

The Dead Sea Scrolls

Intertestamental Period Seminar

Sheldon Greaves, Ph.D.

Lecture 1



Some Changes

- Would like to draw more on what we've studied in the seminar up to now
- Integrate the seminar with efforts to create an organization that promotes the idea of Scholars-in-Residence
- Produce some artifact that would assist others interested in the subject.

DISCOVERING THE OLD TESTAMENT

WITH SHELDON GREAVES, PH.D.



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What Are the Dead Sea Scrolls?

- Regarded as one of the major archaeological discoveries of the 20th Century
- Over 800 parchment manuscripts, mostly biblical texts
- Copies of multiple previously unknown works
- Discovered hidden in caves near the NW shore of the Dead Sea
- Written mostly in Hebrew, plus some Aramaic and a few Greek texts

Why Are They Important?

- The oldest Hebrew copies of the Old Testament books (except for Esther) yet discovered, predating previous manuscripts by over 1,000 years.
- New light on the Jewish Essene sect, up to now known mainly through a few scattered references in late classical historians
- A wealth of details about the religious and cultural background behind the emergence of Christianity.



Scholars will recall that several years ago a shepherd wandering in the Gulf of Aqaba stumbled upon a cave containing several large clay jars and two tickets to the ice show. Inside the jars were discovered six parchment scrolls with ancient, incomprehensible writing which the shepherd, in his ignorance, sold to the museum for \$750,000 apiece. Two years later the jars turned up in a pawnshop in Philadelphia. One year later the shepherd turned up in a pawnshop in Philadelphia and neither was claimed.

Archaeologists originally set the date of the scrolls at 4000 BE, or just after the massacre of the Israelites by their benefactors. The writing is a mixture of Sumerian, Aramaic, and Babylonian and seems to have been done by either one man over a long period of time, or by several men who shared the same suit. The authenticity of the scrolls is currently in great doubt, since the word "Oldsmobile" appears several times in the text... Still excavationist A. H. Bauer has noted that even though the fragments seem totally fraudulent, this is probably the greatest archaeological find in history with the exception of the recovery of his cuff links from a tomb in Jerusalem.

-- Woody Allen

Discoverers



The Bedouin Shepherds
Muhammed edh-Dhib (the
Wolf, left) Ahmad el-Hamid
and Jum'a Muhammed Khalil
who, together with Khalil
Musa, accidentally
discovered the first scrolls
close to the northwest shore
of the Dead Sea in a cave
near Khirbet Qumran.

Qumran Cave 1



Qumran Scroll Jars



- Specially made for storing scrolls
- Unique design; found only at Qumran

Kando: Bethlehem Dealer



- Khalil Esdander Shahin
- Cobbler by trade
- Arab Christian living in Bethlehem
- Obtained four of the original seven scrolls, plus the Temple Scroll and numerous other fragments.

Prof. Eliezer Lipa Sukenik



- Professor at Hebrew University
- One of the first non-Western experts to see the Scrolls up close
- Published some early editions of the Scrolls
- Father of Yigael Yadin

From Sukenik's Diary:

“My hands shook as I started to unwrap one of them. I read a few sentences. It was written in beautiful biblical Hebrew. The language was like that of the Psalms, but the text was unknown to me. I looked and looked, and I suddenly had the feeling that I was privileged by destiny to gaze upon a Hebrew Scroll which had not been read for more than 2,000 years.”

Yigael Yadin



- Archaeologist; also excavated Hazor, Meggido, Masada
- Responsible for obtaining all eight major Scrolls
- Future Deputy Prime Minister of Israel

Metropolitan Mar Athanasius Yeshue Samuel



- Leader of the local Syrian Orthodox Church
- Purchased four of the original seven scrolls from Kando
- Attempted to sell them in the US

John Trever's Photographs



- Director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem
- Took first photographic images of three of the scrolls

