Authorities Now Responsible for Delay in Publication of Dead Sea Scrolls" and **BAR**view: "Failure to Publish Dead Sea Scrolls Is Leitmotif of New York University Scroll Conference," **BAR**, September/October 1985.

\*\*Hershel Shanks, "Chief Scroll Editor Opens Up—An Interview with Emanuel Tov," **BAR**, May/June 2002.



**THE BEDOUIN SHEPHERDS, Muhammed edh-Dhib and Jum'a Muhammed, credited with discovering the first Dead Sea Scrolls. (Photo: John C. Trever)**

have been published as well.) Now most of the scrolls have even been digitized and appear on the web. This sudden release of texts hidden for more than four decades has had a profound effect on scholarship—of the Hebrew Bible, of Second Temple Judaism, and of early Christianity.

I think we scholars who are devoting our lives to the study of the scrolls can be grateful for another reason to the initial team of scholars who resisted disclosure of the texts of the scrolls. Without them, it is highly unlikely that the scrolls would have generated such immense public interest, which, in turn, has led to a series of exhibitions, documentaries, and conferences that has been of great advantage to the field. And the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls has matured into a full-dress academic discipline with a huge number of publications, from books and monographs to articles in numerous scholarly journals. Two journals are devoted solely to dealing with scholarly issues involving the scrolls.

The first generation of scroll scholars included the original team and a number of their close associates, especially their students, some of whom were incapable of independent scroll research and did not continue to contribute. The next group of

scroll scholars was made up of outsiders (like me) who, although they did not have access to the full complement of texts, took up research on the already-published materials. When the editorship of the scrolls shifted to Tov, he added many of this second group to the publication team, as they were skilled in working with the texts and eager to see the publication process completed.

The majority of the next generation of scholars, today's younger scholars, are students of the students of the original team members who were capable of independent research and of the group of former outsiders added to the team when Tov took over.

During the past 60 years, scholars have come to a consensus on many issues in Dead Sea Scrolls research, but they differ on other issues, as is natural in any field. One such issue is to identify the group of Jews who wrote the sectarian scrolls. The majority view is that they are Essenes.\* I have argued that it is important to recognize that their legal system is that of the Sadducees and that their historical origins lie in a group of pious Sadducees.\*\* As can be expected, despite the most informed speculation, some issues will never be resolved simply because there is not enough evidence on these tiny scraps of parchment that were once full scrolls to answer all our questions.

Some far-out theories on other issues have only one or two proponents who often claim that they have not gotten a fair hearing. The truth, however, is they have been heard, and their views have been rejected by their colleagues.

Some of the other divisive issues involve differing evaluations of the archaeological ruins at Qumran. Almost all scholars agree that the people who hid the scrolls used these buildings and, therefore, that the excavation of the site can be useful in helping to reconstruct the nature of the religious group that hid these sectarian scrolls. Unfortunately, much of the archaeological material still lies buried in unpublished fieldnotes and artifacts (such as pottery). Some are in the basement of the Rockefeller Museum and more are at the École Biblique, the French biblical and archaeological school in Jerusalem, where they are still being studied. Unfortunately the École's Father Roland de Vaux, who led the excavation of Qumran, died in 1970. The inability of archaeologists to access the entire corpus from Qumran and to make independent judgments on the material continues to hamper our ability to reach final conclusions on issues raised by both mainstream scholars and those who disagree with them. These archaeological materials should be made available immediately by the École Biblique.

What *has* been accomplished since 1990? First of all, of course, with few relatively minor exceptions, the Dead Sea Scrolls have been published in first-class scholarly editions. And by Dead Sea Scrolls, I mean not only the scroll library from Qumran, but also some scroll material from this period found at Masada, as well some documents from the Second Jewish Revolt (the Bar-Kokhba Revolt) in 132–135 C.E.<sup>7</sup>

\*Steve Mason, "Did the Essenes Write the Dead Sea Scrolls?" *BAR*, November/December 2008; Edna Ullman-Margalit, "Dissecting the Qumran-Essene Hypothesis," *BAR*, March/April 2008; Alan D. Crown and Lena Cansdale, "Was It an Essene Settlement?" *BAR*, September/October 1994; Sidnie White Crawford, "A View from the Caves," p. 18.

\*\*Lawrence H. Schiffman, "The Significance of the Scrolls," *Bible Review*, October 1990; "New Light on the Pharisees: Insights from the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Bible Review*, June 1992. See also (against the Sadducees) Frank Moore Cross, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the People Who Wrote Them," *BAR*, March 1977.



**PIVOTAL PARCHMENT.** This is one of six copies of MMT (for Hebrew *Miqsat Ma'ase ha-Torah* or "Some Principles of the Law"), a text that contrasts the strict religious laws of the Qumranites with the more liberal interpretations of Jews associated with the Temple. (Photo: Biblical Archaeology Society)

Scientific analysis of the scrolls has also proceeded apace. The parchment has been carbon-14 dated and DNA sampled; chemical analysis has been undertaken to determine the origin of the water used to prepare the skins; the inks have been analyzed; infrared photographs and multispectral imaging have been used to identify hitherto illegible letters; archaeologists have combed the Qumran site and nearby caves; experts on coins, glass, textiles and bones have been consulted; and ground-scanning radar has been used to remap the Qumran cemetery. The digitization of the scrolls has been accompanied by new photographs that have made new readings possible. In addition, preservation and conservation projects are underway using the most up-to-date methods.\*

Today Dead Sea Scrolls research is a field of its own. Contrary to what many people seem to expect, Dead Sea Scrolls research is not about looking for bombshells among the fragments. This fundamental misconception affected even scholars in the early days when the bootleg editions were being released. In reality, scroll research is a painstaking activity, beginning with the proper evaluation and publication of manuscripts, proceeding to the study of the literary history of the texts, including their relationship to earlier texts of the Hebrew Bible, other manuscripts from Qumran, other Second Temple period compositions and their later reflection in rabbinic literature and in the New Testament. Only after such consideration can the scroll scholar begin to unravel the history of ideas. This is why we are all so proud of the enormous number of monographs that go beyond the publication and translation of the scrolls. I often get the feeling that the public

\*Hershel Shanks, "The Enigma of Qumran: Four Archaeologists Assess the Site," *BAR*, January/February 1998.

thinks that publication is all that is needed. However, what is most important is the careful literary and historical analysis of the texts that have been entrusted to us.

So what *have* we learned?

First, we now understand much better the evolution of the authoritative Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible and its relation to the other textual traditions (including the Greek Septuagint) that existed in Second Temple times. In the Qumran community, differing biblical text types or textual families coexisted, apparently without conflict. An official authoritative text had not yet been finalized. We have also come to understand the varying modes of biblical exegesis that would later influence the authoritative texts of both Judaism and Christianity. In the scrolls we find Jewish legal midrash, some of it as complicated as what we find in later rabbinic literature. We also find modes of interpretation, like the genre of “rewritten Bible,” that point toward the aggadic midrash of the rabbis. *Pesher* (contemporizing biblical interpretation) points toward the fulfillment passages of the Gospels. Biblical texts were used for the production of *mezuzot* (a small scroll generally containing Deuteronomy 6:4–9 and 11:13–21—and at Qumran sometimes additional passages—affixed according to Jewish tradition to doorposts as a symbol of divine protection) and *tefillin* (phylacteries), indicating the continuity of these traditional Jewish understandings of Scripture. Perhaps most important, we have come to understand the plurality and variety of interpretations of the Bible and the manner in which they would shape the later development of religious traditions.

Disagreements about Jewish law were the main factors that separated Jewish groups and movements in Second Temple times. Yes, many theological differences also existed. These, however, were manifested most clearly in the differing opinions about Jewish practice and ritual. The impact of the scrolls on our understanding of the history of halakhah (Jewish law) has been enormous. With the help of the scrolls we have been able to reconstruct the Sadducee/Zadokite system of Jewish law that competed in Second Temple times with the Pharisaic-rabbinic system that is the basis for later Judaism.

But this is far less important than what the scrolls tell us about the inner ferment and debate that took place within the Jewish community in the second and first centuries B.C.E. and the early first century C.E. The apocalyptic messianism we see in the scrolls propelled the Jewish community toward two revolts against Rome (First Revolt: 66–70 C.E.; Second Revolt: 132–135 C.E.), both of which had messianic overtones.\* Further, the expectation of an assumed-to-come redeemer and numerous other motifs found in Qumran apocalyptic tradition have left their mark on the rise of Christianity and its eventual separation from Judaism.\*\*

A fascinating corollary to all this scroll research has been their effect on Jewish-Christian relations. The scrolls have been part of a wider, post-Holocaust phenomenon of understanding earliest Christianity as a Jewish sect. In turn, this historical understanding has furnished the intellectual basis for the continued evolution of contemporary Christianity away from anti-Judaic positions to a renewed

\* John J. Collins, “A Pre-Christian ‘Son of God’ Among the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *Bible Review*, June 1993.

\*\* James C. VanderKam, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and Early Christianity: Part One, How Are They Related?” *Bible Review*, December 1991; “The Dead Sea Scrolls and Early Christianity: Part Two, What They Share,” *Bible Review*, February 1992; “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament,” p. 37.

understanding of the common background that Jews and Christians share. Jews, in turn, have come to understand the way in which Christianity developed out of Judaism in light of our current understanding of the variegated nature of Second Temple Judaism—itsself the result of the study of the full corpus of the Dead Sea Scrolls as well as other Second Temple Jewish literature. This dual evolution, as a whole, has allowed the scrolls, themselves written by a contentious and even narrow-minded sect of Jews that has not existed for 2,000 years, to become an agent for increased Jewish-Christian understanding in our own time. 📖

*Notes on p. 87*

# BAR's Crusades: Publishing the Dead Sea Scrolls

HERSHEL SHANKS

ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1991, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* ran prominent stories announcing the Biblical Archaeology Society's publication of Volume 1 of the reconstructed Dead Sea Scroll texts. The worldwide coverage extended from Time and Newsweek to CNN and radio. As *The New York Times* headline ("Breaking the Scroll Cartel") suggested, this was the first anyone outside the small secretive publication team had gotten a glimpse of the unpublished Dead Sea Scroll texts. But it had taken 40 years to reach this point, and the fight wasn't over quite yet.\*

Discovered between 1947 and 1956, the scrolls had been written during a period of about 300 years and then stashed away in 11 caves along the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea in the first century C.E. Hailed as the greatest archaeological discovery of the 20th century, archaeologists in fact had comparatively little to do with it. Most of the approximately 40,000 manuscript fragments were found by Bedouin and sold to the authorities through a middleman. Far fewer were professionally recovered by Père Roland de Vaux of Jerusalem's École Biblique and his team of archaeologists, but this was enough to confirm the provenance and authenticity of the collection. All in all, these fragments—some as small as a thumbnail—comprised more than 900 documents, including nearly every book of the Hebrew Bible as well as texts known from the Old Testament canons of Eastern churches, and many other texts that were previously unknown.

A small team of brilliant international scholars was assembled at Jerusalem's Palestine Archaeological Museum (which was then part of Jordan, so no Israelis or Jews were on the team), and each member was assigned the reconstruction, interpretation, and publication of specific scrolls. Their task of sifting through and making sense of thousands of fragments was undeniably enormous, but they were given no schedules and were accountable to no one for the timely completion of their work.

In the meantime, no photographs or transcriptions of their scroll assignments were made available to the public or even to the rest of the scholarly community.

\*This article originally appeared in the July/August/September/October 2009 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*.

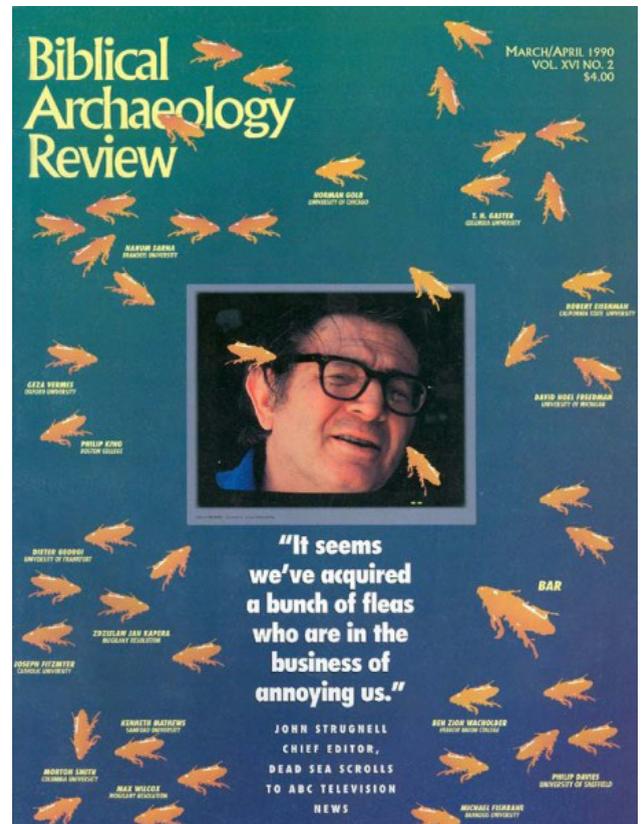
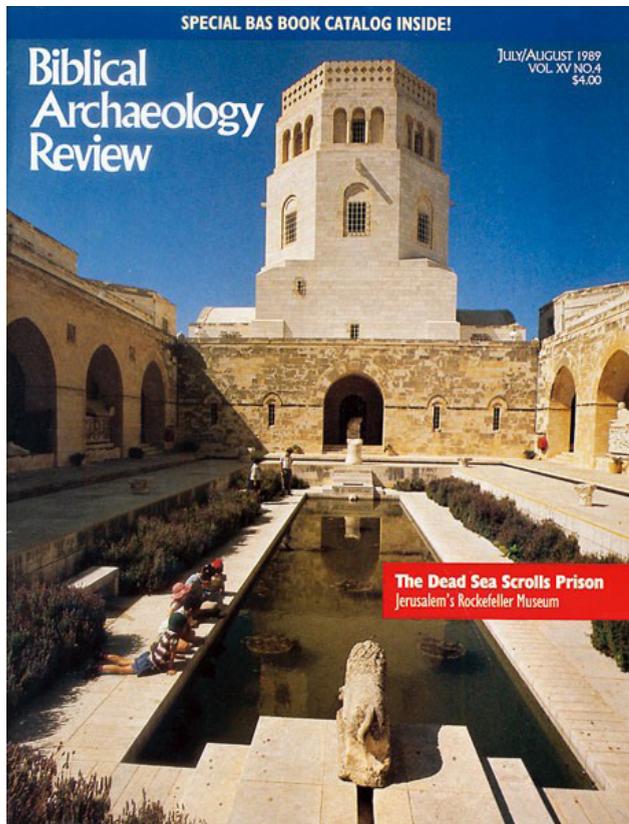


**HIDDEN SCROLLS.** Secreted away in the Palestine Archaeological Museum (now the Rockefeller Museum) in the 1950s, a small team of scholars pieced together thousands of tiny scroll fragments. Monsignor Patrick Skehan, who translated some of the Paleo-Hebrew texts from Cave 4, appears above. (Photo: Najib Albina / Israel Antiquities Authority)

The scrolls were shrouded in secrecy, so only a select group of scholars and a few of their graduate students got to see and work on them. After the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel gained control of the scrolls and the museum (now renamed the Rockefeller Museum), and some Jewish scholars (including Israelis) were eventually added to the scroll publication team, but that didn't fix the problem of access to the scrolls—and publications lagged. The rest of the world was in the dark for decades.

At a public lecture in 1977, Oxford don Geza Vermes declared that the failure to publish the scrolls was threatening to become “the academic scandal par excellence of the 20th century.” In the mid-1980s, *BAR* took up the call demanding the release of the scrolls so that all scholars could study them. Requests for photos or even a publication timeline were essentially ignored.

The problem was that scholarly tradition dictates that once a scholar has been assigned a text, he has the sole rights to publish that text. Releasing photos or transcriptions of the scrolls to the public might mean that someone else could publish the text first, so it simply was not done. And yet some of the editors on the team had been given such hefty assignments that it would be impossible to finish in their lifetimes.



**PRESSURE AND PERSISTENCE.** Multiple covers of *Biblical Archaeology Review* addressed the publication delay of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The July/August 1989 cover pictured Jerusalem's Rockefeller Museum (formerly the Palestine Archaeological Museum) as the "Dead Sea Scrolls Prison." When BAR published this cover, most of the fragmentary texts were still unpublished and kept hidden in the museum, where only a select few scholars could view them. The March/April 1990 cover showed chief editor of the scrolls, John Strugnell, surrounded by fleas, representing those pressuring his team to publish. BAR was the largest flea. (Covers: Biblical Archaeology Society)

Editor-in-Chief John Strugnell was unswayed by BAR's editorial pressure and the public outcry. A famous BAR cover depicts Strugnell's photo on a television screen surrounded by fleas and a quote he gave to ABC News: "It seems we've acquired a bunch of fleas who are in the business of annoying us." The biggest flea on our cover was labeled "BAR." However, the Harvard scholar's well-known alcoholism and emotional problems were clearly affecting his work. After making some anti-Semitic statements to an Israeli reporter (the article was then published in English in BAR), Strugnell was removed as editor-in-chief and replaced by the Hebrew University's Emanuel Tov. But still the scrolls were kept hidden away.

While the scroll team was dealing with its own internal drama and problems with public image, Martin Abegg, a graduate student at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio, and his advisor, Ben-Zion Wacholder, had gotten their hands on secret concordance of the unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls. The concordance consisted of photocopies of index cards on which every word in the unpublished

scrolls was listed, including its location and the few words surrounding it. Using a computer (dubbed by the press “Rabbi Computer”), Abegg was able to reconstruct the unpublished scroll texts for his own research. When he shared his work with his advisor, an excited Wacholder persuaded Abegg to publish it along with the rest of the unpublished scroll texts. The result was Abegg and Wacholder’s *A Preliminary Edition of the Unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls* in four fascicle volumes, the first of which was published by the Biblical Archaeology Society on September 4, 1991. Although the scroll team criticized the move and threatened lawsuits, the publication was widely praised, both for its accuracy and for breaking the monopoly on the scrolls.

In November of that year, BAR and the Biblical Archaeology Society also published photographs of the unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls that had been obtained by Professor Robert Eisenman of California State University. (He prepared them together with Professor James M. Robinson of Claremont Graduate School.) To this day, Eisenman will not disclose the source of these photographs, but their authenticity was never doubted. At about the same time, the Huntington Library in California, through its chief librarian, William A. Moffett, offered free access to its security copy of the scroll photos to anyone who wanted to see them.

More lawsuits were threatened. Although most didn’t follow through, scholar Elisha Qimron in fact won a sizable copyright suit against the Biblical Archaeology Society, ultimately costing \$100,000. The Israeli court held BAS liable for reprinting Qimron’s reconstruction of a Dead Sea Scroll text known as 4QMMT (from the Hebrew *Miqsat Ma’aseh ha-Torah*, “Some Principles of the Law”). Nonetheless, the cat was already out of the bag, so to speak, and the scroll team finally accepted the inevitable—the scrolls were now made available to all.

With a new, open approach and a larger team, publication of the scrolls moved forward swiftly under Tov’s direction. The workload of some scholars such as Józef Milik were reassigned to others for completion.

In 1991, more than four decades after the scrolls were first discovered, only seven volumes of the *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* series containing the scrolls had been published. Now, 18 years later, the series is complete at 40 volumes. And scroll research is thriving. 📖

# A View from the Caves

**SIDNIE WHITE CRAWFORD**

**THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS WERE DISCOVERED** in 11 caves in the Judean Desert near a site known as Khirbet Qumran, or the ruins of Qumran.\* Père Roland de Vaux of the *École Biblique et Archéologique Française*, who excavated the site in the 1950s, concluded that Qumran was a Jewish sectarian settlement, most probably Essene (the other two main Jewish movements in the Greco-Roman period being Pharisees and Sadducees). The Essenes from Qumran, who owned the scrolls, hid them in the caves during the Great Jewish Revolt against Rome (66–73 C.E.), he said, because the settlement was threatened by an advancing Roman legion, which indeed destroyed the site in 68 C.E.

This is still the most common view espoused by scholars, championed especially by the American archaeologist Jodi Magness, Magen Broshi, former curator of the Shrine of the Book where the major intact scrolls are housed, and the late Israeli archaeologist and scroll scholar Hanan Eshel.