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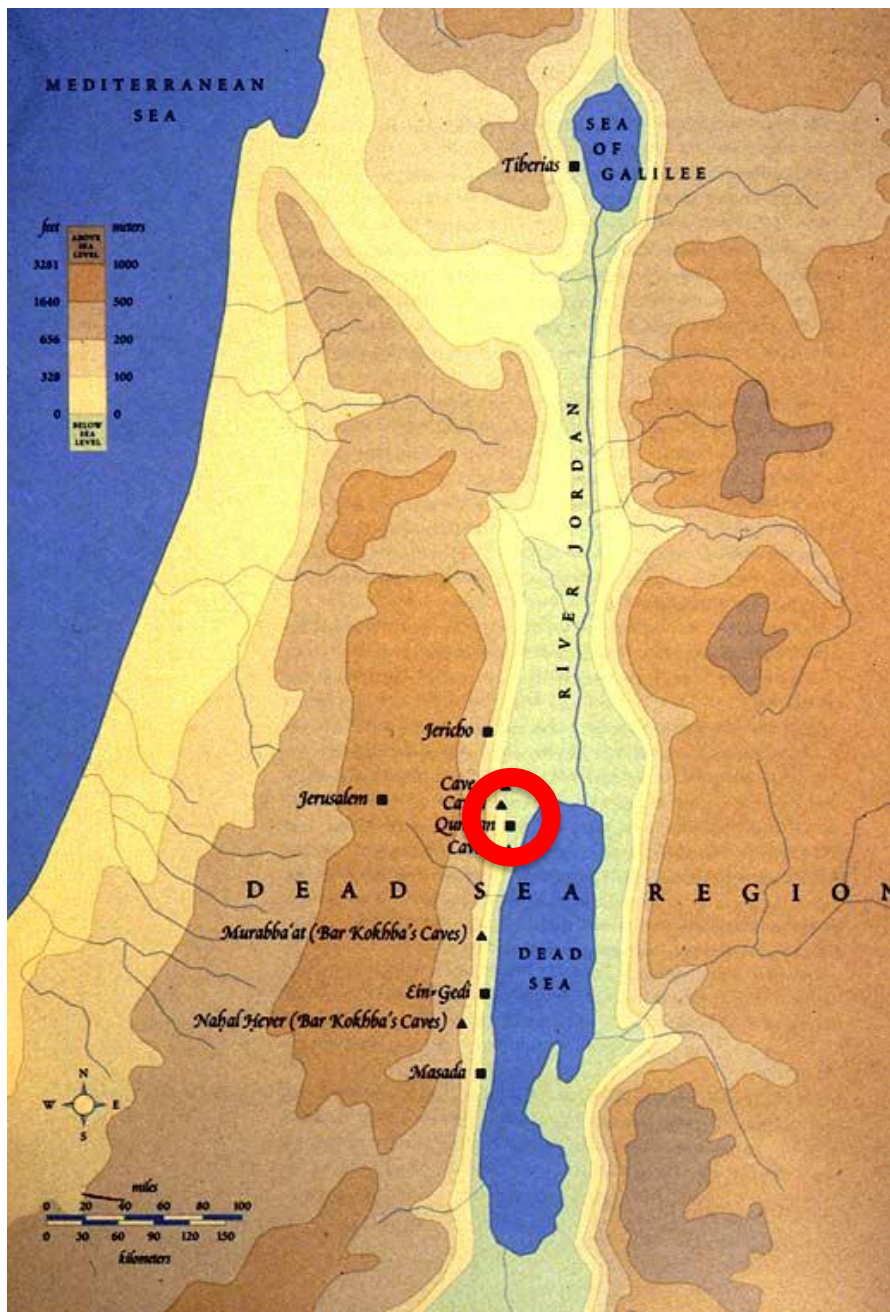
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Box F 206, The Wall Street Journal.



Khirbet Qumran

- Dead Sea: 400 meters below sea level
- Qumran about 1 km from NW shore
- Occupied territory (West Bank)
- Extremely arid

Roland De Vaux (1903-1971)



- Dominican Priest, Director of early Qumran excavations
- Assembled the first editorial teams
- Wrote extensively on what archaeology revealed about life in ancient Israel
- Also pictured: Gerald Harding, Director of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan

Shrine of the Book



- Constructed in 1965
- Permanent home of the original Dead Sea Scrolls
- Dome covers a structure 2/3 below ground
- Also home of the Aleppo Codex, one of the earliest Masoretic ms of the Old Testament

The Temple Scroll



- Discovered in Cave 11 in 1956 and acquired by Kando
- Thinnest parchment of Qumran scrolls: 0.1mm
- Dated to second half of the 2nd century BCE
- Fragments of two other copies found in Caves 11 and 4.

What We Think Of:



The Reality:





“Conservation”



In 1938, the National Science Foundation was established to provide leadership in funding scientific research and education.

חלפת הענין ולו
אחוז ועם נביא וכל
באנו אל הא
בנו תמותה לספר
באנו ליום שידבר
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Scholarly Team



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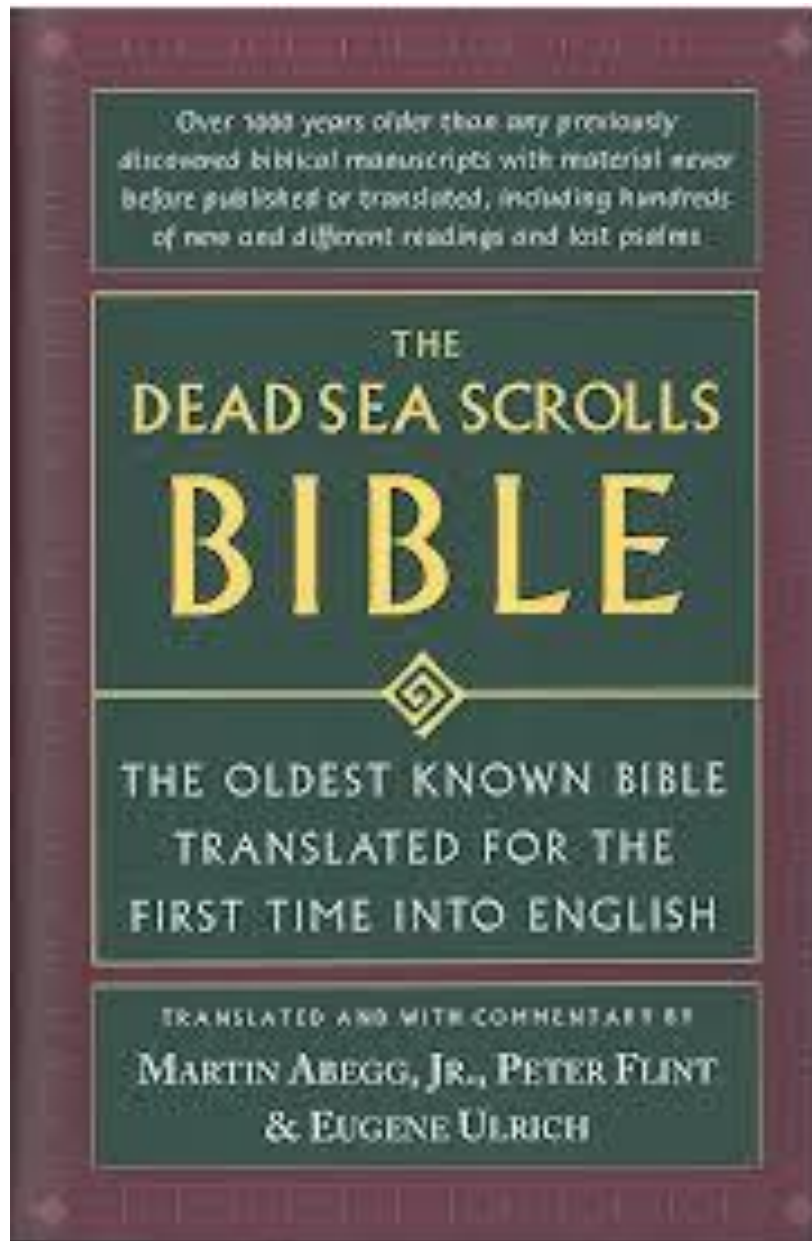


Emanuel Tov

Liberation: Wacholder and Abegg



In 1991 Wacholder and Abegg reconstructed several previously embargoed Scrolls using a computer program written by Abegg.



Abegg, et al,
*The Dead Sea
Scrolls Bible*

Liberation: Elizabeth Hay Bechtel



- Obtained a complete set of Scroll photographs
- No restrictions were attached to her set
- Donated to the library in 1986
- Released to the public in 1990

Who Wrote the Scrolls?



- Essenes
- Sadducees
- Zealots
- Temple Library
- Early Christians
- Aliens

Who Were the Essenes?