A significant number of scholars, however, oppose this so-called Essene-Qumran hypothesis. Theirs is not exactly competing position, but an opposing position, perhaps more accurately described as an anti-de Vaux position. They all agree that Qumran was not a sectarian settlement and that the manuscripts found in the caves are not related to Qumran. But they differ widely as to the nature of the remains at Qumran. Belgian scholars Robert Donceel and Pauline Donceel-Voûte argued that Qumran was a “villa rustica” with wealthy inhabitants.<sup>1</sup> Norman Golb of the University of Chicago argued that Qumran was a Hasmonean/Herodian fortress and that the scrolls were part of the Jerusalem Temple library, hidden in the caves before the Roman siege of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. Israeli archaeologists Yitzhak Magen and Yuval Peleg contended that Qumran was at first a fortress and then became an important pottery production center; the scrolls, meanwhile, were hidden by fleeing refugees during the Great Jewish Revolt, according to them. For Australian scholars Alan Crown and Lena Cansdale, Qumran was a caravanserai or, as they put it, a “commercial entrepot.”\*\* Israeli archaeologist Yizhar Hirschfeld held that Qumran was a rural estate complex; the scrolls were brought for concealment in the caves from some public library, probably in Jerusalem. What we may characterize as the “anti-de Vaux”

\*This article originally appeared in the September/October 2011 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*.

\*\*Alan D. Crown and Lena Cansdale, “Was It an Essene Settlement?” *BAR*, September/October 1994.



**GUARDED SECRETS.** For millennia, the darkened caves peering out over the Dead Sea stood guard over one of the world's greatest archaeological treasures, the Dead Sea Scrolls. Since their discovery, the scrolls have shed invaluable light on the Bible, Second Temple Judaism, and Christian origins, but many questions remain, including who hid the scrolls and why? Were they left in the caves by the sectarian Jews living at Qumran, or were they hidden by desperate Temple priests fleeing the Roman destruction of Jerusalem? The caves may hold the answers. (Photo: G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection / Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-DIG-matpc-22897)

interpretations are united by the way that they reinterpret the archaeological data from the site. What they do not do, or at best do only superficially, is take into account the archaeological data from the caves. That is what I want to do here.

The caves themselves fall into two groups. The first group (Caves 1, 2, 3, 6, and 11) are naturally formed caves in the high, rugged limestone cliffs in the littoral behind Qumran. The second group (Caves 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10) are manmade caves carved into the soft sandstone marl on which Qumran sits; for all practical purposes they are part of the site.

In 1952, after the Bedouin had discovered Cave 1 with its seven intact scrolls and Cave 2 with some additional scroll fragments, both of which were in the limestone cliffs, the scholars decided to mount their own survey of these cliffs overlooking Qumran. In a race with the Bedouin, the archaeologists discovered Cave 3, which yielded fragments of 14 leather scroll manuscripts, as well as pottery (and the famous Copper Scroll,\* which is separate from the other scrolls). Almost all of the attention aroused by this cave survey has focused on Cave 3. But the scholarly team also made soundings in 270 other caves in a 6-mile section of the cliffs, with Qumran approximately in the middle. Two hundred and thirty of these caves had nothing in them, but 40 contained pottery and other objects. Some were as old as the Chalcolithic period (4500–3300 B.C.E.), some as late as the modern period, but 26 contained remains from the Greco-Roman period similar to the finds from the caves in the limestone cliffs that had contained scrolls or scroll fragments. In the 1980s, Joseph Patrich, now of the Hebrew University, conducted several surveys in the limestone cliffs; he, too, found no new scrolls, but he did confirm the earlier survey regarding the pottery.<sup>2</sup> In the 1990s, Broshi and Eshel excavated two caves (C and F) 650 feet north of Qumran and also discovered pottery sherds in the limestone caves identical with that found in Qumran itself.<sup>3</sup>

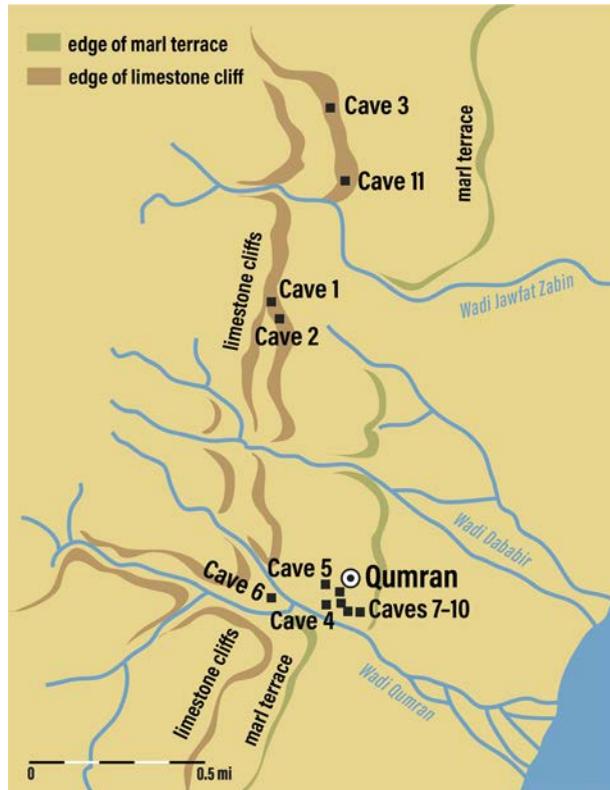
We will not undertake an extended pottery analysis here; a few remarks will suffice. In Cave 1, the initial Bedouin discovery, a jar was found containing two intact scrolls each wrapped in linen. The Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>) was discovered in the same jar without a wrapping. The jar in which these scrolls were found is a tall storage jar, hole-mouthed, with a cylindrical body, a well-marked (carinated) shoulder and a flat base. It was fitted with a bowl-shaped lid. This type of jar has now become known as a “scroll jar.” A number of other empty “scroll jars” lined a wall of Cave 1. This cave also yielded sherds from at least 50 other cylindrical jars and their bowl-shaped lids.

In Cave 2, six similar jars and one lid were found. From Cave 3 came sherds of 35 cylindrical jars and more than 20 lids. A “scroll jar” was also found in Cave 6 and in Cave 11. Again and again the 1952 scholars’ survey recovered storage jars (cylindrical and ovoid) and bowl-shaped lids.

This same kind of pottery was found at Qumran itself. The conclusion is inescapable: The same types of pottery were in use in the limestone cliffs as in Qumran itself.

The limestone cliffs were not lived in, but they were used by the inhabitants of the area. That only a few of these caves contained scrolls indicates that their primary purpose was not the storage of scrolls, but something else. They were not

\*See Joan E. Taylor, “Secrets of the Copper Scroll,” p. 56.



**QUMRAN'S CAVES.** The many caves found in the mountains and hills surrounding Qumran can be divided into two groups. The caves closest to the site (Caves 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10) were chiseled out by hand from the soft, marl sandstone upon which Khirbet Qumran was built. These caves, which were closer to the site and better ventilated, served as residences for some of Qumran's inhabitants. Beyond the immediate sandstone terrace, however, stand the imposing and darkened limestone cliffs of Qumran, honeycombed with naturally formed caves (Caves 1, 2, 3, 6, and 11) that were used to hide many of the Dead Sea Scrolls. (Map: Biblical Archaeology Society)

suitable for long-term occupancy because they are small, not well ventilated nor well lit, with uneven floors and ceilings.

The situation is different, however, for the second group of caves in the marl terrace on which Qumran sits. They are bright and airy with beautiful views of the Dead Sea and the rose-red mountains beyond. They have level floors and storage niches. Unlike the caves in the limestone cliffs, they were created by humans to be lived in.

The most famous of the Qumran caves is Cave 4, which was discovered by the Bedouin in 1952 under the very noses of the archaeologists excavating the structure above. As de Vaux recognized, Cave 4 was created as a dwelling space. In addition to fragments of storage jars, other finds in the cave included cooking and serving vessels. Cave 4 is best known, however, for its thousands of scroll fragments. When the archaeologists followed the Bedouin into Cave 4, they found that the scroll fragments went right down to the floor. Eventually more than 10,000 scroll fragments coming from more than 500 manuscripts were recovered from Cave 4.



**CAVE 4.** Thousands of scroll fragments came from Qumran Cave 4. (Photo: Megan Sauter / Biblical Archaeology Society)

Harvard's Frank Cross, who made preliminary identifications of the excavated scroll fragments, reports, "I was struck with the fact that the relatively small quantity of fragments from the deepest levels of the cave nevertheless represented a fair cross section of the whole deposit in the cave, which suggests ... that deterioration of the manuscripts must have begun even before time sealed the manuscripts in the stratified soil, and that the manuscripts may have been in great disorder when originally abandoned in the cave. The paucity of [pottery] sherds in the cave certainly indicates that the scrolls of Cave 4 were not left stored away in jars."<sup>4</sup> In other words, the scrolls were placed in the cave in haste and all at once! The space was not originally intended as a storage space for scrolls (a *genizah*), but was, as de Vaux hypothesized, originally carved out as a dwelling space.

An exploration of the marl terrace followed the discovery of Cave 4. Caves 5 and 10 were located in the southwest spur; Caves 7–9 were found on the southern spur. All are artificial caves, well lit and well ventilated, and clearly created for residence. Pottery fragments, all of the same period and type, including lamps, bowls and cooking vessels, were recovered in all the caves in the marl terrace.

Cave 8 gave unique evidence that it was intended to be lived in: Near the entrance was a *mezuzah*, the little container of sacred script that Jews then

(and still) affixed to the doorposts of their houses. As the Bible states, “You shall ... write [these words] on the doorposts [*mezuzot*] of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:9).

In addition, Cave 8 contained more than 100 leather tabs used for fastening scrolls when rolled up. Whoever lived in Cave 8 probably manufactured the scroll fasteners; that may have been his job. Whether intended for new scrolls or for their repair, these leather tabs are evidence of something larger than a private scroll collection. There must have been scrolls nearby on which the fasteners were meant to be used.

Moreover, as Broshi and Eshel point out, all the caves in the marl terrace lie within the Sabbath limit of 1,000 cubits (about 1,500 ft) from Qumran.<sup>5</sup> The term “Sabbath limit” refers to the distance from home a Jew may walk on the Sabbath day. The very propinquity of these caves in the marl terrace to the site strongly suggests a connection between the scrolls and Qumran.

Broshi and Eshel also discovered an “intricate network of trails” leading from Qumran to both the marl caves and the caves in the limestone cliffs. Staircases were cut into the marl leading to the caves.<sup>6</sup> While today these marl caves are difficult to access, at the time of the Qumran settlement there would have been easy traffic between the site and the marl caves, and at least occasional traffic to the limestone caves.

All of these facts argue against the notion that the scrolls were abandoned in caves by fleeing Jerusalemites, who were simply looking for a remote hiding place.

And, as de Vaux pointed out, “The pottery from the caves is identical with that of the Khirbeh [Qumran].”<sup>7</sup> Since de Vaux’s time, this observation has only been reinforced.<sup>8</sup>

One thing that is frequently cited as casting doubt on the connection between the scrolls and the site is that, although thousands of scroll fragments have been found in the caves, not a single scroll fragment has been found at Qumran itself. Scroll fragments have been found in Caves 1, 2, 3, 6, and 11 in the limestone cliffs. (Cave 1 was the site of the original Bedouin discovery of seven intact scrolls; the Bedouin also discovered the famous intact Temple Scroll in Cave 11.) In the caves in the marl terrace, in addition to the hoard of fragments from Cave 4, scroll fragments were also found in Caves 5, 7 (all in Greek), 8, and 9. (The only inscription from Cave 10 was written on a piece of pottery, or an ostrakon.)

Why wasn’t a scrap of papyrus or animal hide ready to be inscribed or a tiny fragment of an inscribed scroll found at Qumran itself?

The answer lies in the fiery end of habitation at Qumran. After a brief settlement in about 800 B.C.E., Qumran was not resettled until the late second century B.C.E. Habitation then continued without interruption (except for a brief period following an earthquake and a fire<sup>9</sup>) until it was destroyed by a second fire in the mid- to late first century C.E.,<sup>10</sup> most probably as a result of the Roman conquest. The fire that consumed Qumran at this time consumed all the organic material at the site. As de Vaux states, “The end of the Period II is marked by a violent destruction ... [A]ll the rooms of the southwest and northwest were filled with debris from the collapse of the ceilings and superstructures ... [A]lmost everywhere a layer of a powdery black substance gives evidence of the burning of the roofs.”<sup>11</sup>



**THE SCROLL JAR.** Many of the scrolls discovered in the caves of Qumran were found inside tall, cylindrical storage jars distinguished by their flat bases, delicately carinated shoulders, and perfectly fitted bowl-shaped lids. While numerous “scroll jars” and lids have been found in the area’s caves, the same type of pottery can be found strewn across the site of Qumran itself, indicating that those who placed the scrolls in the caves and those who lived at Khirbet Qumran were one and the same. This jar stands 2 feet tall and dates to the second century B.C.E. (Photo: Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art / Gift of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 1964)



**WRITING DESK?** Archaeologists found fragments of plastered benches and tables at Qumran. Many interpret these as writing desks, such as the above reconstruction in Qumran's museum, but their function is disputed. (Photo: Megan Sauter / Biblical Archaeology Society)

In these circumstances, we should not expect to find scraps of parchment or papyrus in the ruins.

Moreover, significant evidence for scribal activity has been found at the site, including three inkwells excavated by de Vaux. As many as six inkwells may have come from the site. This many inkwells at a small site is unparalleled in Israel.

Associated with the Qumran inkwells were plastered benches and tables, which de Vaux believed were writing desks, though their actual function is disputed.<sup>12</sup> It does not really matter what the function of the tables was, since we know by the presence of the inkwells at the site that some writing occurred. De Vaux also discovered an ostrakon inscribed with a complete alphabet, which he plausibly identified as the work of a “pupil scribe.”<sup>13</sup> In a 1996 survey, James F. Strange uncovered an inscribed ostrakon that appears to be some kind of deed.<sup>14</sup> All this is evidence of writing at Qumran.

The evidence seems clear that the scrolls and the settlement at Qumran were related. What can we learn from the kinds of scrolls in the various caves?

We have seen that the caves in the marl terrace near the site were meant to be lived in. With the exception of Cave 4 (we'll come to that in a moment), none of these caves contained large collections. What was in the marl caves seems to be meant for private use of the residents. Thus, Cave 8 contained two



**THE WAR SCROLL** was one of the first texts discovered in the caves above Qumran and provides a clear example of the sectarian worldview that defined the Essene community. The scroll describes in exacting detail the final apocalyptic confrontation between the righteous and observant Sons of Light and the sinful and disobedient Sons of Darkness, the latter of which included traditional biblical enemies like Ammon and Moab, as well as more traditional Jewish groups who were seen as “violators of the covenant.” Such a distinct sectarian message, which runs counter to much of the theology of the established Jerusalem priesthood, indicates that the scrolls were a product of the local Essene community, not the remnants of the Temple archive that had been taken to the caves for safety. (Photo: David Harris / Shrine of the Book / © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem)

biblical manuscripts and a hymn or prayer scroll. Cave 5 contained seven biblical manuscripts, fragments of three sectarian manuscripts (i.e., reflecting a theology different from common Judaism) and some unidentifiable manuscripts. Cave 7 contained only Greek manuscripts. The few manuscript fragments from Caves 9 and 10 could not be identified. These small collections are not the remnants of a larger library hidden by refugees fleeing from Jerusalem, but were used by the individual inhabitants of the cave for study or private devotion.

The caves in the limestone cliffs (Caves 1, 2, 3, 6, and 11), on the other hand, were not meant to be lived in. Hence, their contents were not meant for the private reflections of the inhabitants. In addition to scrolls that could be identified with any group of Jews (e.g., scrolls of biblical books and the Apocrypha), they also contained distinctly sectarian compositions belonging to a specific group of Jews with specific and often unique legal, theological, and historical interests not shared by the wider Judaism of the period.<sup>15</sup>

There is another peculiarity of the manuscripts from the caves in the limestone cliffs: Many of them advocate or assume a solar calendar rather than the standard lunar Jewish calendar.<sup>16</sup> These scrolls would hardly have come from the Jerusalem Temple.

Finally, we come to the Cave 4 fragments, the largest collection that ties all the other manuscripts to itself and to each other. The scroll fragments were deposited on the entire floor of Cave 4; they seem to have been deposited all at once, with no apparent order, and they were covered with a layer of marl that had sealed them in antiquity.<sup>17</sup> The scrolls in Cave 4 include virtually every category of scroll in the entire Qumran collection.<sup>18</sup> And the Cave 4 fragments cover the entire time range of the collection, beginning in the mid-third century B.C.E. and continuing to the mid-first century C.E. (The various scrolls found in the 11 caves have been dated paleographically, that is, by the shape and form of the letters, a method that has now been confirmed by carbon-14 tests).

The handwriting of individual scribes also links the Cave 4 fragments with the other caves. For example, according to the analysis of noted paleographer Ada Yardeni, the same hand that wrote some Cave 4 fragments also penned some manuscripts found in Cave 1 (in the limestone cliffs).<sup>19</sup>

All this ties the scrolls from the 11 caves into a common collection or corpus. And the sectarian nature of some of the scrolls and the favoring of the solar calendar tell us that the collection did not come from the two principal groups of Second Temple Jews (Pharisees and Sadducees), nor from the Jerusalem Temple.

What was not found in the scrolls is equally important—nothing that can be described as Pharaonic and very, very few historical texts or personal, legal, or business documents. This contrasts sharply with the caves found in the major valleys south of Qumran such as Nahal Hever and Wadi Murabba'at. We know that the property in these caves belonged to refugees fleeing from the conflicts of the first and second centuries C.E. The vast majority of these documents are deeds of sale, leases, loans, marriage contracts, and the like, including the famous Babatha archive.\* None of these kinds of documents was found in the Qumran caves, as would be the case if they had been deposited by fleeing refugees.

Where, then, did the Qumran collection—essentially a single collection—come from? As noted earlier, some of the scrolls have been dated paleographically prior to the late second century B.C.E., when the sectarian community was founded at Qumran. These could not have been written at Qumran. But very few of the scrolls are older than the sectarian settlement at Qumran. They were presumably brought to the site with the earliest residents. The latest date of the scrolls is clear: None is later than the destruction of Qumran around the time of the Great Jewish Revolt against Rome.

All these facts create a strong chain of evidence that it was the sectarian inhabitants of Qumran who owned the scroll collection and who hid them, first in the relatively inaccessible caves in the limestone cliffs, but then finally and quickly in the large, conveniently located space of nearby Cave 4.

Why did they do this? There is no direct evidence to answer that question, but the destruction layer at Qumran, along with the Roman arrowheads found in the debris, point to a threat to the settlement by a Roman legion on its way to Jerusalem during the Great Jewish Revolt. ❏

*Notes on p. 87*

\*See Anthony J. Saldarini, "Babatha's Story," March/April 1998.

# PRESENT

Photo: Shrine of the Book /  
The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

# Searching for the “Original” Bible: Do the Dead Sea Scrolls Help?

EMANUEL TOV

**WHEN ANCIENT BIBLICAL TEXTS DIFFER FROM ANOTHER, which one should we believe?\***

More specifically, in answering this question: How helpful are those ancient scrolls of the Hebrew Bible found among the Dead Sea Scrolls?

Prior to their discovery, scholars looked mainly to two texts to answer the question posed at the beginning of this article—the traditional Hebrew text known as the Masoretic Text (or MT), which was finalized by Jewish scholars in about 1000 C.E., and a Greek translation of the Hebrew text called the Septuagint (or LXX). This Greek translation of the Pentateuch (Torah) was made for the Jews of Alexandria in the beginning of the third century B.C.E.

According to tradition, 72 or 70 wise men translated the Torah into Greek in 72 days, seated in 36 separate cells, and, lo and behold, they produced identical Greek translations, supposedly testifying to the accuracy of their translation. The other books were translated in the course of the next century.

Then, almost 70 years ago, the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in caves near the ancient site of Qumran. Some of these Hebrew texts have more in common with the Greek Septuagint (LXX) than with the traditional Hebrew text (MT). This shows that the Greek translators must have held in their hands some Hebrew scrolls that resembled the Hebrew texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The main question I wish to raise here is how important are the Hebrew texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls for elucidating the text of the Hebrew Bible. Are they equally as trustworthy as the other two sources that we use all the time, that is, the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint?

\*This article originally appeared in the July/August 2014 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*.



**THE GREAT ISAIAH SCROLL.** Perhaps the most famous of the Dead Sea Scrolls, this 23.5-foot scroll, dating to about 100 B.C.E., is the oldest and best-preserved copy of a book of the Hebrew Bible. But with its numerous mistakes and omissions, contextual changes, unusual spelling system, and bad handwriting, it does not provide as much insight to today's biblical texts as some of the other more incomplete or fragmented scrolls. (Photo: John C. Trever / Digital image, James E. Trever)

I believe the answer to this question will inevitably be subjective. In asking which among two or more readings (i.e., differences in manuscripts) reflects an original or more acceptable text than the others, we are embarking on a subjective search that can be crowned only by an equally subjective answer that may be contested by other scholars. In the end, it is subjective. Sometimes there does seem to be a “right” answer, but often there is no “right” answer.