- One of several “philosophies” in late Judaism
- The only major Jewish sect not mentioned in the New Testament
- Possibly grew out of a dispute over control of the Temple
- Deeply apocalyptic; looking for the end time
- Main communities were in the desert, but also found in all major Jewish cities.
- Followed a “Teacher of Righteousness” and opposed an unnamed “Wicked Priest”

Pliny on the Essenes

“On the west side of the Dead Sea, but out of range of the noxious exhalations on the coast, is a solitary tribe of the Essenes, which is remarkable beyond all the other tribes in the whole world, as it has no women and has renounced all sexual desire, has no money, and has only palm trees for company. Day by day the throng of refugees is recruited to an equal number by numerous accessions of persons tired of life and driven thither by the ways of fortune to adopt their manners. Thus through thousands of ages—incredible to relate—a race in which no one is born lives on forever. So prolific for their advantages is other men’s weariness of life!”

Josephus on the Essenes

“The doctrine of the Essenes is this: That all things are best ascribed to God. They teach the immortality of souls, and esteem that the rewards of righteousness are to be earnestly striven for...”

Josephus, continued...

“...when they send what they have dedicated to God into the temple, they do not offer sacrifices because they have more pure lustrations of their own; on which account they are excluded from the common court of the temple, but offer their sacrifices themselves... “

Josephus, continued...

“Nor is there any one to be found among them who hath more than another; for it is a law among them, that those who come to them must let what they have be common to the whole order, - insomuch that among them all there is no appearance of poverty, or excess of riches, but every one's possessions are intermingled with every other's possessions; and so there is, as it were, one patrimony among all the brethren.”

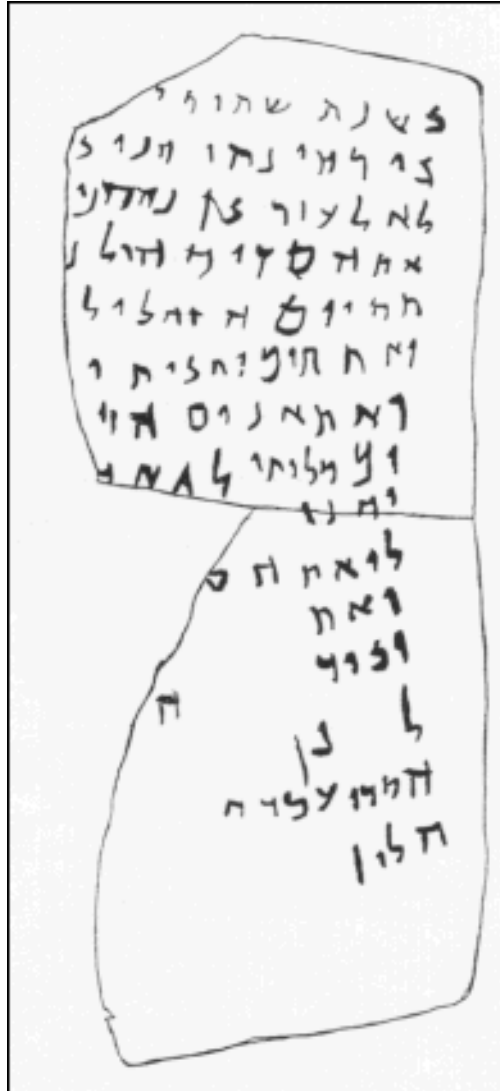
Josephus, continued...

“There are about four thousand men that live in this way, and neither marry wives, nor are desirous to keep servants; as thinking the latter tempts men to be unjust, and the former gives the handle to domestic quarrels; but as they live by themselves, they minister one to another.”

Josephus, continued...

“These Essenes reject pleasures as an evil, but esteem continence, and the conquest over our passions, to be virtue. They neglect wedlock, but choose out other persons children, while they are pliable, and fit for learning, and esteem them to be of their kindred, and form them according to their own manners.”

The Yahad Ostrakon



- Discovered in 1996 at Khirbet Qumran
- An agreement whereby one Ḥoni gave his slave Ḥisday, his home, fig and olive trees to Eleazar, the treasurer or bursar of the Qumran community
- Translated and published By F.M. Cross and E. Eshel