Let me illustrate this with a few examples.

### On which day did God rest after the creation? (Genesis 2:2)

The statement in Genesis 2:2 is clear: Upon finishing the creation activity in six days, God rested on the seventh day. Most translations, such as the New Revised Standard Version and English Standard Version, render the Hebrew text literally: “And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done (and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done”). This has been the usual

translation in English ever since the King James Version of 1611 (“And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made”).

All these translations pose an exegetical challenge, however: If God finished his work on the seventh day, by implication he must have performed at least a minimal amount of work on that day.

The medieval Jewish commentator Rashi suggested that God performed only “a hair’s breadth” of work. There is no real linguistic problem in this verse, however, if the Hebrew is taken to mean something like “By the seventh day God finished his work.” At the same time, according to some commentators there is still a theological problem, for if people are not permitted to work on the seventh day, why did God perform even a minimal amount of work on that day?

Well, help may come from an unexpected place. The ancient Hebrew text known as the Samaritan Pentateuch reads “On the sixth day God finished ...” This reading is also reflected in the Septuagint and the Peshitta (in Syriac).

Now, which Bible text are we to believe? Modern scholars disagree. Some prefer the reading “On the sixth day” because it is so much easier in the context. Others would say just the opposite: The reading “sixth” should be rejected precisely because it is so easy (“too good to be true”). That is, it must have been created in order to solve the problematic issue. In other words, these scholars would still prefer the slightly problematic received text referring to the “seventh day.”

This verse has not been preserved among the fragmentary Dead Sea Scrolls. In my view, however, even if a reading “seventh” or “sixth” had been preserved in an ancient Dead Sea Scroll, I would still claim that we should be guided by content considerations in deciding upon the “correct” reading. I would still choose “on the seventh day.”

In other cases, as in the next example, relevant guidance is available in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

### **Did Hannah bring one bull or three bulls as an offering at Shiloh? (1 Samuel 1:24)**

When the infant Samuel had been weaned and his mother, Hannah, finally came to Shiloh with her son, she also brought with her an offering for the Lord that is described in two ways in our textual sources. According to the Masoretic Text, she brought “three bulls,” but according to the Septuagint and a Qumran scroll (4QSam<sup>a</sup> from 50–25 B.C.E.) she brought one “three-year-old bull.”

I believe that Hannah probably offered only a single bull (as in the Septuagint and 4QSam<sup>a</sup>); supporting this choice is the next verse in the Masoretic Text which speaks about “the bull.” I believe the Masoretic Text was textually corrupted when the continuous writing (without spaces between words) of the original words *prm/shlshh* (literally: “bulls three”) underlying the Septuagint was divided wrongly to *pr mshlsh* (“three-year-old bull”).

The evidence of the Septuagint, being in Greek, always depends on a reconstruction into Hebrew, and consequently the Qumran scroll here helps us in deciding between the various options. Incidentally an offering of a “three-year-old bull” is mentioned in Genesis 15:9. It shows that a Hebrew text underlying the Septuagint once existed in which Hannah brought only one three-year-old bull.



**THREE BULLS OR ONE?** Fulfilling her vow, Hannah takes her son Samuel to Eli, a priest at Shiloh, shown in this 13th-century stained-glass roundel from the Canterbury Cathedral in Kent, England. In addition, she brings an offering of three bulls (see lower right), according to the Masoretic Text (MT). But in the next verse, the MT text refers to “the bull.” That verse comports with both the Septuagint (LXX) and the Dead Sea Scroll 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, which state that Hannah brought one “three-year-old bull.” (Photo: “Canterbury, Cathedral-Stained Glass 06” by Mattis / CC by-SA 3.0)

## **Were the nations divided according to the number of the sons of God? Did God have sons? (Deuteronomy 32:8)**

The first 43 verses of Deuteronomy 32 comprise the beautiful poem of Moses. Deuteronomy 32:8 in the King James Version reads: “When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.”

“The Most High” then divides the nations according to the “number of the children of Israel” of which there were “70” (the number of the descendants of Jacob who went down to Egypt). That is, the number of the nations equaled the number of the children of Israel. Each of the 70 nations had its own god. In the next verse we read that YHWH, the personal name of the God of Israel, received Israel as “his portion.” There seems to be no connection, however, between the number of the nations of the world and the number of the children of Israel.

We should therefore take a serious look at a different reading found in the Qumran scroll 4QDeut<sup>i</sup>; according to that text, the nations were divided “according to the number of the sons of Elohim (God).” In this reading, which is also reflected in the Septuagint, “the Most High” divided the nations according to the number of the sons of Elohim. This reading seems more logical than that of the Masoretic Text. It seems even more logical that the original text referred to the Canaanite god El rather than the Israelite Elohim. In its probable original wording, reconstructed from 4QDeut<sup>i</sup> and the Septuagint, the Song of Moses originally referred to an assembly of the gods in which “the Most High (Elyon) fixed the boundaries of peoples according to the number of the sons of the God E(l).”<sup>1</sup> The next verse stresses that the Lord, YHWH, kept Israel for himself. Within this supposedly original context, ‘Elyon and El need not be taken as epithets (appellations) of the God of Israel, but as names of the gods known from the Canaanite and Ugaritic divine assembly.

This obviously bothered a scribe of an early text, now reflected in the Masoretic Text; he did not feel at ease with this polytheistic picture and replaced “sons of El” with “the sons of Israel,” thus giving the text a different direction by the change of a single word. Another scribe, the source of the Qumran scroll, changed El to Elohim, God, which is a natural development since both words are used in Hebrew texts as “God.” If this reasoning is correct—it is no more than speculation—a Qumran fragment together with the Septuagint helps us to recover the original text in one important detail, but one that may be embarrassing to a modern reader (and even to ancient ones), referring as it does to the division of the nations according to “the sons of God.”

## **Did Jeremiah praise God or only rant against idolatry? (Jeremiah 10)**

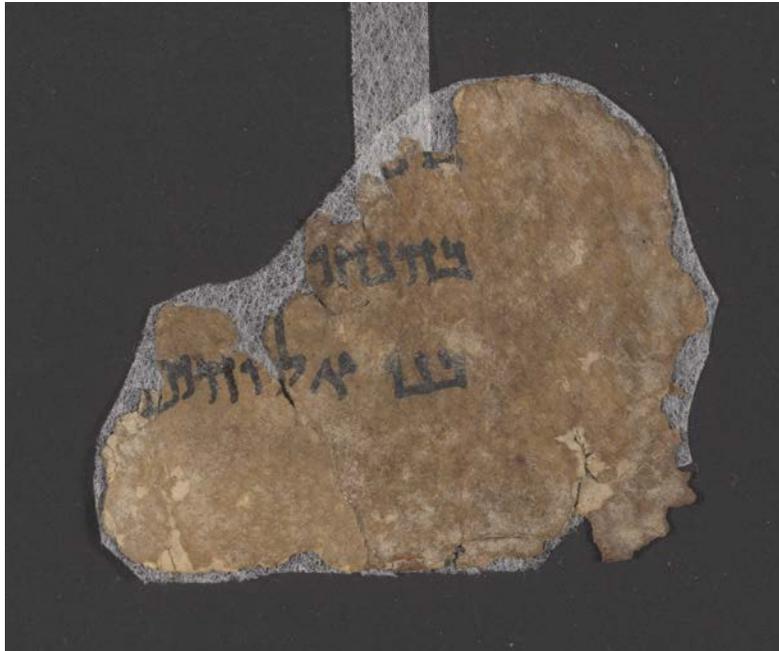
The prophet Jeremiah is well known for his rants against idolatry. In one of his most outspoken utterances, he eloquently mocks the idols, but also praises the Lord. Listen to the prophet, as quoted in the Masoretic Text (I have put his praise of the Lord in italics, in contrast to his mockery of the idols):

<sup>3</sup> ... For it is the work of a craftsman's hands.  
 He cuts down a tree in the forest with an ax,  
<sup>4</sup> He adorns it with silver and gold,  
 He fastens it with nails and hammer,  
 So that it does not totter.  
<sup>5</sup> They are like a scarecrow in a cucumber patch,  
 They cannot speak.  
 They have to be carried,  
 For they cannot walk.  
 Be not afraid of them, for they can do no harm;  
 Nor is it in them to do any good.  
<sup>6</sup> *O Lord, there is none like You!*  
*You are great and Your name is great in power.*  
<sup>7</sup> *Who would not revere You, O King of the nations?*  
*For that is Your due,*  
*Since among all the wise of the nations*  
*And among all their royalty*  
*There is none like You.*  
<sup>8</sup> But they are both dull and foolish;  
 [Their] doctrine is but delusion;  
 It is a piece of wood,<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>9</sup> Silver beaten flat, that is brought from Tarshish,  
 And gold from Uphaz,  
 The work of a craftsman and the goldsmith's hands;  
 Their clothing is blue and purple,  
 All of them are the work of skilled men.  
<sup>10</sup> *But the Lord is truly God:*  
*He is a living God,*  
*The everlasting King,*  
*At His wrath, the earth quakes,*  
*And nations cannot endure His rage.*

(Jeremiah 10:3–10, JPS)

This same pattern continues, but this is enough to raise the question: Have the passages praising the Lord been added by a later scribe or redactor?

The question is raised rather insistently because the verses of praise are lacking in the Septuagint. More recently, in a text of this passage among the Dead Sea Scrolls (4QJer<sup>b</sup>), the italicized passages praising the Lord are also lacking. On this basis it is often argued that the shorter text from the Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scrolls reflect the original form and that the Masoretic Text reflects a later tradition in which the praise of the Lord has been added in contrast to the futility of the idols. Indeed, in the development of Scripture, usually elements were added, not deleted. Moreover, it is intrinsically more plausible that verses of praise were added than omitted.



**SONS OF GOD?** The Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:8) in the Masoretic Text describes the Most High dividing the nations according to number of “the sons [children?] of Israel.” This Dead Sea Scroll fragment (4QDeut<sup>i</sup>) and the third-century B.C.E. translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch into Greek (the Septuagint), however, say the nations were divided according to the “sons of Elohim” (God). Based on this evidence, the original text probably referred to the head of the Canaanite assembly of gods, El, which later became “Elohim,” in some sources and became “the sons of Israel” in the Masoretic Text. Very probably, the text was changed by scribes who were uncomfortable with any hint of polytheism. (Photo: Shai Halevi / Israel Antiquities Authority)

Which text reflects the original words of the prophet? In an abstract way, both may be original: The short text, containing only the mockery, reflects a first stage in the prophet’s thinking. This early formulation may have been expanded, either by the prophet himself or by a later scribe or redactor. In that case, we learn about the system of expanding text in the course of its literary history. The relatively late Dead Sea Scroll fragment and the Septuagint thus help us to understand the complicated composition history of this book.

\* \* \*

These examples illustrate how the Dead Sea Scrolls do make a difference. They often show us the right way in our search for the nature of the original Bible text. But we do not automatically choose the Dead Sea Scroll text over the Masoretic Text or the Septuagint simply because the Dead Sea Scroll text is older than the others. We could have made such an argument based on the age of the Dead Sea Scroll texts, arguing that these 2,000-year-old texts are likely to reflect the more original readings—the later the Bible copies, the more likely they were subjected to the process of scribal corruption (the technical term for scribal errors).

Instead, I have argued that the preferred text is what makes the most sense in the given context. My reasoning is based on internal logic. By its very nature, however, this is a hypothetical and therefore highly subjective process.

Therefore, I offer the above analyses of these biblical passages with due caution and modesty. I invite readers to consider other, more powerful arguments or counter-arguments.

But one thing is clear: Those counter-arguments are also subjective. In this process of comparing texts there are no winners and losers; there is no right or wrong. What seems to me to be right today may seem to me wrong tomorrow. In any event, the biblical texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls remain a significant source of information to be used judiciously alongside other sources, the main ones being the traditional Hebrew text (MT) and the Septuagint (LXX).

Some Dead Sea Scrolls are more significant than others. One of the less significant, surprisingly, is the great Isaiah scroll, 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Preserved in its entirety except for a few words, this scroll gives us an excellent picture of what a text of Isaiah looked like. (Please note, I did not say, the text of Isaiah.) This scroll is a classroom example of what an inferior text looked like, with its manifold contextual changes, harmonizations, grammatical adaptations, etc. It is also a scroll with many mistakes and omissions, an unusual spelling system, and bad handwriting.

Nevertheless, even a scroll that is somewhat inferior to the Masoretic Text, like 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, contains a few pearls of significant ancient readings.

In finding our way in the labyrinth of textual sources of the Bible, we must slowly accumulate experience and intuition.<sup>3</sup> When maneuvering among the sources, we will find much help in the Dead Sea Scrolls. But they must be used judiciously.

In many instances that ideal that we are searching for—the “original text”—is unobtainable. We must recognize that often we must simply give up the search. We must remain modest with regard to what we can and cannot achieve. 📖

*Notes on p. 88*

# The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament

**JAMES C. VANDERKAM**

**WHAT DO THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS** tell us about the New Testament?\* One possible answer is: Nothing.

The scrolls were associated with a relatively small group, or, rather, with several small groups. Other Jewish people, like the first Christians, may not even have known about their sectarian writings. In fact, there is no evidence that any author of a New Testament book knew of or used any of the sectarian works found in caves near Qumran that we know as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Moreover, the cast of characters in the scrolls and in the New Testament is entirely different. No person mentioned in the New Testament (other than ones from the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament) appears in any of the scrolls—not even John the Baptist, who for a time lived in the wilderness and around the Jordan, not too far from the Dead Sea Scroll caves (see Luke 1:80; 3:3).

Moreover, the worldview that comes to expression in the two bodies of literature is often starkly at variance. A group that set a goal of spreading its religious message to all peoples to the ends of the earth had a very different understanding of God's plan than ones who seem to have done no proselytizing and had no interest in bringing the nations into the fold.

There is a divide between the two sets of texts, yet scholars have found it meaningful to compare and contrast them in order to enhance our understanding of the New Testament. One important reason is that, as has become increasingly apparent, the earliest followers of Jesus and the literature they produced were thoroughly Jewish in nature. As a result, the more one knows about Judaism during the time of Christian origins, the stronger basis we have for understanding the New Testament. And the scrolls are the most significant body of Hebrew/Aramaic literature related to a Jewish group or groups from roughly this time and thus are potentially invaluable for shedding light on the meaning of New Testament texts. Whenever the parting of the ways between Jews and Christians occurred, there is a substantial overlap between the people of the scrolls and

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**JORDAN VALLEY.** The Judean Wilderness served as the backdrop for the Qumran community, as well as certain biblical figures, such as John the Baptist. With clothing of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, John the Baptist lived and preached in the wilderness of Judea, baptizing people in the Jordan River and surviving on a diet of locusts and wild honey (Matthew 3). This view of the Jordan Valley illustrates the conditions in which John lived, though it would have been more verdant 2,000 years ago. (Photo: Megan Sauter / Biblical Archaeology Society)

the earliest Christians in their way of life and their beliefs.\* The more one knows about Judaism, the more one knows about the beginnings of Christianity.

It is also true that a goodly amount of the teachings in the scrolls was known and had been applied to New Testament study before 1947, when the first scrolls came to light. Works such as 1 Enoch and Jubilees, both of which are attested in many copies among the scrolls, were available in the form of ancient translations long before the first cave near Qumran yielded its scrolls. Copies of 1 Enoch in the Ethiopic language were brought to Europe beginning in the late 18th century, and copies of the Book of Jubilees, also in Ethiopic, started arriving in the mid-19th century. Two manuscripts of the Damascus Document were found in the *genizah* of a Cairo synagogue at the end of the 19th century. Nevertheless, the texts found since 1947 have greatly enhanced the information available and helpfully contextualized it.

\*See Hershel Shanks, ed., *Partings—How Judaism & Christianity Became Two* (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2014).

Two general parallels between the scrolls and the New Testament illustrate this point. The first relates to the ongoing nature of divine revelation: The early Christians produced a large body of literature, much of which has survived to modern times. The best contemporaneous Second Temple-period analog of this literature is the scrolls. Both collections show that Jewish writers were busy producing compositions of varied sorts, often texts that responded in some way to the ancient Jewish scriptures. Those scriptures, while they had not yet been defined as a canon in the strict sense of the term,<sup>1</sup> attracted constant attention from Jewish readers. In addition, not only did both communities produce a diverse and sizable literature, they also regarded at least some of their texts as divinely inspired. The age of revelation, in their view, had not ended with the last book of the Hebrew Bible but continued into their times. The Teacher of Righteousness in the scrolls, for example, receives from God an explanation of the mysteries found in the prophetic writings of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the letters of the apostle Paul were already recognized as scripture in New Testament times.<sup>3</sup>

Second, members of both communities read ancient scriptures eschatologically, that is, as pointing forward to and addressing the times in which they were living (not to the times of the prophets to whom authorship is attributed)—times they regarded as close to the end. Both communities anticipated messianic leadership at the end, although their exact views about a messiah or messiahs differed. The New Testament knows of one messiah who had appeared and would return at the end; the scrolls know of two messiahs who would appear at the end.

Here are some other specific parallels between the scrolls and the New Testament:

Both the scroll communities and the first followers of Jesus in Jerusalem describe their fellowship in much the same way. The fellowship of the first Christian community in Jerusalem comes to expression in the Book of Acts 1–4 where the Pentecost plays a prominent part. The Festival of Weeks, which goes under its Greek name Pentecost in the New Testament, is the middle of the three pilgrimage festivals mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. It differs from the other two, in that it lasts for just one day and the law prescribes no precise date for it. The only specifications are that it falls on the 50th day (hence the Greek name Pentecost) after an event (the raising of the sheaf, also undated) associated with Passover/Unleavened Bread (month 1, days 14–21; see Leviticus 23:9–16). As a result, there were differences of opinion about the precise timing of the holiday, but all agreed it had to be in the third month of the year. The third month was also the time when the Lord and Israel entered into a covenant at Mt. Sinai (see Exodus 19:1). It comes as no surprise, then, that the two events—the Festival of Weeks and the covenant/giving of the law at Sinai—were connected with each other. The pseudepigraphical Book of Jubilees dates both the festival and the Sinai covenant ceremony to the same date—month 3, day 15—and the Qumran calendar texts also specify the 15th of the third month as the date for celebrating the holiday.

In the Qumran texts, the Festival of Weeks was probably the occasion for the annual covenant ceremony described in the scroll known as the Community Rule.<sup>4</sup> It was a time when the members of the Qumran group renewed their covenantal vow and new members were welcomed into the group. The group



**COMMUNAL DINING.** A dining room (above) and well-stocked pantry at Qumran testify to communal dining. The two rooms were connected, and the pantry contained many vessels. The Community Rule, a Dead Sea Scroll, dictates: “All are to dine together, worship together, and take counsel together.” (Photo: Megan Sauter / Biblical Archaeology Society)

could be described as an ideal society. The same text depicts a fellowship in which there was an extraordinary measure of sharing. It specifically mentions that they ate together, studied and worshiped together, and—most impressively— shared property. Explaining the three nouns heart, soul, and might in Deuteronomy 6:5 (“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might”),<sup>5</sup> they devoted themselves to “bring all their knowledge, powers, and possessions into the Community of God, that they may purify their knowledge in the truth of God’s precepts and order their powers according to His ways of perfection and all their possessions according to His righteous counsel” (column 1, lines 11–13).<sup>6</sup> A few columns later the scroll states that “They shall eat in common and bless in common and deliberate in common” (column 6, lines 2–3).

In their communal study time, they interpreted the scriptures, presumably using their *peshet* method, that is, applying the ancient texts to their own times. The property of each member was merged with that of the community so that no one had private possessions; all shared the community’s resources.

I think a good case can be made that these Essenes were patterning themselves

after the Israelites at Mt. Sinai. According to some rabbinic texts,<sup>7</sup> the Israelites who fought and murmured before reaching the mountain suddenly became unified and enjoyed harmonious relations. That was soon to change in the incident of the golden calf, but for a brief time Israel behaved as a society should and as the Essenes later tried to imitate.<sup>8</sup>

Very similar elements appear in the first chapters of the Book of Acts. There the small band of Jesus' followers—120 Christians led by 12 apostles (Acts 1:15, 26)—celebrated the Festival of Weeks/Pentecost. On this occasion the disciples who had received the Holy Spirit were miraculously enabled to speak in other languages—preparatory to bringing the message to all peoples. Jews from all over the world had journeyed to Jerusalem for the pilgrimage festival, and they heard the gospel in their own languages.

On this occasion about 3,000 new members joined the Christian community (Acts 2:41) that is described as an ideal fellowship. Like the Essenes, the Christians of Acts 2–4 practiced a community of goods—the only two Jewish groups known to have done so.

As described in Acts:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers ... All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the Temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.

(Acts 2:42, 44–47)

Members of this fellowship devoted themselves to goals similar to those the scrolls prescribe, paraphrasing or interpreting the same text from Deuteronomy: “Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common” (Acts 4:32). Both groups understood the commandment to love the Lord “with all your might” to mean sharing one's possessions.

One more parallel: In Acts when some bystanders charged that the disciples were speaking as they were because they were drunk, Peter defended them; part of his apology consisted of offering a *peshet*-like exegesis of a passage from the prophet Joel—a *peshet* that might have made the scrolls' Teacher of Righteousness proud: “No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy’” (Acts 2:16–18). As in *peshet* exegesis, Peter takes a prophetic text and claims it speaks to his time and situation—a time characterized as “in the last days.”

Another parallel area between the scrolls and the New Testament involves legal issues: For example, in the Gospels, Jesus and Pharisees disagree about the proper way to observe the Sabbath. In the scrolls, some of the same questions are discussed. In the Gospels, when Jesus heals someone on the Sabbath, he



**NOT FINE CHINA.** Qumran's pantry held 708 bowls, 210 plates, 75 beakers, and 21 small jars (some replicas from Qumran's museum, above). These simple, wheel-made vessels indicate that large group meals took place at Qumran. (Photo: Megan Sauter / Biblical Archaeology Society)

makes statements that appear to expand the list of permitted kinds of labor on the Sabbath beyond what the Pharisees and other leaders allowed. Thus, he asks rhetorically whether an owner would rescue his only sheep if it fell into a pit on the Sabbath and concludes: “How much more valuable is a human being than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (Matthew 12:12). Similarly in Luke 14:1–6, Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath and asks the lawyers and Pharisees present whether this was permitted; they do not answer. He says to them: “If one of you has a child or an ox that has fallen into a well, will you not immediately pull it out on a Sabbath day?” (Luke 14:5). The Pharisees, who are portrayed rather unappealingly in these stories, then consider how to do away with Jesus (e.g., Matthew 12:14).

So—did Pharisees forbid healing people or saving them from drowning on the Sabbath? We have no reason to think they did. No Pharisaic writing, if they composed any, has survived, but later rabbinic literature, which is often thought to reflect and develop Pharisaic views, teaches that saving a life overrides the normal Sabbath prohibitions on labor (e.g., *Mishnah Yoma* 8:6).

However, the physical ailments from which Jesus healed people on the two occasions mentioned—a withered hand and a case of dropsy—were not life-threatening, so they could have been postponed to the next day. This is the point a synagogue official makes in Luke 13:14 after Jesus performs another Sabbath healing (of a woman bent over with a crippling disease): “There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the Sabbath day” (Luke 13:14). There is no Jewish text from the Second Temple period or before that prohibits healing on the Sabbath.<sup>9</sup>

A number of instances among the scrolls offer relevant comparative material. For example, the Damascus Document (CD), column 11, lines 13–14 reads: “No man shall assist a beast to give birth on the Sabbath day. And if it should fall into a cistern or pit, he shall not lift it out on the Sabbath.” And: “Should any man fall into water ... let him not be pulled out with the aid of a ladder or rope or (some such) utensil” (column 11, lines 16–17). The words at the end of the proscription are important (“with a ladder or a rope or a utensil”). This becomes clear from another scroll (4Q265, Miscellaneous Rules): “No man shall lift an animal which has fallen into water on the Sabbath day. But if a man falls into water on the Sabbath, he shall pass to him his garment to lift him out, but he shall not carry an instrument [to lift him out on] the Sabbath.” The principle is that one is not to fetch a tool for rescue and carry it to the spot (a kind of labor), but a person could use his clothing to remove the victim from danger.<sup>10</sup>

An example like this encourages a different approach to the gospel passage. The point is apparently not to contrast Jesus’ more relaxed approach to Sabbath law with a heartless one espoused by Pharisees. They too believed that a life could be saved on the Sabbath but did not think the healings Jesus performed fell into that category. Jesus challenged the current practice in some respects (he was more lenient about saving animals on the Sabbath) perhaps to make more emphatic his message about the healing power associated with the kingdom of God. At the very least, one can say that both the gospel and scrolls passages show that such issues were discussed at the time.

Legal debates are not the only places in the Gospels for which the scrolls provide a historical context. A scroll called Apocryphon of Daniel (4Q246), written in Aramaic, has received its modern name from the fact that its two preserved columns concern a person like Daniel who interprets a vision. In the course of his interpretation, the Daniel-like character says that a future ruler “will be called [gr]eat ... and by his name he will be designated. The son of God he will be proclaimed and the son of the Most High they will call him.”<sup>11</sup>

The passage is strongly reminiscent of Luke 1:32, 35, which was written about 100 years after the scroll was copied. In Luke, the angel Gabriel appears to the virgin Mary and informs her that she will conceive a son whom she is to name Jesus. The text goes on: “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.” Gabriel continues in verse 35, “He will be called Son of God.”

Both this New Testament passage and Apocryphon of Daniel share the use of “great,” “son of God,” and “son of the Most High.” The scroll and the gospel use “will be called” in connection with “son of God” and “son of the Most High.”

“Son of God” is a title attested in the scriptures. For example, the Davidic king is called God’s son (2 Samuel 7:14; Psalm 2:7). “Son of the Most High” is not found in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, but a plural form of it appears in Psalm 82:6 (“children [= sons] of the Most High”)—but not the singular. This makes it all the more remarkable that the scroll and Luke agree in using the title. In short, the contexts of the scroll and the gospel share several distinctive features.

Scholars debate whether the one who will be called by these names and titles in Apocryphon of Daniel is a positive or negative character. I think that the context in the scroll favors the view that he is a negative leader who rules during an age of suffering before the kingdom of God’s people arises.<sup>12</sup> If so, then the character in the scrolls would not deserve the titles people give him, whereas in Luke, Jesus is presented as fully worthy of them.

Another example of scriptural interpretation illustrates how a scroll writer and a New Testament author drew on a similar exegetical tradition. In Luke 7 Jesus performs several miracles, including raising someone from the dead. After John the Baptist’s disciples tell him about these miracles, John, who rather surprisingly has some doubts about whether Jesus meets the qualifications for the special agent of God that he was expecting, sends messengers to ask Jesus: “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” (Luke 7:19–20). Luke then offers this response:

Jesus had just then cured many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and had given sight to many who were blind. And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

(Luke 7:21–23; see also Matthew 11:2–6)

In face of John’s concerns, Jesus then provides proof of his being “the one who is to come” by listing the kinds of miracles he performs.



**MESSIANIC APOCALYPSE.** In Luke 7, Jesus gives John the Baptist a list of miracles that he performed as proof that he is the messiah. The source for this list is the Book of Isaiah, chapters 35 and 61. Interestingly, Isaiah 61:1-2 is the passage Jesus reads at the synagogue in Nazareth as recorded in Luke 4. Yet some miracles listed in Luke 7 do not appear in Isaiah, such as raising the dead. Raising the dead does appear, however, in the list of miracles in the Dead Sea Scroll called the Messianic Apocalypse (4Q521—see image above). Written approximately 150 years before Luke’s Gospel, this scroll’s list of miracles also draws on Isaiah 35 and 61 as a source.

The Messianic Apocalypse says that the wounded will be healed, the blind will see, the dead will be revived, and the poor will be brought good news. While a messiah figure—Jesus—is the one credited with these miracles in Luke 7, the Lord is the one who will perform them in the Messianic Apocalypse. Similar to Luke 7, the Messianic Apocalypse mentions bringing good news to the poor immediately after saying that the dead will be raised. The parallels between these two texts do not necessarily indicate that the writer of the Book of Luke had seen the Messianic Apocalypse. More likely, it reflects that the writers of these two texts—and the communities of which they were a part—shared certain interpretive and theological traditions. (Photo: Tsila Sagiv / Israel Antiquities Authority)

**Parallels between Isaiah, Luke 7:21-22, and Messianic Apocalypse (4Q521)**

Isaiah	Luke 7	4Q521
	cured many	heal the wounded
blind eyes opened (Isaiah 35:5)	blind see	blind see
lame leap (Isaiah 35:6)	lame walk	
	lepers cleansed	
ears of deaf opened (Isaiah 35:5)	deaf hear	
	dead raised	dead raised
good news to poor (cf. Isaiah 61:1)	good news to poor	good news to poor

These quotations from Luke show some remarkable similarities to a scroll known as Messianic Apocalypse (4Q521). This Dead Sea Scroll text was copied approximately 150 years before Luke composed his gospel. It states:

...[the hea]vens and the earth will listen to His Messiah, and none therein will stray from the commandments of the holy ones.  
Seekers of the Lord, strengthen yourselves in His service!  
All you hopeful in (your) heart, will you not find the Lord in this?  
For the Lord will consider the pious (*hasidim*) and call the righteous by name.  
Over the poor His spirit will hover and will renew the faithful with His power.  
And He will glorify the pious on the throne of the eternal Kingdom.  
He who liberates the captives, restores sight to the blind, straightens the b[ent]...  
And f[or] ever I will clea[ve to the h]opeful and in His mercy ...  
And the fr[uit ... ] will not be delayed for anyone  
And the Lord will accomplish glorious things which have never been as [He ... ]  
For He will heal the wounded, and revive the dead, and bring good news to the poor [cf. Isaiah 61:1].

(Fragment 2, column 2, lines 1–12)

Mention of a messiah in the first line has supplied part of the text's modern name (Messianic Apocalypse), but the interesting material for comparison with Luke 7 is the list of miracles that parallel the ones Jesus names in his response to John. In speaking about miraculous events of the future, both the scroll and the gospel combine and interpret passages from Isaiah. The first passage is Isaiah 61:1–2, which happens to be the section Jesus reads from the scroll of Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth:

When he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

(Luke 4:16–19)

This is not an exact quotation from Isaiah 61; it includes an expression from another passage from Isaiah, namely Isaiah 58:6: "to let the oppressed go free." Isaiah 61 thus accounts for one of the items that Jesus enumerates in Luke 7 (bringing good news to the poor); the others are taken from Isaiah 35:5–6: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy" (see chart on p. 45).

There may be nothing very remarkable in the appearance of similar lists of miracles in the two texts. But in other respects the two are more surprising. Both 4Q521 and Luke 7:22 add to their list of miracles a statement about raising the dead, and both place it right before mention of good news for the poor. Isaiah does not refer to raising the dead. Moreover, both 4Q521 and Luke 7:22 form their

lists from the same two passages in Isaiah and also supplement them in the same place with a reference to resurrection of the dead.

The two texts are certainly not the same. For the scroll, the Lord is the one who will carry out these amazing actions, not the messiah; in Luke 7, Jesus, the messianic one who is to come, performs them. The scroll shows, nevertheless, that the list of miracles in Luke 7, including resurrection, is an attested expansion of the mighty works named in the two passages in Isaiah.

What do the examples presented here, and many others like them, tell us? None of them is evidence that a New Testament writer knew and used any of the scrolls. It is far more likely that these examples reveal a store of shared interpretive and theological traditions on which writers in both communities drew. The parallels we have discussed indicate that the relevant New Testament texts fit into the circumstances and debates of the time. Naturally, the two communities used these shared traditions on which to build their own teachings. Perhaps if more texts were to be discovered, we would learn that some of these traditions were shared even more widely within the Judaism of the time. The scroll passages we have looked at here—and others as well—help one to read the corresponding New Testament sections in a more informed way. 📖

*Notes on p. 88*

# The Lost World of the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls

ANDREW B. PERRIN

**PORTIONS OF THE HEBREW BIBLE** and some of the Dead Sea Scrolls are written in Aramaic, the common language of Jesus' time.\* What are these texts, who wrote them, and why do they matter?

As geopolitical shifts sent ripples across the ancient Near East, from the Mediterranean coast to the borders of modern-day India, cultural tensions and transformations became a part of life. One interface between empires and regional groups concerned language—both spoken and written.

Naturally, Hebrew was the language of Israelite tradition, scripture, and culture. Aramaic, on the other hand, took hold in much of the ancient Near East as both the official and common tongue, starting in the eighth century B.C.E., to eventually supplant Akkadian as the lingua franca of the region.

Despite its diffusion, much of ancient Judaism's Aramaic scribal heritage was presumably lost or forgotten. All we find of it in the Bible is the imperial dispatches in Ezra (Ezra 4:8–6:18; Ezra 7:12–26), apocalyptic dream-visions and court tales of the first half of Daniel (Daniel 2:4b–7:28), and a few Aramaic words and phrases dotted elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Genesis 31:47; Jeremiah 10:11). Aramaic was largely relegated to commentary about the mostly Hebrew canon, as half of the Babylonian Talmud and most of the Jerusalem Talmud were written in some dialect of Aramaic, as was the collection of creative translations in the Targumim.

Our knowledge of Jewish Aramaic texts, however, all changed with the modern discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The fragmentary scrolls uncovered—in the late 1940s and early 1950s—near the site of Qumran, just off the shores of the Dead Sea (hence, Dead Sea Scrolls), are written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. From an early time, the so-called “sectarian” literature (written by a particular group within Judaism) and “biblical” texts penned in Hebrew became a focal point in Qumran studies. Similarly, the Greek texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls have received significant scholarly

\*This article originally appeared in the September/October 2018 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*.



**SCROLL CAVE.** Rock-hewn caves in the cliffs around Qumran provided fragments of 972 separate documents. Painstakingly reassembled, edited, and translated, those writings have become an invaluable source for understanding the beliefs and practices of ancient Jewish sects and the context of Christian origins. The documents discovered in Cave 4 (above) include many written in Aramaic. (Photo: Megan Sauter / Biblical Archaeology Society)

attention. The Aramaic Genesis Apocryphon from Qumran Cave 1 was among the first discoveries in the Judean Desert and was promptly published (1955), but the larger suite of Aramaic texts had long remained among the most understudied materials in the collection. It was not until 2009 that the last of these texts received full, critical publication.

The tally of Aramaic texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls includes upwards of 30 literary works. These represent between 10 and 13 percent of the Qumran finds, depending on how you collect, count, and configure the epic jigsaw puzzle that is the Dead Sea Scrolls. These Aramaic fragments include previously known works (e.g., Daniel 2–7 and Tobit), texts that served as sources for other Jewish or Christian compositions in antiquity (e.g., Aramaic Levi Document and the Book of Giants), and completely new materials (e.g., Visions of Amram and Prayer of Nabonidus).

Given the cultural and linguistic context of mid-Second Temple Judea, the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls show how Jewish scribes reimagined their sacred and authoritative traditions. They did this by many means and for many purposes. They revisited inherited scriptures and imbued them with interpretive elements, expanded them for the purposes of education and even entertainment, and instilled them with a sharp theological edge to cut against the imperial powers of the day, as they believed the end times were lingering on the horizon. Yet all of this was done in the common language of the day, Aramaic. This begs the question: Why would faithful Jewish scribes reflecting on their ancestral past and expecting the dramatic arrival of divine rule pen their works in Aramaic, their adoptive language, rather than Hebrew, the traditional language of their sacred scriptures?

In the most basic sense, language is about communication. However, it can also be an effective tool for establishing or maintaining identity and advancing ideology. The chosen idiom of a work speaks volumes about how an author and community understand themselves politically, religiously, and socially. To write a work in Hebrew or Aramaic, then, makes a statement. Just what type of statement is a matter of debate.

The Qumran community apparently preferred to write in Hebrew. This deference to the ancestral language plugs into a larger linguistic revival percolating in the mid-second century B.C.E. The Book of Jubilees, for example, makes the bold claim that Hebrew was a revealed language—the tongue of ancestral tradition and even the idiom through which creation was spoken into being (Jubilees 3:25; 12:25–27). Second Maccabees makes regular recourse to “the ancestral language,” not least in key moments of the narrative where rebels and martyrs are pitted against their imperial oppressors (e.g., 2 Maccabees 7:8). Collectively, these various takes on language choice amplify Hebrew’s importance for certain Jewish communities and groups.

In this context, the selection of Aramaic is curious and requires explanation. There are three possible explanations for the use of Aramaic in the Dead Sea Scrolls:

First, because the Aramaic texts are largely set in either the times of the patriarchs and matriarchs or during the Exile, perhaps the choice was a purely



**QUMRAN SCRIPTORIUM.** Although no scrolls were found within the settlement at Qumran, inkwells and other writing implements discovered in this rectangular room suggest it served as a scriptorium. At least some of the Dead Sea Scrolls were likely produced here. (Photo: Megan Sauter / Biblical Archaeology Society)

literary and logical one. After all, would Abram speak Hebrew given that the Bible says he was from Ur Kasdim in southern Mesopotamia (modern Iraq)? On the other end of the timeline, would it not be odd to have tales of Jews in exilic courts speaking Hebrew?

Second, in most cases our earliest Jewish materials with apocalyptic inclinations are either inscribed in Aramaic or crafted on the basis of Aramaic traditions. Daniel and Jubilees are cases in point. In this sense, medium and message intersect—apocalyptic scribal settings apparently had a knack for Aramaic, perhaps due to the early cultivation of some aspects of early apocalyptic thought in Babylonian mantic and divination texts.

Third, since Aramaic was the lingua franca of the age, perhaps the choice was pragmatic: Writing in Aramaic meant that the texts were accessible to communities beyond Judea, including Jewish communities in the Diaspora.

The correct answer is probably somewhere in a combination of the above options, which are not mutually exclusive.

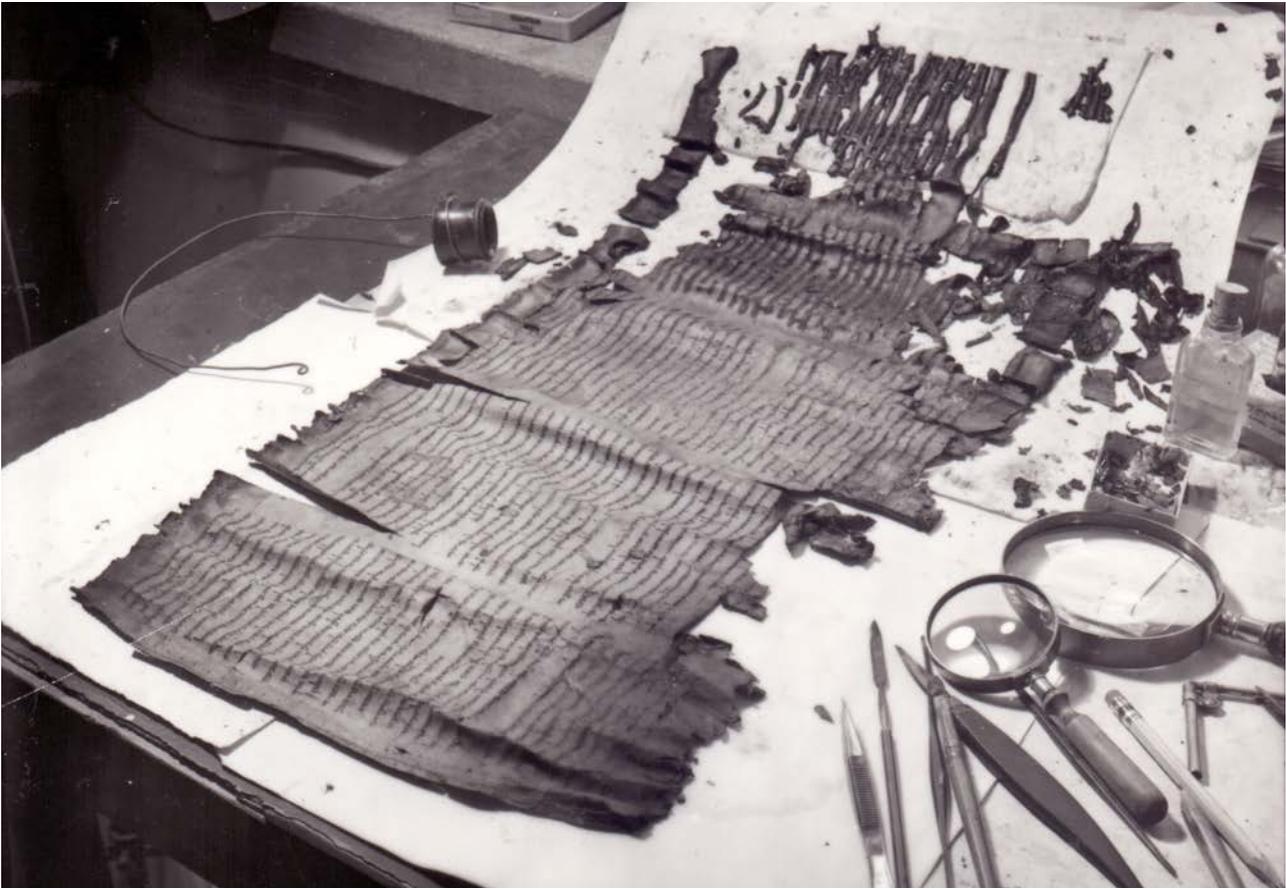
To be sure, language choice represents only one aspect of the dynamic of the Aramaic scrolls, which are diverse in their character and content. Despite this variety, there are some currents of continuity in the Aramaic writings that involve main themes and overarching interests. These common features suggest there is a degree of cohesion to these texts—to the extent that they seem to form a corpus of sorts within the Qumran library.

Right out of the gate, readers will notice that the tales told of Genesis and the Aramaic texts reimagine the ancestral past predominantly in bold first-person voices of biblical characters, even though their authorship lies with anonymous authors centuries later. These pseudepigrapha capture the vivid and authoritative voices of founding figures for a new generation or give the impression of Diaspora characters telling their own story of the plight of the recent past. Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen) 5:29, for example, introduces a new section as “a copy of the book of the words of Noah.” Prayer of Nabonidus (4Q242) 1–3:1 begins, “The words of the prayer of Nabonidus, king of Babylon, the great king.” This seems to be a common compositional technique that recurs throughout ancient Jewish Aramaic literature.

The Aramaic texts are not only indebted to the cast of characters from the Hebrew scriptures, but are also steeped in topics and expressions drawn from them. There are works that adhere closely to the text of the Hebrew scriptures, such as the translation of Job (11QtgJob) or remnants of an apparent Aramaic rendition of Leviticus (4QtgLev). Other writings, such as 1 Enoch or Genesis Apocryphon, blur the border between scripture and interpretation by developing creative and clever expansions of familiar stories. Still others interacted with later pools of Hebrew traditions, like the New Jerusalem text (1Q32; 2Q24; 4Q554–555; 5Q15; 11Q18), which depends on the visionary tour of Ezekiel 40–48 for its ornate and detailed blueprint of eschatological Jerusalem and her temple. In sum, the scribes of the Aramaic texts exhibit an exceptional command of ancestral traditions as well as creativity in reimagining them.

Regardless of how we describe these texts’ formation and function in light of their scriptural antecedents—rewriting, interpretations, allusions, etc.—the overarching insight here is that the scribes of the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls transport us to a lost world of larger traditions of the Second Temple period. In their time, scripture was more than a single set of inscribed texts; it encompassed bodies of vibrant traditions.

In addition to their general interests in the figures from Genesis, the scribes of several Aramaic works paid a particular attention to priestly topics and personae. In the veritable “trilogy” of literature associated with Levi, Amram (Moses and Aaron’s father), and Qahat (one of the sons of Levi), we find discourses and demonstrations of priestly service, admonishments to maintain the purity of the priestly line, and portrayals of transmitted priestly lore down through the generations. In the Visions of Amram, the priestly patriarch even experiences a dream-vision of an angel revealing to him the “mystery” of the work of the priesthood. In this way, the priestly concerns of the Aramaic literature span the practical, genealogical, and ideological.



**GENESIS APOCRYPHON.** This roll of parchment was discovered in Qumran Cave 1. When unrolled, the scroll revealed Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen)—an Aramaic literary work that creatively expands various stories from the biblical Book of Genesis. (Photo: Helene Biberkraut / Courtesy the Israel Museum, Jerusalem)

With the motif of revelation extending across many other texts and topics in the Aramaic scrolls, the collection as a whole has unmistakably apocalyptic contours. The imaginative spin-off of Enochic tradition in the Book of Giants (1Q23–24; 2Q26; 4Q203, 530–533; 6Q8), for example, features the blood-thirsty giants of Genesis 6:4 as experiencing a series of foreboding nightmares intended to communicate their imminent death in the coming deluge and appointed annihilation at the end of the age.

Messianic figures feature both implicitly and explicitly. For example, Messianic Apocalypse (4Q521) describes the anticipated happenings of the messianic age in a form similar to that described later in the Gospels (see Matthew 11:2–6; Luke 7:18–23). Whether it is privileged dialogues with angelic revealers, seers beholding or inscribing celestial tablets, views of the upside-down populated with angels and demons, outlooks of the order and consummation of humanity's timeline, or any number of items typically blended into apocalyptic literature, the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls check all the boxes. The study of the evolution of the apocalypse and theologies of the Second Temple period, therefore, must account

for the contribution of the Aramaic scrolls.

Let us now turn to one book from that corpus that has been studied for the better part of two millennia. The Book of Daniel is the “odd man out” in the Hebrew Bible for three reasons: Its linguistic DNA is a double helix of Aramaic and Hebrew; in the form we know it, the book came together in the mid-Second Temple period (c. 160s B.C.E.); and its genre and ideas are unapologetically apocalyptic. And yet precisely these oddities make it happily at home within the Qumran Aramaic corpus. The Dead Sea Scrolls provide not only eight new manuscripts of Daniel, but also a fresh context to reconsider the book’s theological, cultural, and literary dynamics in light of Aramaic literature.

To begin with, the comparison of idioms between the canonical Book of Daniel and the Qumran Aramaic texts reveals something of a common stock of terms. Take, for example, the famous description of the fourth beast in Daniel 7:7 as “dreadful and terrifying.” A reappraisal of a fragmentary section of the Visions of Amram suggests that upon beholding the frightening figure of an angel of darkness, Amram also remarked at this otherworldly figure’s “dreadful and terrifying” visage (4Q544 1:13). Such analogies open questions of the proximity and relationship of the scribal groups responsible for the Qumran Aramaic texts to those behind the Danielic materials.

The figure of Daniel also enjoys an extended résumé in the Qumran Aramaic scrolls. Not unlike the so-called Additions to Daniel in the Septuagint, a small collection of texts from Cave 4 feature Daniel in previously unknown adventures and episodes. The Pseudo-Daniel fragments (4Q243–244; 4Q245), for example, name Daniel in the context of some familiar characters, such as the Babylonian kings Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar (see Daniel 2–5). They also associate Daniel with other traditions, including genealogical lists apparently revealed to him for both kings and priests from the ancestral and monarchic past down into the Second Temple period.

From these and similar observations, the material of canonical collections appears to be but soundbites of a larger conversation had among ancient Jewish scribes and communities around the figure of Daniel.

As we look beyond the Aramaic text of canonical Daniel and through the Qumran Aramaic corpus as a whole, we should conclude where we began: Where did the Aramaic texts come from? Who wrote them? Why were they written in the first place?

With the Aramaic texts only relatively recently coming onto the radar, we have more questions than answers. We know they were read and some even revered as authoritative at Qumran. Take, for example, the nod to “the Book of Daniel the prophet” in Florilegium (4Q174 1–3ii:3) or the allusion to a likely Aramaic Levi tradition in the Damascus Document’s interpretation of Isaiah 24:17 (CD 4:14–19). The favorable reception of the Aramaic texts at Qumran, however, does not mean they originated in that community. In fact, the consensus is that the Aramaic texts mostly date before the sectarian settlement at Qumran and certainly come from locales beyond it. The opportunity we now have is to explore what these writings reveal about the patterns of thought and practice of ancient Jewish culture and the life that existed beyond the wilderness of the Judean Desert.

Since the Qumran group was likely part of a larger Essene or Essene-like movement, the Aramaic texts may provide a lens into the ideas and ideals of other groups. The topic of dualism, for example, is traditionally seen as a hallmark of Qumran thought in view of key Hebrew texts, such as “Treatise on the Two Spirits” in the Community Rule (1QS) or portrayals of the War Scroll (1QM). However, dichotomies and metaphors pitting light and darkness are also found in the Aramaic texts. In one such fragmentary work (4Q548, a text possibly featuring the final words of an unknown dying patriarch), we find the familiar phrases “sons of light” and “sons of darkness.” Is it possible that this fragment harkens to a group outside Qumran, yet one that conceived of the world in terms and categories similar to that of the community that preserved the scrolls? If so, this fragment could serve as the bridge between the Aramaic and Hebrew scribal communities. The Qumran Aramaic texts present new questions about the literature of ancient Judaism; they also demand new questions and models for mapping the social and cultural worlds of ancient Judaism as a whole and the situation and origins of the Qumran group in particular.

Since an early time, the Dead Sea Scrolls have proved both beneficial and controversial for New Testament studies. Comparisons and connections between Qumran and early Christianity, however, have not always recognized inherent diversity to these movements and the literature they generated. The scrolls are not a uniform group of texts representing the singular thought and practice of a monolithic sociological community; they are not a singular variable to be brought into comparison. If we want to account for the ancient Jewish context of Christian origins, the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls should be the first stop on that lengthy tour—simply because they originate in the larger cultural, ideological, and literary landscape of ancient Judaism.

Take but one example illustrating the potential of the Qumran Aramaic texts for comparative study of the New Testament: Abraham laying hands on Pharaoh in prayer to exorcise an unclean spirit, in Genesis Apocryphon 20:29. As many commentators noted, this is the earliest such reference to this posture of apotropaic prayer—one that is designed to drive away evil—which features heavily in the descriptions of Jesus’ miracles (e.g., Mark 5:23; Mark 6:5; Luke 13:13). Elements of the Aramaic Genesis Apocryphon reflect the broader common culture—the culture in which other Jews, including those of the early Jesus movement, also walked and thought.

With the field of Qumran studies basking in the afterglow of its 70th year and contending with prospects and problems on many fronts—from forgeries to potential new caves to new applications of technology—we would be wise not to lose sight of the original purpose of written texts. Now that the arduous and detailed task of publishing the Dead Sea Scrolls in critical editions has been completed, and we’ve determined what these ancient texts say, we should now be asking: What do they mean? These Aramaic texts provide a point of departure for pursuing this question both in and beyond the words and world of Qumran. 📖

# Secrets of the Copper Scroll

JOAN E. TAYLOR

**THE MYSTERIES OF THE COPPER SCROLL**, found in one of the Dead Sea caves, have never really been solved.\* The Copper Scroll seems to contain a list of treasure—and is the kind of find that Indiana Jones could have used to track down vast amounts of gold and silver ingots. Its very substance—fine copper—indicates that the people who hid this text were wealthy. But not a single piece of treasure from the Copper Scroll has ever been located.

Scholars ask many questions: Was this treasure ever hidden, or is it a kind of fantasy? If treasure was hidden, when did this hiding take place? And what kind of treasure was it?

The Copper Scroll was discovered in the cave explorations done jointly by the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR), the Palestine Archaeological Museum, and the École Biblique et Archéologique Française in March 1952. It was found by a team headed by French archaeologist Henri de Contenson in a cave about 1 mile north of the site of Qumran, in the northwestern region of the Dead Sea. Known as Cave 3 (the third cave found with manuscripts in it [3], close to the site of Qumran), this cave otherwise contained fragments of parchment and papyrus manuscripts, textiles, more than 30 broken cylindrical jars, more than 20 lids, two jugs, and a lamp.<sup>1</sup>

However, it is the Copper Scroll that is the most extraordinary find. It was actually not one intact scroll, but two rolls, which were found one on top of the other at the back of the cave's front chamber. This is because one of the three parts of the scroll had broken off when it was rolled; it was supposed to be whole. In 1955–1956, it was cut into 23 pieces in the Manchester Institute of Technology, by Henry Wright Baker, through the agency of Dead Sea Scroll scholar John Marco Allegro. Finally, it could be read. And it was immediately sensational—in that it appears to be a list of buried treasure.

The treasure is vast, far beyond what we could imagine would be the property of an individual or even a group, unless they were the rulers of a nation. It is no wonder that a scholar such as Allegro invested much effort trying to understand the precise locations of the treasure, even searching for it.<sup>2</sup> If we look at the Copper Scroll closely in terms of its contents, this treasure seems to come from

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**TEMPLE TREASURE MAP?** Like a sort of treasure map, the Copper Scroll lists dozens of locations in the vicinity of Jericho where vast treasures have been stashed. Archaeologists discovered the scroll in 1952 in a cave near the Dead Sea (Qumran Cave 3). They found it broken into two rolls—sitting one on top of the other—in a niche. (Photo: Courtesy École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem)

a temple—perhaps the Temple in Jerusalem—and was secreted away in 64 (or perhaps 61) locations, most of which are close to Jericho. The enormous size of the treasure, as well as the presence of cultic terminology (e.g., references to tithes, priestly vestments, etc.) included in the text, indicates the treasure’s sacred origin.

Some scholars, however, doubt that this could possibly be the Jerusalem Temple treasure, arguing instead that it relates to an Essene community that lived at Qumran. Logistically, it is hard to imagine how the Temple’s treasure could have been buried in this area around the time of the First Revolt, before the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. It is also hard to imagine how the ancient Jewish legal school of the Essenes—as envisaged—could have played a part in hiding it. Therefore, it has even been suggested that the treasure described in the Copper Scroll is not a real treasure.<sup>3</sup>



**UNROLLING SECRETS.** The Copper Scroll was originally found broken into two rolls. Made of oxidized, rigid copper, it was impossible to read the scroll in its rolled form. So, in 1955-1956, Henry Wright Baker of the Manchester Institute of Technology carefully cut the scroll into 23 pieces. Once unrolled, scholars were able to read and decipher the text. The segments of the Copper Scroll (one pictured above) are on display at the Jordan Museum in Amman. (Photo: "Strip of the Copper Scroll" by Osama Shukir Muhammed / CC by-SA 4.0)

I would like to look not so much at the difficulties of the scroll's reading and interpretation, but rather at its archaeology and historical context.

To begin with, the artifact's actual substance is high-quality and expensive copper (99 percent copper and 1 percent tin), rather than the usual fine leather (parchment) of the other Dead Sea Scrolls. This writing surface is extremely unusual and costly, well beyond the means of most people. If we look to comparative examples of writing on high-quality copper in antiquity, we have only tiny pieces, largely in the form of amulets, called *lamellae*. Writing was incised on these thin metal sheets, which were then rolled up, placed in containers, and worn around the neck.\* By contrast, the Copper Scroll was about 8 feet long, 1 foot wide, and 1 millimeter thick. While the inscriptions on *lamellae* are designed to protect the wearer, the Copper Scroll's contents are prescriptive: This is a list of hiding places with no apparent prophylactic value.

\*See Jeremy D. Smoak, "Words Unseen: The Power of Hidden Writing," *BAR*, January/February 2018.

The material of the scroll should be a major consideration in its interpretation. Why was copper preferable to parchment or papyrus? The most obvious answer is that writing on copper was intended to last. It could not be damaged by water, and its high melting point (1,083 degrees Celsius or 1,981 Fahrenheit) ensured it could also survive some fires. So the substance of the writing material coheres with the contents of the work—in that it is a valuable treasure in itself, built to last and containing evidence of a treasure’s hiding places. This implies that whatever crisis caused the hiding of the treasure, those who hid it had a fairly dismal view of their own survival. The Copper Scroll is like a time capsule, made for the future.

As for its dating, the orthography (style of writing) is distinctive, and the language is generally identified as an early form of Mishnaic Hebrew (mid- to late second century C.E.) with a number of Greek loanwords and even mysterious Greek letter sequences that may, indeed, be designed to be protective in some way. Despite the Mishnaic style, the majority of scholars date the scroll to the mid-first century, with many suggesting the Copper Scroll comes from just before the Second Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E.

However, other scholars have suggested dates after this period. Notably French archaeologist Ernest-Marie Laperrousaz, historian Ben-Zion Luria, and scroll scholar Manfred Lehmann argued that the Copper Scroll must connect to the treasures relating to cultic activity in the Bar-Kokhba period or the Temple tax collected between the years 70 and 135 C.E.<sup>4</sup> It is these latter suggestions about the Copper Scroll that are most intriguing to me.

Bar-Kokhba—rightly Shimon Bar-Kosiba—is himself a mystery. Little is known about him, but he led a Judean revolt against the Romans from c. 132–135 C.E. His rebellion was quashed with enormous force. For this revolt, we have little evidence to form a historical narrative.

It seems that unrest was sparked by the Roman emperor Hadrian. Roman historian and statesman Dio Cassius states that when Hadrian visited Judea en route from Egypt to Syria c. 129–130 C.E., he ordered that a new temple to Jupiter Capitolinus be constructed on the Temple Mount and that Jerusalem be rebuilt as a Roman colony, Aelia Capitolina, Latin for the “City of the Capitoline Gods” (*Roman History* 69.12–14).

The resulting Judean revolt was widespread—and the results catastrophic. Dio Cassius records that the Romans sent their best generals and massive numbers of troops, and soon 50 of the rebels’ secret outposts were destroyed, almost a thousand towns and villages were razed, 580,000 Judean men were killed in battle, and countless numbers of people died from starvation, disease, and displacement. In short, “almost all of Judea was turned into a wilderness” (*Roman History* 69.14.2).

Refugees fled to caves in the area of the western Dead Sea coast, where well-preserved archaeological artifacts have been discovered. In my view, the Copper Scroll coheres with what we know of the last phase of the Bar-Kokhba Revolt, when those in charge of the ongoing Jewish cult—the high priest and the chief priests—would have sought to hide what was in reality as much the state treasury as Judean cultic funds, assuming rightly that horrendous circumstances would prevail.



**REBEL COINAGE.** Minted in 133/134 C.E. during the Bar-Kokhba Revolt, this silver coin depicts the Temple on one side with the name "Jerusalem" written around it. A *lulav* (palm frond) and *etrog* (citrus fruit) appear on the other side with the words "Year One of the Redemption of Israel" written around the outside. Even though the Romans had destroyed the Jerusalem Temple more than 60 years earlier, it featured prominently on coinage from the Bar-Kokhba Revolt. (Photos: American Numismatic Society)

But was there a functioning Temple at the time of Bar-Kokhba? In view of evidence we have, it is unlikely that Bar-Kokhba restored the Temple proper in Jerusalem. However, a deep love of the Temple—and the desire to rebuild it—is clearly advertised in the Bar-Kokhba coinage that shows the façade of the Temple's sanctuary. From coins, we also learn that a Temple administration existed under a high priest named Eleazar.

It is not necessary to have a functioning temple in Jerusalem for there to be Temple treasure, because some form of cult could continue without a building. If your synagogue or church is destroyed, it doesn't mean you give up on worship and religious practice. As Lehmann argued, this treasure may never have been in Jerusalem, but rather stored up in various safe localities over time. Josephus describes everything to do with the Temple cult and Jewish law as still functioning through the end of the first century C.E., even though the Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E. While always referring in the past tense to the Temple as a building, Josephus refers to the continuation of sacrifices in the present (e.g., *Against Apion* 2.193–198).

Historically, there have always been problems in ascribing the Copper Scroll to the time of the First Jewish Revolt and the Jerusalem Temple. It is often thought that all of the Dead Sea Scrolls were taken from a library in or around Qumran itself and placed in caves along the mountain ridge in order to hide them in advance of a threat, namely the arrival of the Roman army in Jericho and its surroundings in 68 C.E. (Josephus, *Jewish War* 4.483–450). Qumran was destroyed

at this time, as verified by Roman arrowheads and burning at the site.

Qumran was then turned into a Roman garrison station, surrounded by a trench. It continued like this until the early years of the second century, probably until the neighboring Nabatean kingdom was safely incorporated into the Empire in 106 C.E. After this, the site was abandoned.

Whatever the case, if Qumran and the region of Jericho fell to the Romans prior to the Temple's destruction in 70 C.E., then the area would have been held by the Romans at the very time the Temple treasure of the Copper Scroll was supposedly hidden. The city of Jerusalem, held by revolutionaries, was under siege by the Romans, who apparently carried off and exhibited in an extravagant public procession what they understood to be the Temple treasure (*Jewish War* 6.282; 7.148), some of which is displayed on the Arch of Titus in Rome. The treasure seized by the Romans from the Temple was so vast that it furnished the Temple of Peace in Rome and continued to be known (and transferred) for centuries to come.\*

If part of the Temple treasure was secreted away before the siege, we would have to imagine a situation in which people journeyed a long way with a heavy load of extremely valuable goods—up to 900 talents—on very dangerous roads to then hide these goods, sadly, in the path of an oncoming army. Furthermore, no one responsible for any of our literary sources (most importantly, Josephus) knew about this! Josephus states that the wealthy people of Jerusalem could not get their own personal valuables out of the city and that, after the war, Roman soldiers and Jewish captives managed to dig up gold, silver, and precious furniture that desperate owners had buried in the city (*Jewish War* 7.114–115).

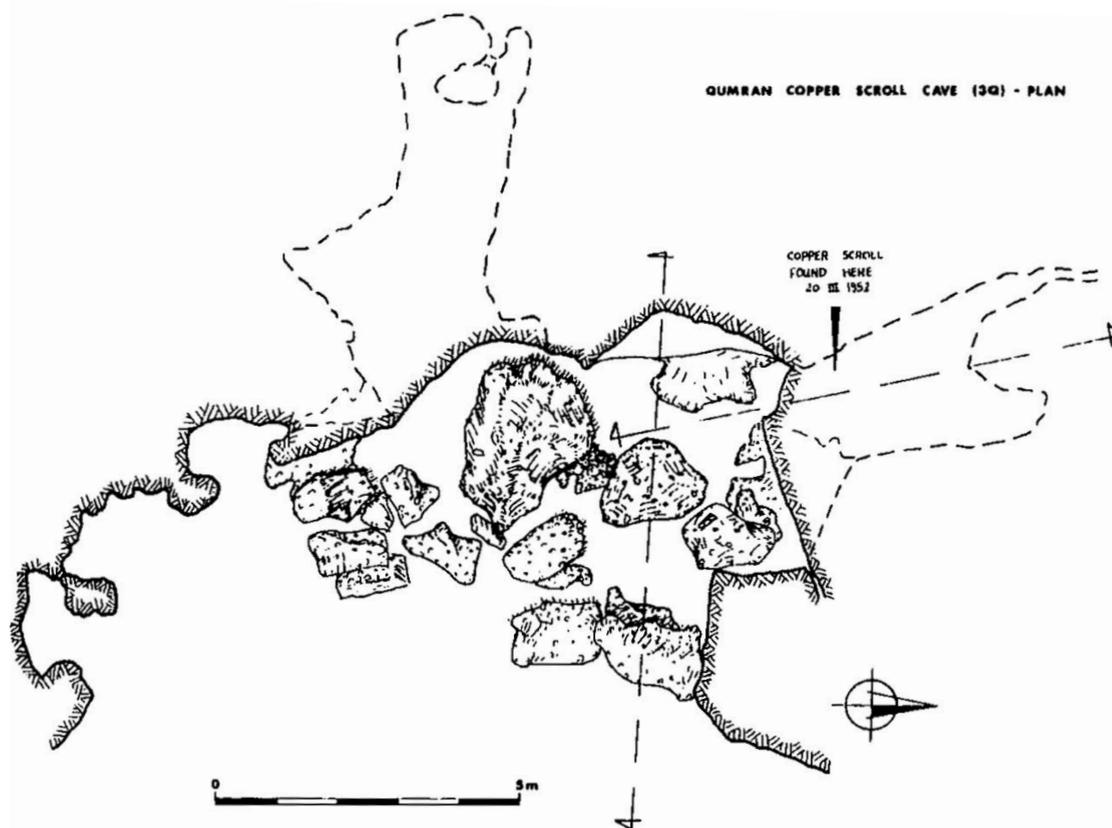
In terms of the archaeological assemblage of Cave 3, the pottery, small pieces of inscribed parchment, and other findings suggested a date prior to 70 C.E.

But do we know for sure that the Copper Scroll should be dated by its association with the other artifacts in the cave? Sequences of deposits in caves are often difficult to understand because caves do not usually have much of a stratigraphy; the floor of 2,000 years ago can be the same floor today. However, earthquake falls do provide some perspectives.

Cave 3 was a large cave, but its main chamber had collapsed, leaving only a cavity 10 feet long and 6.5 feet wide, prolonged by a bifurcated ascending passage at the back. According to the excavators, the two rolls of the Copper Scroll were found lying without a container, one on top of the other in a natural shelf, behind a large stone at the back of the main chamber of the cave. The ceiling had suffered collapse, smashing surrounding jars, with the sherds and their contents buried in a foot of debris; the Copper Scroll was isolated in a kind of niche. Ultimately, collapse also destroyed the cave's original entrance and the front part of its main chamber, but it was accessible for some time to rats: Rat nests found in the back passage testify to their healthy appetite for ancient manuscripts. Given ongoing access after the collapse, we simply do not know whether the Copper Scroll and the jars, lids, and manuscripts were deposited at exactly the same time.

In 1986, a team headed by Joseph Patrich of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem re-excavated Cave 3. He noted that the cave had suffered collapse even before

\*Joan Taylor, "The Nea Church: Were the Temple Treasures Hidden Here?" *BAR*, January/February 2008.



**INSIDE CAVE 3.** This plan shows the interior of Qumran Cave 3. Archaeologists found the Copper Scroll on a small ledge at the back of the cave's front chamber, and they discovered other scroll fragments nearby. The cave's original entrance was likely located at the front chamber's southern end. (Plan: From J. Patrich, "Khirbet Qumran in Light of New Archaeological Explorations in the Qumran Caves," *Annals New York Academy of Sciences* 722.1 [December 2006])

anything was placed in it.<sup>5</sup> Patrich's team moved stones and boulders to check if any sherds were located under these in the inner passage, and they found none. However, when the explorers of 1952 found Cave 3, the way into the cave was sealed shut with blocks of stone, though potsherds outside offered clues to the archaeological team that they should break through these fallen stones to enter the cave.<sup>6</sup> The initial team found sherds under the outer blocks from pottery that would originally have been well within the cave. They did not think of their entry point as the original entrance, which had collapsed away. It is impossible then to know how open it was at different times in the past; only the rats' access gives us a clue.

So, there were at least two rockfalls: one before anything was deposited (in the back part of the cave) and at least one after, which broke the pottery and threw down debris. But earthquakes can open and close entrances to caves over the centuries many times, and in this earthquake zone we can't really know how many times the entrance could have been blocked up—by humans or earthquakes—and opened again. There must have been cave collapse after the Copper Scroll was deposited as stone dust was pushed deep inside the interstices of the rolls.

If manuscripts (in jars, with lids) were placed in Cave 3 before 68 C.E., we can also imagine a scenario in which the cave partially collapsed soon after, but there was still a way to wriggle in to place the Copper Scroll safely on the rock shelf

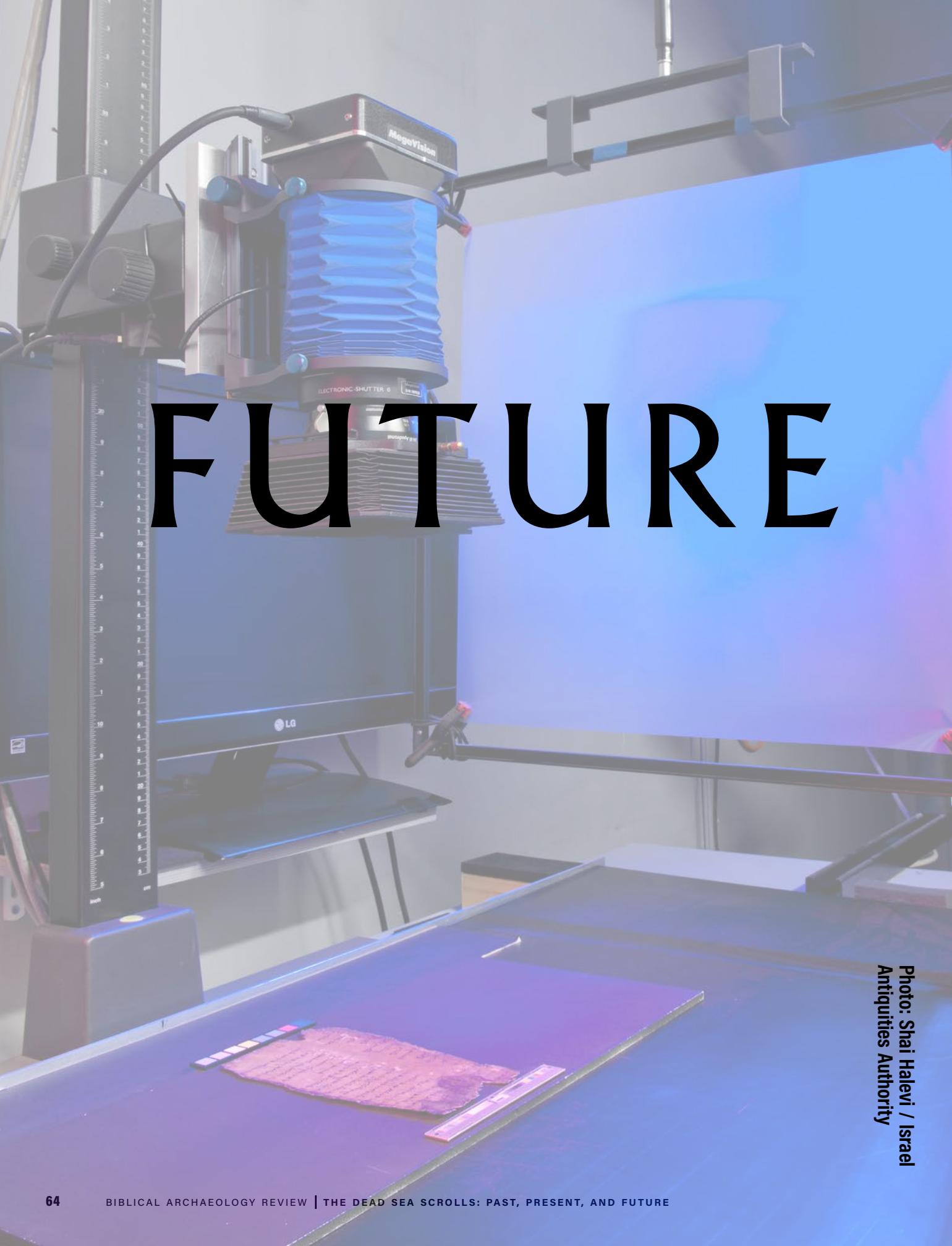
behind this collapse. For example, there was a strong earthquake recorded as happening c. 113–115 C.E. Two decades later, Bar-Kokhba refugees in 135 C.E. were looking for caves here. We know of many other caves in the vicinity where Bar-Kokhba refugees hid from the Romans; they even encamped at the abandoned site of Qumran and dropped coins.

Strangely, a *New York Times* report on Tuesday, April 1, 1952 (based on the report by a Religious News Service from Jerusalem, March 31, 1952), tantalizingly stated that the Copper Scroll was found with Bar-Kokhba coins, but these were never mentioned again. Roland de Vaux, Qumran's excavator, later stated that no coins were discovered in any of the caves.

Whatever the case, if we consider the Copper Scroll as an artifact and look at the historical context and the archaeology together, it would be reasonable to suggest that the Temple treasure might very well derive from the end of the Bar-Kokhba Revolt. The Copper Scroll would then be associated with the people who briefly occupied Qumran and the region c. 135 C.E.—after the site was left derelict.

What became of them and their treasure may forever be unknown. 📖

*Notes on p. 89*



# FUTURE

Photo: Shai Halevi / Israel  
Antiquities Authority

# From Dirt to Decipherment: An Interview with the IAA's Joe Uziel

NATHAN STEINMEYER AND JOE UZIEL

**Joe Uziel**, who heads the Dead Sea Scrolls Unit at the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA), spent many years excavating the City of David and the Western Wall Tunnels. **BAR** Assistant Editor Nathan Steinmeyer recently sat down with Uziel to discuss the IAA's critical role in the conservation, curation, documentation, and research of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Dead Sea Scrolls Unit has eight members, including conservators, curators, and a photographer. The conversation has been edited and modified for clarity and readability.

## **When did conservation of the Dead Sea Scrolls become a priority?**

**JOE UZIEL:** Over the past 70 years, numerous treatments have been carried out on the scrolls—always with the best intentions—to unroll them, improve legibility, and hold them together. The most noteworthy treatments were the extensive use of pressure sensitive tape and the occasional use of castor oil and other surface treatments by the first scholars in the 1950s. These practices, together with the employment of glass plates to encase the fragments, ultimately proved detrimental to the scrolls. Additionally, the use of British Museum Leather Dressing in the early 1960s and acrylic glue in the 1970s caused further damage to the scroll fragments.

By the time the IAA was established in 1991, the preservation of the scrolls had become a main concern. That led to the establishment of a designated conservation laboratory to treat and preserve the scrolls, attempting to prevent further deterioration. Work protocols were drawn up in consultation with an international team of experts in the field of manuscript conservation and preservation. The IAA built a climate-controlled room to house the scrolls and to ensure that temperature and humidity remain stable. In 2010, the Dead Sea Scrolls Unit was created to provide a holistic treatment of the scrolls, including conservation, curation, documentation, research, and outreach.



**CUTTING-EDGE CONSERVATION.** The IAA's conservation lab preserves the Dead Sea Scrolls for future generations. The original scroll research team connected scroll fragments with tape and placed them between glass plates. Among other tasks, the IAA's conservation lab team removes this tape and moves the scrolls to better housing. (Photos: Shai Halevi / Israel Antiquities Authority)



**HOUSING CONCERNS.** The IAA's conservation team houses the Dead Sea Scroll fragments on acid-free cardboard plates, along with Japanese tissue paper, and keeps them in a climate-controlled storeroom. These fragments from the biblical Book of Samuel all come from Qumran Cave 4. (Photo: Shai Halevi / Israel Antiquities Authority)

### **What methods does the IAA use to preserve and document the scrolls?**

UZIEL: In addition to conservation work and proper storage, we needed a way to monitor the scrolls' condition. After various consultations, we established a unique monitoring system based on multispectral imaging technology. The idea is to give every possible detail through objective documentation. For the system to monitor changes in the physical state of the scrolls, we created standard, unchanging parameters. We periodically image a fragment under the same conditions and compare those images to earlier ones using advanced computational analysis. This allows us to detect any change in a given fragment.

We also use certain angles and bandwidths of light to bring out different features of the scrolls. Some bandwidths are very good at highlighting the carbon ink that was used to write the scrolls. They bring out the writing in areas that have been blackened due to the deterioration of the scrolls. Other types of lighting show the topography of the scroll, since a scroll isn't nice and flat. It has waviness. These are important bits of information that can monitor changes in the physical state of the scroll.

Although the multi-spectral imaging system was initially developed for monitoring the scrolls, it also provided much-needed data on each and every fragment. This data is used extensively in our internal database, and the bulk of it is also accessible through the Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library ([www.deadseascrolls.org.il](http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il)). Scholars and the general public alike can access the scroll images and information from their own home or office—without having to travel to Israel to see them. This also contributes to the conservation of the scrolls, as it minimizes their exposure.

### **How have digital technologies changed scroll research?**

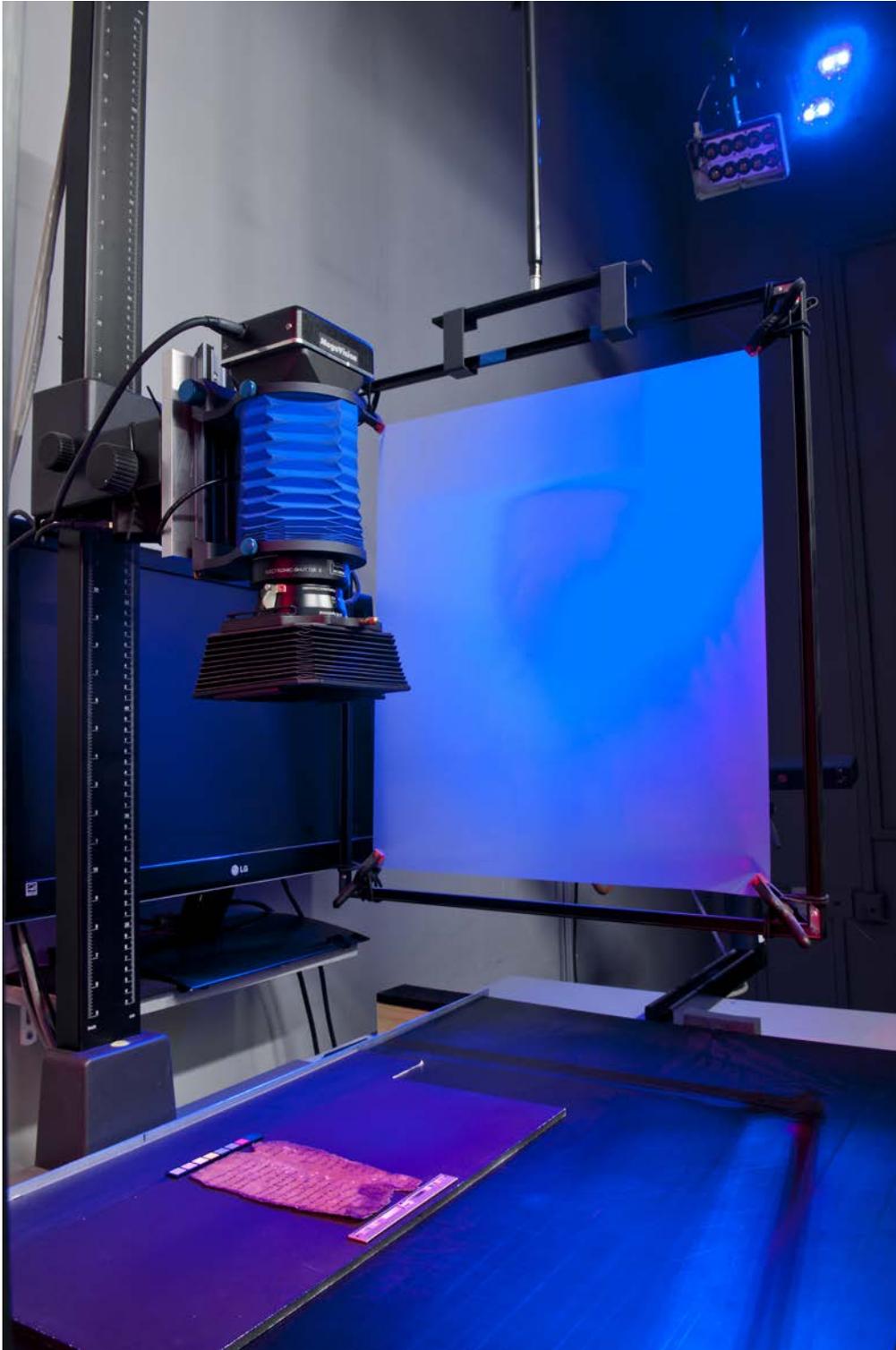
UZIEL: The data accumulated for more than a decade has led us into the world of digital technologies, where computers enable us to venture into new worlds of data analysis through the development of algorithms, artificial intelligence, and machine learning. These tools are used to compare manuscripts and even identify the different scribes who wrote the scrolls.\*

There is much work we can do in terms of rethinking the scrolls' organization, such as material reconstructions. We are in the midst of launching a virtual research platform (Scripta Qumranica Electronica) in collaboration with the University of Göttingen, the Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Haifa University, and Tel Aviv University, where our image database is coupled with Göttingen's database of scroll transcriptions. The platform allows scholars to join fragments virtually and position them alongside one another, create digital editions of the various manuscripts, and make corrections to the texts' readings.

### **What about chemical analyses?**

UZIEL: The original study of the scrolls was primarily text-based, as it should have been. However, there is much to be learned by studying the scrolls as artifacts—exploring their materiality alongside their texts—and examining the parchment, papyrus, and ink with which the scrolls were written.

\*See Mladen Popović, "Artificial Intelligence Identifies Scroll Scribes," p. 77.



**MULTISPECTRAL SYSTEM.** The IAA uses a unique multispectral imaging system to document the Dead Sea Scrolls. Each scroll fragment is photographed on its front and back using 12 wavelengths with 28 exposures. This creates 56 photos, which are then combined to create another two images of the front and back—in total, 58 images for each fragment. (Photo: Shai Halevi / Israel Antiquities Authority)

A great example is a joint study by researchers from Tel Aviv University, the University of Uppsala, and the IAA that identifies the DNA of animals used to produce the parchment. Such studies can potentially shed light on the origin of the scrolls and on ancient production processes. Extracting DNA from ancient parchment is quite challenging, but the potential insight we gain from such research goes far beyond understanding what animals were used to prepare the parchments. It can provide answers about authorship and relationships between manuscripts.

The study of ink also gives insight into scribal practices and sources of the scrolls. It can even potentially identify fragments that we did not know belonged together. We recently took part in a study where proteins were extracted from the ink of a small scroll fragment using a revolutionary, non-destructive method. Remnants of *gum arabic*, extracted from acacia trees, were found as binders in the ink.

The material research is important for conservation purposes because if we understand the chemical composition of the various components, then we can better treat them and prevent deterioration.

### **Are there any Dead Sea Scrolls left to be discovered?**

UZIEL: The IAA has taken on the mission to stop the looting of archaeological sites in the Judean Desert. To accomplish this goal, a team led by the Anti-Theft Unit surveyed the region and conducted selective excavations. At one site, the Cave of Horror in Nahal Hever, the team discovered biblical scroll fragments for the first time in more than 60 years. These included a section of the Book of Zachariah written in Greek that fit together with earlier portions of the same scroll, found in the 1950s and 1960s. This scroll was likely written in the first century B.C.E. or first century C.E., but it was taken to the cave in the early second century C.E. by refugees of the Bar-Kokhba Revolt. When discussing refugees, it is important to remember that they were taking things to survive but also items that were important to them personally. This scroll was obviously important to whomever was fleeing to this remote location—possibly as an heirloom to the community or to the family.

### **How does your team approach a new scroll?**

UZIEL: When a scroll fragment is brought to our unit, we immediately register it in our database, and then we assess its condition. At this point, we make decisions about conservation methods and what can be done to make it readable.

Our primary concern is conservation. When possible, as the case with the Nahal Hever fragments, we slowly unfold and separate crumpled fragments, while documenting the entire process. This is a tedious process that can last months.

The fragments are imaged in the multispectral system both before and after they have undergone conservation and have been placed in their estimated position. At the same time, our curators and researchers work on the text's decipherment. They prepare the transcription, analyze the paleography, language, and content, and place the finds in their historical and literary context.

The final step is the scientific publication, which presents the results of our research to the scholarly community.



**CAVE EXPLORERS.** Archeologists Hagay Hamer and Oriah Amichai sift finds at the Cave of Horror, one of the caves recently investigated by the IAA. The cave's name comes from a grisly find in 1960: 40 skeletons—refugees from the Bar-Kokhba Revolt (132-136 C.E.). In 2019, the IAA team uncovered scroll fragments, among other finds, at the cave. (Photo: Eitan Klein / Israel Antiquities Authority)



**“NEW” SCROLLS.** In 2021, archaeologists announced the discovery of new scroll fragments in the Cave of Horror within the Nahal Hever region. With portions of the books of Zechariah and Nahum, these are the first biblical scroll fragments from the Judean Desert found in the last 60 years. They were likely stashed in the cave during the Bar-Kokhba Revolt (132-136 C.E.). The top photo shows these fragments before conservation in the IAA lab. The bottom photo shows a fragment after conservation; it bears a Greek translation of the Book of Zechariah. (Top photo: Shai Halevi / Israel Antiquities Authority; bottom photo: Orit Rosengarten / Israel Antiquities Authority)



**ANCIENT EDITS.** Discovered in Qumran Cave 11, this scroll (a portion shown above) contains biblical Psalms. Though written by a talented scribe, the scroll has some mistakes. Certain words have been scratched away and replaced by others. (Photo: Shai Halevi / Israel Antiquities Authority)

### What is the most interesting scroll you have documented?

**UZIEL:** I never like to answer that question because each and every scroll is interesting in a different way, but I will mention a couple of examples that I particularly like. One is the Psalms Scroll found in Qumran Cave 11 and dated to the first century C.E. It is well written, but the scribe still made mistakes along the way. You can see the erasure of certain words that were written erroneously. However, there is one word that you cannot scratch away: the Tetragrammaton (YHWH). The Tetragrammaton is even written in a different script, Paleo-Hebrew, than the rest of the scroll, which is written in square Hebrew, common to the Second Temple period. Therefore, the scribe marks the mistake with dots above and below each of the letters to indicate that this word should not be read there.

Another interesting group of documents, found in the purse of a woman named Babatha, comes from the time of the Bar-Kokhba Revolt in the second century C.E. Babatha lived at the southern end of the Dead Sea, but subsequent to the death of her first husband, she remarried and relocated to Ein Gedi. She found herself hiding in the desert due to the revolt. Amazingly, she brought personal and legal documents, which included marriage contracts, land deeds, bills of sale, and court protocols, because she was waiting for the day she could return and reclaim her land. These documents teach us a lot about life and relationships in the period right after the destruction of the Second Temple.

**Thank you for your work, Joe. We look forward to learning more about what your team learns about the scrolls in the coming years. 📖**

# Missing: Have You Seen These Scrolls?

ÅRSTEIN JUSTNES AND SIGNE M. HÆGELAND

IT MAY SEEM SUPRISING, but 75 years after the discovery of the first Dead Sea Scrolls, we still don't know how many scroll fragments there are in total. Published references to the number of recovered fragments vary considerably—from 25,000 to more than 200,000. Even more worrisome, not an insignificant number of those fragments seem to have been lost.

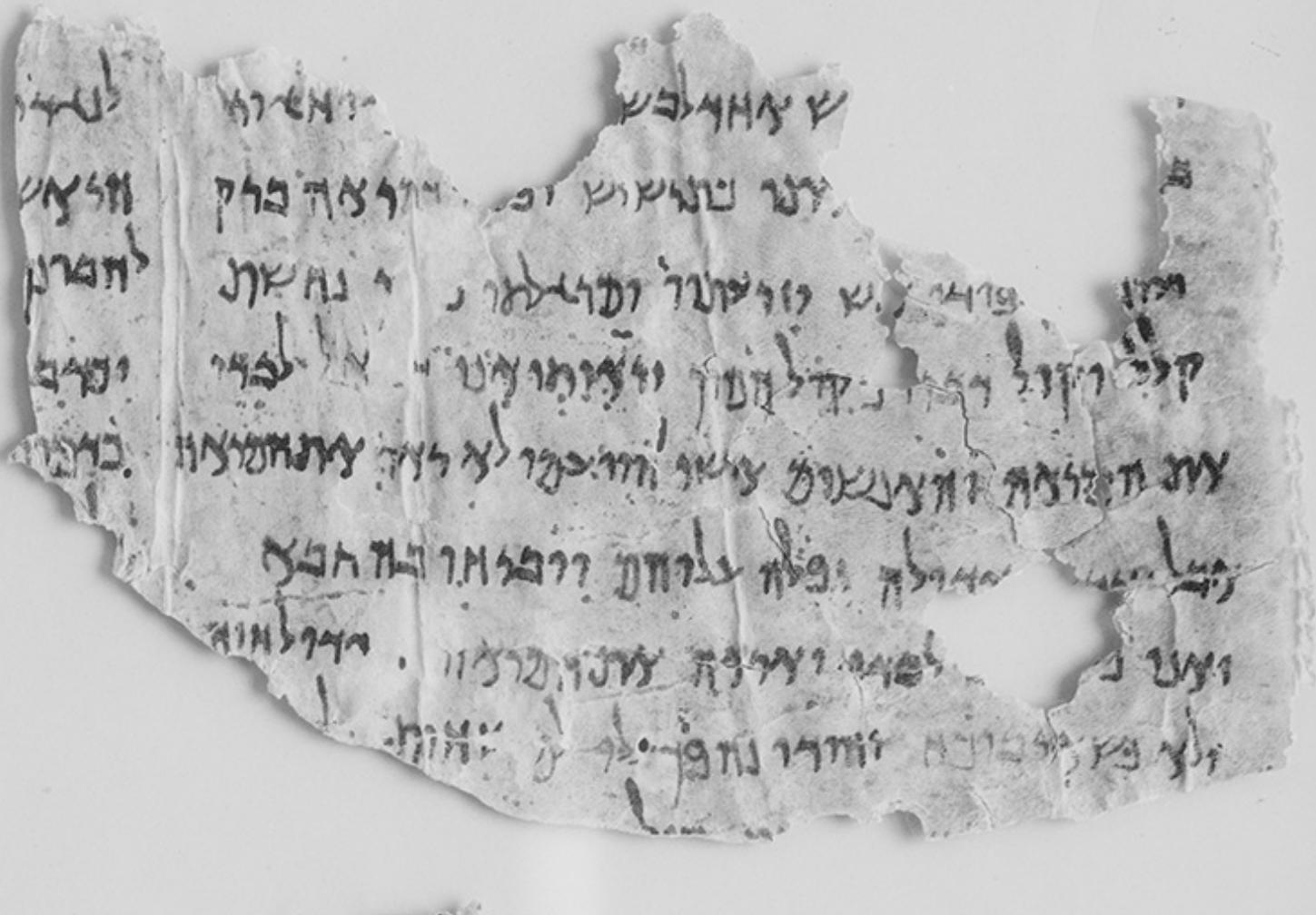
Writing for *Jerusalem Report* in December 1991, journalist Felice Maranz listed ten large fragments as missing, among them portions of the books of Daniel and Samuel.<sup>1</sup> When she questioned John Strugnell and Emanuel Tov—the former and current editors-in-chief of the Dead Sea Scrolls publication project, respectively—neither was keen on discussing the issue.

So what portion of the total number of fragments is now gone? In other words: How considerable a loss is this?

Some 30 years after the alarm was first sounded, our team (the authors and Martin S. Stomnås) set out to look for missing Dead Sea Scroll fragments.<sup>2</sup> We use the term “lost” to refer to scroll fragments that are thought to be either destroyed, stolen, misplaced, or simply missing.

Already in 1960, five fragments were reported stolen from the Palestine Archaeological Museum (known as the Rockefeller Museum since 1967). They included a large fragment from a Samuel scroll, three fragments from a Daniel scroll, and a fragment from a non-biblical scroll named *Beatitudes*. Reflecting on the loss of the Samuel fragment many years later, Strugnell seemed surprisingly relaxed: “It didn't matter. I mean, it would be nice for a museum to have the Samuel [fragment], but we've got the pictures. ... That's better than the original.”<sup>3</sup> Despite the evident loss, the problem with stolen fragments, at least to Strugnell, seemed marginal. To this day, there are rumors about other thefts.

When scroll scholar Stephen A. Reed conducted his massive cataloging project at the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem and the Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center in Claremont, California, he noted that several fragments were missing from the plates (manuscripts grouped and mounted in between plates of glass) at the Rockefeller Museum, including several with Cave 5 material.<sup>4</sup>



**MISSING FRAGMENTS.** These two joined fragments of 4Q114 (Book of Daniel) were stolen in 1960. (Photo: Shai Halevi / Israel Antiquities Authority)

In his brief annotations, Reed sometimes pondered the whereabouts of the missing pieces: “Missing at Rockefeller, possibly at Shrine of Book,” or, more often, just “Shrine?” Building on his work, our preliminary investigation indicates that the Cave 5 manuscripts are neither at the Rockefeller nor at the Shrine of the Book. No one seems to know where they are.

Throughout *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, the official publication series for the Dead Sea Scrolls, there are hundreds of brief notes about lost fragments. Phrases like “cannot be found in the Rockefeller Museum” or simply “missing” or “lost” abound. Most of these pieces are indeed very small, but they add up to quite a substantial lot.

Volume 33 of the series is a special case. It consists mostly of small, unidentified fragments. Notably, almost every single one of the 41 entries includes a disclaimer about fragments that could not be located. In total, this adds up to about 450 missing fragments. Such disclaimers are consistently followed by a comforting sentence stating that in most cases the missing pieces have been identified, but their present location is not known. We suspect that most of these fragments have been moved to other plates, but there doesn't seem to be any record of such interventions.

Our database currently lists more than 1,000 Dead Sea Scroll fragments that are missing. We do not believe that all of these pieces are actually lost, but there seems to be no easy way to find out. Thankfully, other scholars helped us locate a handful of fragments after we posted them on Twitter. And notably, some of the manuscripts that Reed couldn't find in the early 1990s have since turned up—for instance 2QRuth<sup>a</sup>, a Ruth manuscript from Cave 2.

Dead Sea Scroll scholars face a paradox: Even today, 30 years after the controversial crusade by Hershel Shanks to “free the Dead Sea Scrolls,” most scholars still do not have full access to the tens of thousands of scroll fragments that have been discovered. The leading online repository for the scrolls, the Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library, is incomplete, and its long-anticipated replacement, the Scripta Qumranica Electronica platform, is still in an intermediate stage of development.<sup>5</sup> As scholars gain full access to these online collections, perhaps more “missing” scroll fragments will resurface. 📖

*Notes on p. 89*

# Artificial Intelligence Identifies Scroll Scribes

MLADEN POPOVIĆ

**AFTER THE BIBLE**, the Dead Sea Scrolls are the most famous collection of writings from ancient Israel. However, the individuals who penned the scrolls remain anonymous. To identify individual scribes in the Dead Sea Scrolls, my team of scroll scholars and artificial intelligence (AI) experts has developed a tool that analyzes the scrolls on the level of individual scribal strokes.

Scholars have previously suggested that single scribes wrote some manuscripts.\* They based their claims on the detailed examination of handwriting. But traditional paleography (the study of ancient writing) is always subjective. Paleographers typically try to find a “smoking gun” in the form of a very specific trait in a letter that would identify a scribe. However, scribes may show a range in a variety of forms of individual letters within one or across more manuscripts. At the same time, different scribes may have almost the same handwriting. So the challenge for paleographers is to determine which differences in handwriting are likely to be idiographic (unique to an individual writer) and thus significant, which requires lots of experience.

To tackle this problem, our team used digital images of the scrolls and applied pattern recognition and artificial intelligence techniques. We performed a case study on the Great Isaiah Scroll from Qumran Cave 1 that offers a good example of the lack of a robust method in Dead Sea Scrolls paleography for determining and verifying writer identity. Because its handwriting is nearly uniform, some scholars say one scribe wrote this scroll. Others, however, suggest there were two scribes. Our team was able to present new evidence for two scribes.<sup>1</sup> Here’s how we did it.

The Great Isaiah Scroll, which is about 23 feet long with 54 columns of text, contains the letter *aleph* at least 5,000 times. It is humanly impossible to compare all these occurrences by eye. Computers, on the other hand, are well suited to analyze large datasets and can make all sorts of calculations at the level of letters and even individual strokes and curvatures. Although the human eye is amazing

\* See Sidnie White Crawford, “Scribe Links Qumran and Masada,” *BAR*, November/December 2012.



**ONE SCROLL, TWO SCRIBES.** Artificial Intelligence (AI) confirms that the Great Isaiah Scroll was penned by two scribes, who switched at the halfway mark (between columns 27 and 28, pictured here). (Photo: Shrine of the Book / The Israel Museum, Jerusalem)

and presumably considers these levels, too, the process is often not transparent or quantifiable, especially when there is much data to consider.

The first hurdle was to train an algorithm to separate the inscribed text (ink) from its background (leather or papyrus). For this separation, or binarization, Maruf Dhali, a member of our research team, developed a state-of-the-art artificial neural network that can be trained using deep learning (machine learning method that imitates the way humans learn). The neural network keeps the original ink traces intact as they appear on the digital images. This is important because the ancient ink traces relate directly to a person's muscle movement and are person-specific.

Our first analysis showed that the columns of text in the Great Isaiah Scroll fell into two distinct groups and that these were not distributed randomly through the scroll, but rather were clustered, with a transition around the halfway mark (between columns 27 and 28).

Expecting more than one writer, we then recomputed the similarities between the columns, this time using the patterns of letter fragments. This second analysis confirmed the presence of two different scribes. When we added “noise” (spurious letter forms) to the data, the results did not change. We also succeeded in demonstrating that the second scribe shows more variation within his writing than the first, although their writing is very similar.

Finally, we visualized the collected data in heatmaps for individual letters that show all attested letter shapes morphed into one character and coded in color from cold to hot, depending on the statistical frequency of individual shapes. These heatmaps show minute but significant differences between characters from the two halves of the scroll.

Certain aspects of the Great Isaiah Scroll and the positioning of the text had led some scholars to suggest that a new scribe had begun writing after column 27, but this suggestion was not generally accepted. Now, we can confirm this with a quantitative analysis of the handwriting as well as with robust statistical analyses. Instead of basing judgment on more-or-less impressionistic evidence, we can now demonstrate that the separation is statistically significant using computer-based artificial intelligence.

Our breakthrough in scroll paleography is that we can now access the level of individual scribes and carefully observe how they worked on these manuscripts. Applying our digital tool to other scrolls may reveal relations between manuscripts and texts that have previously gone unnoticed. The ability to identify scribes can contribute to a finer understanding of the different groupings and collections of manuscripts within the Dead Sea Scrolls, contributing to a better understanding of the dynamics of manuscript production and collection in biblical times.

We are now able to distinguish between individual scribes. Although we will never know their names, with artificial intelligence, it at least feels as if we can finally shake hands with them through their handwriting. 🤖

*Notes on p. 89*

# Reading the Invisible:

## Virtual Unwrapping of the Dead Sea Scrolls

**CHRISTY CHAPMAN AND W. BRENT SEALES**

**TECHNOLOGY IN THE HANDS** of scholars, conservators, and archaeologists alike has long been central to the successful preservation and analysis of the Dead Sea Scrolls. While early technologies involved sticky tape for rejoining fragments and analog photography for their documentation, the advanced tools of today allow fragile scrolls to be read without even unwrapping them.

The breathtaking range of the scrolls spans everything from major texts, such as the Temple Scroll, to unopened phylactery cases with slips of hidden writing, to a small number of completely unopened scrolls. And while the glory of the collection is represented by the substantially complete and amazingly preserved copy of the Book of Isaiah on display at the Shrine of the Book in Jerusalem, its remarkable condition is the exception rather than the rule. According to the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA), the scroll archive contains more than 25,000 fragments, many no larger than a postage stamp. Practically all of them consist of many layers, portions of a single scroll stuck together due to damage and decay.

The painstaking work of conservators has stabilized these fragments against further decay and provided a superb effort at physical restoration. In many cases, however, not much can be done, leaving thousands of fragments unstudied because of the difficulty and risk associated with invasive efforts to separate the multiple layers that stubbornly cling to each other.

Fortunately, researchers have developed non-invasive, digital restoration techniques, including “virtual unwrapping” that reveals the interior writings on rolled-up surfaces and multi-layer fragments. Virtual unwrapping uses penetrating 3D X-ray images from micro-computed tomography (micro-CT) to create a 3D model of an object, also known as the 3D volume. The 3D model data then passes through a series of steps that make up the virtual unwrapping pipeline.



**MULTI-LAYERED FRAGMENT.** This analog photograph shows fragment 1032a, a scroll fragment with multiple layers of writing—all stuck together. (Photo: Shai Halevi / Israel Antiquities Authority)

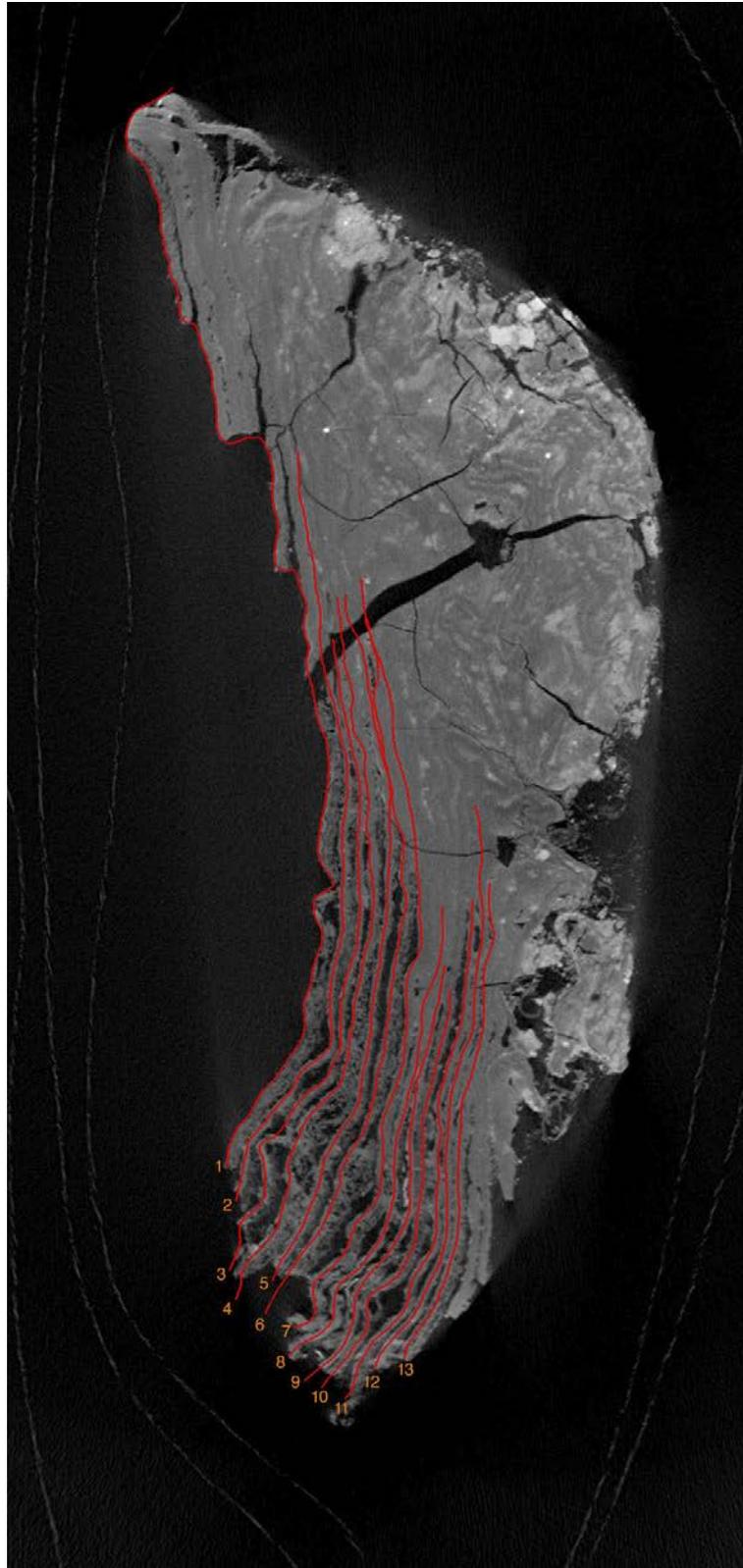
First, each individual layer on which writing may sit—each wrap of a scroll, for example—is identified in the volume and explicitly modeled. Every point on these segmented surfaces is then textured or assigned a brightness/intensity value corresponding to the density of that particular spot in the 3D volume. Materials that are denser, such as certain kinds of ink, show up brighter than less dense materials, such as the animal skin often used as a writing surface. The software exploits this variation in density and brightness to make the text visible.

Because the model of the writing surface reflects the actual curvature of the scroll, it is then necessary to digitally flatten it for reading. This is accomplished through a material simulation, which is common in video games and movies for effects like cloth flags waving in the wind.

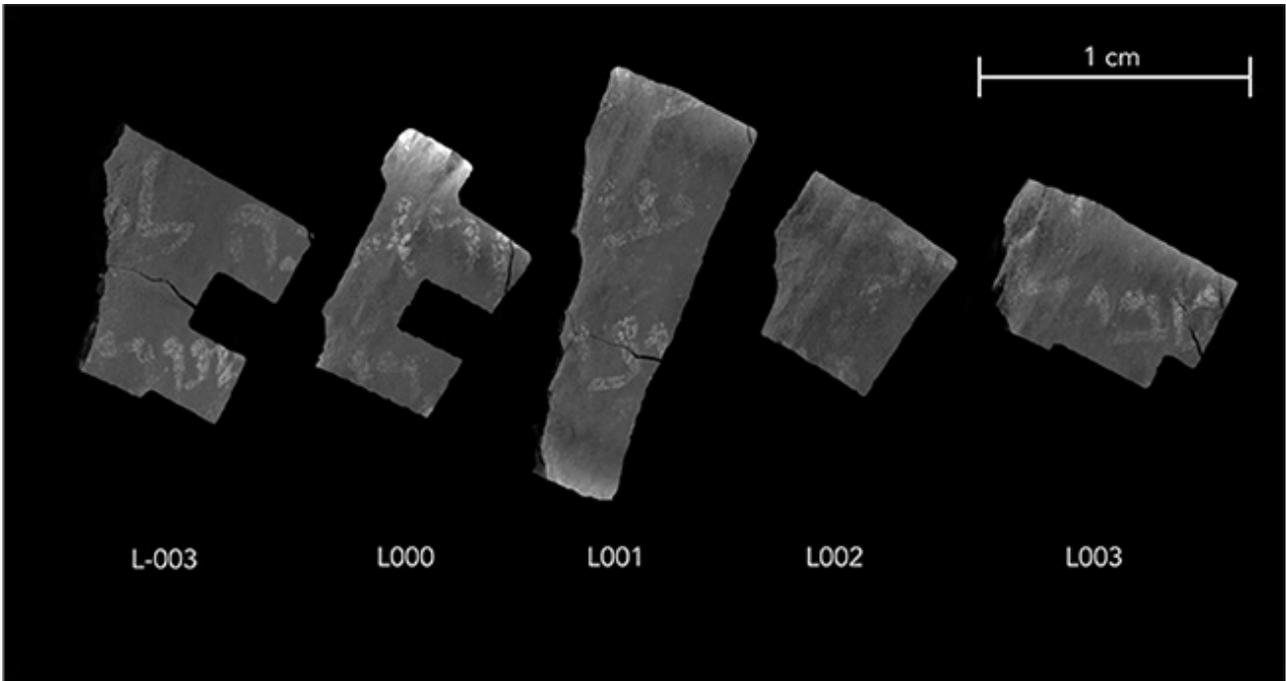
Virtual unwrapping is completely non-invasive, as X-rays induce no damage during imaging, and the analysis takes place on the data, not the physical object. The technique was successfully applied for the first time in 2015, when an ancient Hebrew scroll from Ein Gedi was safely revealed to be an early copy of the Book of Leviticus.\*

This breakthrough technology is now being applied to the 25,000 fragments from Qumran. Among them is a multi-layered fragment (1032a) with text concealed between a dozen stuck layers. Even this is now readable digitally. Perhaps even more exciting, recent approaches inspired by artificial intelligence (AI) have made it possible to enhance and make more precise the results from virtual unwrapping.

\*Robin Ngo, "Book of Leviticus Verses Recovered from Burnt Hebrew Bible Scroll," *Bible History Daily* (blog), July 21, 2015.



**LOOKING FOR LAYERS.** Segmentation work on fragment 1032a to identify layers with ink. Thirteen layers have been identified. (Photo: © EduceLab)



**HIDDEN WRITING.** Layers 5, 8, 9, 10, and 11 of the 13 virtually unwrapped layers of fragment 1032a. (Photo: © EduceLab)



**COLORED WRITING.** The virtually unwrapped layers of fragment 1032a with the color-trained convolutional neural network (CNN) applied. Text from this fragment is now readable—but not yet deciphered. (Photo: © EduceLab)

As anyone who has ever broken a bone knows, the gray-scale imagery that results from an X-ray is not as compelling as a color photograph. But using a machine-learning framework, researchers can now show the gray-scale images in full color.

To achieve this “data-informed colorization,” the X-ray evidence of ink and parchment from deep inside a closed fragment is matched with a color photo of the visible portions of the fragment. A convolutional neural network (CNN) is then trained to build a map between the two imaging modalities. Whenever the CNN encounters a massive number of associations between the two kinds of imagery—color photography and X-ray—it can learn the conversion between the two types of data. This learned conversion makes it possible for virtually unwrapped fragments to look like color photographs.

From layer separation of a digitized manuscript, to ink identification, to digital flattening of pages, to virtual “recoloring,” this new AI technology produces digital images of unopened manuscripts that rival actual photographs of undamaged parchment texts. As the next step in a long line of technological advances, this forges a new pathway for restoration. Machine learning and AI will continue to push against the boundaries of what was previously considered impossible. Such innovations will support and inspire the next generation of scholars dedicated to the study of fragmentary, damaged collections. 

## Authors

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**Hershel Shanks** (d. 2021; “BAR’s Crusades: Publishing the Dead Sea Scrolls,” p. 14) was the Editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review* (BAR) and the founder of the Biblical Archaeology Society. He campaigned to free the Dead Sea Scrolls from the scholarly monopoly that delayed in publishing them and raised public awareness about the scrolls.

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**Joe Uziel** (“From Dirt to Decipherment: An Interview with the IAA’s Joe Uziel,” p. 65) is the head of the Dead Sea Scrolls Unit at the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA). This department is responsible for the conservation, research, and documentation of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Prior to this role, he excavated several areas in the City of David and the Western Wall Tunnels, uncovering a range of finds from the Middle Bronze Age through to the Mamluk period. His research has produced many studies on the archaeology of Jerusalem, particularly relating to the Bronze and Iron Ages and Roman period.

**James VanderKam** (“The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament,” p. 37) is the John A. O’Brien Professor Emeritus of Hebrew Scriptures at the University of Notre Dame. He is a member of the committee that prepared the Dead Sea Scrolls for publication and author of the highly praised work *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (2nd ed., 2010). He specializes in the the history and literature of early Judaism and the Hebrew Scriptures.

# Notes

## "A Short History of the Dead Sea Scrolls and What They Tell Us" (continued from p. 13)

<sup>1</sup> The Cairo Genizah is a collection of mostly Jewish manuscripts, composed in the Middle Ages in Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, and other languages. In the late 19th century, this collection was discovered in a synagogue in Fostat, Old Cairo, and was brought to various European and American libraries, mainly Cambridge University.

<sup>2</sup> Solomon Schechter, *Documents of Jewish Sectaries: Fragments of a Zadokite Work*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1910).

<sup>3</sup> Ben Zion Wacholder and Martin G. Abegg, *A Preliminary Edition of the Unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls: The Hebrew and Aramaic Texts from Cave Four* (3 fascicles; Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1991–1995).

<sup>4</sup> Robert H. Eisenman and James M. Robinson, *A Facsimile Edition of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Prepared with an Introduction and Index*, Publisher's Foreword by Hershel Shanks (2 vols.; Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> Eisenman and Robinson, *Facsimile Edition*, fig. 8, p. xxxi.

<sup>6</sup> David Nimmer criticized this decision in "Copyright in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Houston Law Journal* 38 (2001), pp. 5–212. See the commentary by James L. Oakes, pp. 219–229 and response by Martha Woodmansee, pp. 231–236. For detailed discussion of the case, see Timothy H. Lim, Hector L. MacQueen, and Calum M. Carmichael, eds., *On Scrolls, Artefacts and Intellectual Property* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp. 63–192; Raphael Israeli, *Piracy in Qumran: The Battle over the Scrolls of the Pre-Christ Era* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008), pp. 71–203.

<sup>7</sup> Wadi Daliyeh, almost 9 miles (14 kilometers) north of Jericho, yielded fragmentary remains of legal documents drafted in Samaria in the fourth century B.C.E. These papyri concern land and slave sales and provided important evidence for the history of the Aramaic language.

## "A View from the Caves" (continued from p. 27)

<sup>1</sup> Robert Donceel and Pauline Donceel-Voûte, "The Archaeology of Khirbet Qumran," in Michael Wise, Norman Golb, John Collins, and Dennis Pardee, eds., *Methods of Investigations of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Khirbet Qumran Site: Present Realities and Future Prospects* (New York: The New York Academy of Sciences, 1994), pp. 1–38.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Patrich, "Khirbet Qumran in Light of New Archaeological Explorations in the Qumran Caves," in *Methods of Investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 73–96.

<sup>3</sup> Magen Broshi and Hanan Eshel, "Residential Caves at Qumran," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 6 (1999), p. 328.

<sup>4</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1958, 1961), p. 27, n. 32.

<sup>5</sup> Broshi and Eshel, "Residential Caves," p. 334.

<sup>6</sup> Broshi and Eshel, "Residential Caves," pp. 328, 335.

<sup>7</sup> Roland de Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961), p. 54. It should be noted that, since no final report on the excavations, including the pottery, has been published, all conclusions must necessarily be preliminary.

<sup>8</sup> The most thorough published study of the Qumran pottery to date has been done by Jodi Magness, relying on de Vaux's preliminary publications and field notes: Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002); see also Jodi Magness, "The Community of Qumran in Light of Its Pottery," in *Methods of Investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 39–50. Rachel Bar Nathan has made an extensive survey of pottery types in the Jericho region, which includes Qumran: Rachel Bar Nathan, "Qumran and the Hasmonaean and Herodian Winter Palaces of Jericho: The Implication of the Pottery Finds for the Interpretation of the Settlement at Qumran," in Katharina Galor, Jean-Baptiste Humbert, and Jurgen Zangenberg, eds., *The Site of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Archaeological Interpretations and Debates* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 263–280. Bar Nathan notes that the pottery types found at Qumran are also found throughout the region, most notably the pottery from the palaces at Jericho (pp. 263–264). Therefore, she reasoned, we can conclude that the pottery at Qumran is not unique but part of the larger regional repertoire of the period. Magness agrees with this conclusion but argues that the "peculiarities" of the Qumran assemblage have to be taken into account. Most important for our purposes is the ubiquity of the hole-mouthed cylindrical, "ovoid," and "bag-shaped" storage jar at the site of Qumran and in the Qumran caves, especially in the natural caves in the limestone cliffs. In addition, "wasters" of these jars were found in the eastern garbage dump, indicating that they were produced on site (Bar Nathan, p. 275). The jars are,

therefore, an important material connection between the caves and the site. It is true that these types of storage jars (ovoid, bag-shaped, and cylindrical) appear in other sites in Judea in the same period (although they have not been discovered in Jerusalem). But the cylindrical jars do not appear in anywhere near the same numbers as they do at Qumran. Thorough studies of the pottery found in the caves and excavated at Qumran have shown that, while the corpus fits into the regional pottery types found in the Judean Desert in the vicinity of Jericho, there are distinctive features in the caves/Qumran corpora that tie those two strongly together.

<sup>9</sup> Magness, *Archaeology of Qumran*, pp. 66–69.

<sup>10</sup> In 31 B.C.E., an earthquake badly damaged the site, but it was rebuilt with only a slight gap, if any, in habitation, as Magness has shown; Magness, *Archaeology of Qumran*, pp. 68–69.

<sup>11</sup> De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 36.

<sup>12</sup> The Donceels, e.g., argued that these were dining benches. Donceel and Donceel-Voûte, “Archaeology of Khirbet Qumran,” pp. 27–31.

<sup>13</sup> De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 103.

<sup>14</sup> James F. Strange, “The 1996 Excavations at Qumran and the Context of the New Hebrew Ostrakon,” in *The Site of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 51, and the bibliography cited there.

<sup>15</sup> Caves 1 and 3 contained *pesharim*, a form of composition unique to the Qumran collection. *Serekh ha-Yahad*, the New Jerusalem, and the Damascus Document were located in Cave 5. Copies of the *Serekh* were also found in Caves 1 and (possibly) 11. Fragments of the New Jerusalem were found in Caves 1, 2, and 11. The Damascus Document was found in Cave 6.

<sup>16</sup> These works include the books of Enoch (Caves 1, 2, and 6), Jubilees (Caves 1, 2, 3, and 11), the Temple Scroll (Cave 11) and Aramaic Levi (Cave 1).

<sup>17</sup> De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 100.

<sup>18</sup> Almost every composition found in the other ten caves is also found in Cave 4. There are exceptions: Two of the *pesharim* from Cave 1 (Micah, Habakkuk) were not found in Cave 4; the Genesis Apocryphon is unique to Cave 1. But these are exceptions that prove the rule: Cave 4 provides a cross-section of the Qumran collection.

<sup>19</sup> Ada Yardeni, “A Note on a Qumran Scribe,” in Meir Lubetski, ed., *New Seals and Inscriptions, Hebrew, Idumean, and Cuneiform*. Hebrew Bible Monographs 8 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), pp. 287–298; see also Emanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004), p. 23, Table 2.

### “Searching for the ‘Original’ Bible: Do the Dead Sea Scrolls Help?” (continued from p. 36)

<sup>1</sup> Compare Psalm 82:1 in the New Revised Standard Version: “God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment.” See also Psalm 29:1 “Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.” In the latter verse, a literal translation of the words *bney elim* would be “sons of gods,” but modern translations usually present this phrase as “heavenly beings.”

<sup>2</sup> Like the preceding two verses, also this verse is lacking in the LXX and Qumran Scroll. Even though verse 8 does not contain praise of the Lord, it was probably added by a late scribe or redactor.

<sup>3</sup> Some guidance, including in practical matters, is given in my handbook *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed., revised and expanded (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012).

### “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament” (continued from p. 47)

<sup>1</sup> A canon is a list of authoritative books from which none may be subtracted and to which none may be added.

<sup>2</sup> See the Commentary on Habakkuk column 2, lines 2, 6–10; column 7, lines 1–5.

<sup>3</sup> See 2 Peter 1:19–21; 3:15–16.

<sup>4</sup> In the Cave 1 copy, it is in columns 1, line 16, to column 2, line 26.

<sup>5</sup> Biblical citations are from the New Revised Standard Version.

<sup>6</sup> Scroll quotations are from Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Penguin, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> For example, *Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer* 41.

<sup>8</sup> This point and others in this section are worked out in more detail in my essay “The Festival of Weeks and the Story of Pentecost in Acts 2,” in Craig Evans, ed., *From Prophecy to Testament: The Function of the Old Testament in the New* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), pp. 185–205.

<sup>9</sup> See John Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Law and Love*, vol. 4, Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 2009), pp. 235–252.

<sup>10</sup> See Lawrence Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1994), pp. 278–281.

<sup>11</sup> I have omitted from Vermes's translation his parenthetical alternate translations: call himself, designate himself, proclaim himself. I have also changed his "[gran]d" to "[gr]eat" as a better rendering and one that indicates by more accurate placement of the brackets how much of the word is preserved on the fragment.

<sup>12</sup> For the view that the text is using the titles for a negative figure, see, e.g., David Flusser, "The Hubris of the Antichrist in a Fragment from Qumran," in his *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press of the Hebrew University, 1988), pp. 207–213. For the view that the titles are attributed to a messianic figure, see, e.g., John Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*, Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1995), pp. 154–163. Among the debated issues is whether 4Q246 presents events in a chronological order so that everything before the gap in the text at col. 2, line 4, is negative (including the titles); another concerns the ways in which the titles are used in other texts. For a recent attempt to approach the issue from a different perspective (concentrating on the manner of the naming in the text) and favoring a messianic interpretation, see Tucker Ferda, "Naming the Messiah: A Contribution to the 4Q246 'Son of God' Debate," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 21 (2014), pp. 150–175.

### **"Secrets of the Copper Scroll" (continued from p. 63)**

<sup>1</sup> Roland De Vaux, "Exploration de la Région de Qumran," *Revue Biblique* 60 (1953), pp. 540–561; Maurice Baillet, Józef T. Milik, and Roland de Vaux, *Les "Petites Grottes" de Qumrân*, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), pp. 7–8, 201; William L. Reed, "The Qumran Caves Expedition of March, 1952," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 135 (October 1954), pp. 8–13.

<sup>2</sup> John Allegro, *The Treasure of the Copper Scroll* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960).

<sup>3</sup> Although many scholars associate the scroll with the Essene community, some doubt it was a real treasure, e.g., Jozef T. Milik, "The Copper Document from Cave III, Qumran," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 19.3 (1956), pp. 60–64. For further, see Stephen Goranson, "Sectarianism, Geography and the Copper Scroll," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 43 (1992), pp. 282–287; Al Wolters, "Literary Analysis and the Copper Scroll," in Zdzislaw Jan Kapera, ed., *Intertextual Essays in Honour of Jozef Tadeusz Milik* (Krakow: Enigma Press, 1992), pp. 239–252; Bargil Pixner, "Unraveling the Copper Scroll Case: A Study on the Topography of 3Q15," *Revue de Qumran* 11 (1983), pp. 323–366; Émile Puech, *The Copper Scroll Revisited* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 1–17.

<sup>4</sup> Ernest-Marie Laperrousaz, "Remarques sur l'origine des rouleaux de cuivre découverts dans la grotte 3 de Qumran," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 159 (1961), pp. 157–172; Ben-Zion Luria, *The Copper Scroll from the Desert of Judah* (Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1963; Hebrew); Manfred R. Lehmann, "Identification of the Copper Scroll Based on Its Technical Terms," *Revue de Qumrân* 5 (1964), pp. 97–105.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Patrich, "Khirbet Qumran in Light of New Archaeological Explorations in the Qumran Caves," in Michael O. Wise, Norman Golb, John J. Collins, and Dennis G. Pardee, eds., *Methods of Investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Khirbet Qumran Site: Present Realities and Future Prospects*, Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 722 (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1994), pp. 73–95.

<sup>6</sup> De Vaux, "Exploration," p. 555.

### **"Missing: Have You Seen These Scrolls?" (continued from p. 76)**

<sup>1</sup> "The Case of the Missing Scrolls," *Jerusalem Report* (December 26, 1991).

<sup>2</sup> Visit our project at [lyingpen.uia.no](http://lyingpen.uia.no).

<sup>3</sup> Weston W. Fields, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Full History* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 239.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen A. Reed, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Catalogue: Documents, Photographs and Museum Inventory Numbers*, SBL Resources for Biblical Study 32 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> See [deadseascrolls.org.il](http://deadseascrolls.org.il) for the Digital Library and [sqe.deadseascrolls.org.il](http://sqe.deadseascrolls.org.il) for the new platform.

### **"Artificial Intelligence Identifies Scroll Scribes" (continued from p. 79)**

<sup>1</sup> See Mladen Popović, Maruf A. Dhali, and Lambert Schomaker, "Artificial Intelligence Based Writer Identification Generates New Evidence for the Unknown Scribes of the Dead Sea Scrolls Exemplified by the Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>)," *PLoS ONE* 16.4 (2021): e0249769.

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