

ture rather than the prospect of blessings in this life”, puzzling. I would think that the first step in our conversion is a conviction of sin, of our unworthiness, and that living a righteous life should be the way we ought to live whether there is a reward or not. The psalmist speaks of the blessedness of those whose sins are forgiven and in whose spirit there is no guile (32:1,2). Surely this is the “life eternal [aiōnios zōē]” that Jesus speaks about in John 17:3.

This “life eternal” is thus not just about the future but about the here and now, it is the joy of knowing God and His Son, of knowing that we are not alone but are intimately associated with God’s plan of redemption. When we read Ephesians 1 and ponder each verse it is almost intoxicating in its impact. This is about the quality of life beyond mortality which we can experience in measure now if we have faith to grasp it. Even

now we can “sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6).

David Karst
Christchurch, New Zealand

I think Brother Karst may have misunderstood my use of the word ‘primarily’ in the passage quoted above from my article. I used it in the sense of most important rather than of first in time. Whilst we do have to first believe the gospel, repent and be forgiven our sins, these are not ends in themselves but rather the first steps towards immortality. Also, though what he says about the significance of ‘ever’ in Scripture has much to commend it, I think he overstates his case when he says that the original never carries the meaning of eternity. Vine in Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words says that aiōnios “describes duration, either undefined but not endless . . . or undefined because endless”.—T.B.



Prophecy, History and Archaeology

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The scrolls and the Book

3. The Dead Sea Scrolls

John Carder

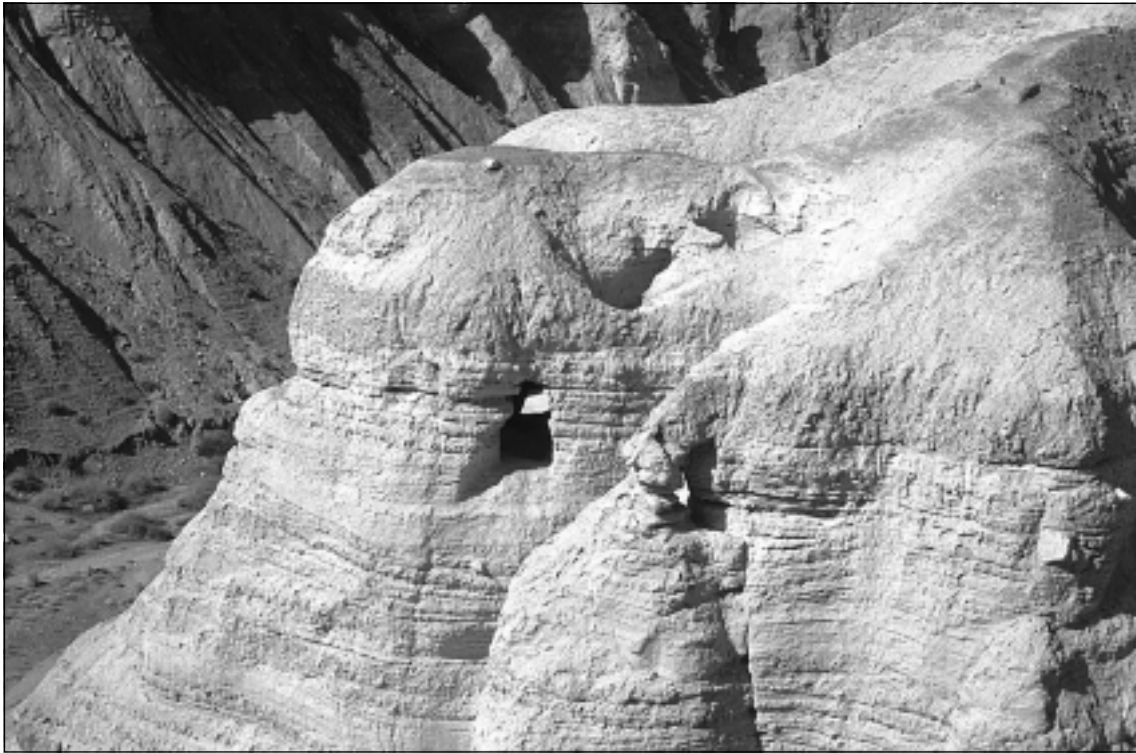
THE BEGINNING of the modern history of the Dead Sea Scrolls has often been told: how they were found in a cave near the Dead Sea supposedly by a Bedouin boy herding his flock. Their later involved and frustrating history is the subject of many, often confusing, books. We can discuss only a few important aspects here.

The first discoveries

The first scrolls, found in 1947 by the Bedouin, soon came into the hands of a Christian Arab dealer in Bethlehem, nicknamed Kando. As the barbed wire was being erected between Arab and Israeli-controlled areas of Jerusalem by the British army in the preliminary skirmishes of the 1948 War of Independence, an Israeli archaeologist, Dr. Eleazar Sukenik, managed to buy three scrolls from Kando, and was told there were more.

Those three scrolls, which were the basis for Israel’s collection for many years, were:

- **A scroll of Isaiah.** This was not the beautiful scroll, which was acquired later, but one in bad condition. Only the next to last sheet is whole. There are parts of thirty-eight chapters, enough to show that there are some differences in spelling and in the text from the later scroll. It may have been an unauthorised copy.
- **Thanksgiving hymns.** This consisted of part or whole of thirty-five hymns similar in general style to the Biblical psalms, but they are written as the expressions of one unnamed person. They all begin, “I thank thee O God”.
- **War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness.** This consists of five sheets containing nineteen columns, gathering together texts based on Biblical passages for a holy war by the Sons of Levi, Judah and Benjamin



Caves adjacent to the Qumran settlement. Here the first discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls were made.

on behalf of all Israel against Edom, Moab, the Philistines and Asshur.

The search for more

Soon after Dr. Sukenik's purchase, the Jericho district and the area of the scroll finds around the ruin of Qumran, near the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea, became part of the 'West Bank' under the control of Jordan. It remained out of bounds to Israelis until the Six-Day War in 1967.

Jordan's Director of Antiquities, an Englishman called Lancaster Harding, loosely controlled further work related to scrolls. However, the Bedouin tribesmen, realising that there was a market for these scraps of leather, did most of the work. Finally scrolls were found in eleven caves in the vicinity of Qumran. The caves are now numbered in the order in which they were found, by scholars who have identified the remains of about 870 scrolls. Cave 4, the one nearest to the Qumran ruin, had the most scrolls in an estimated total of 16,000 fragments.

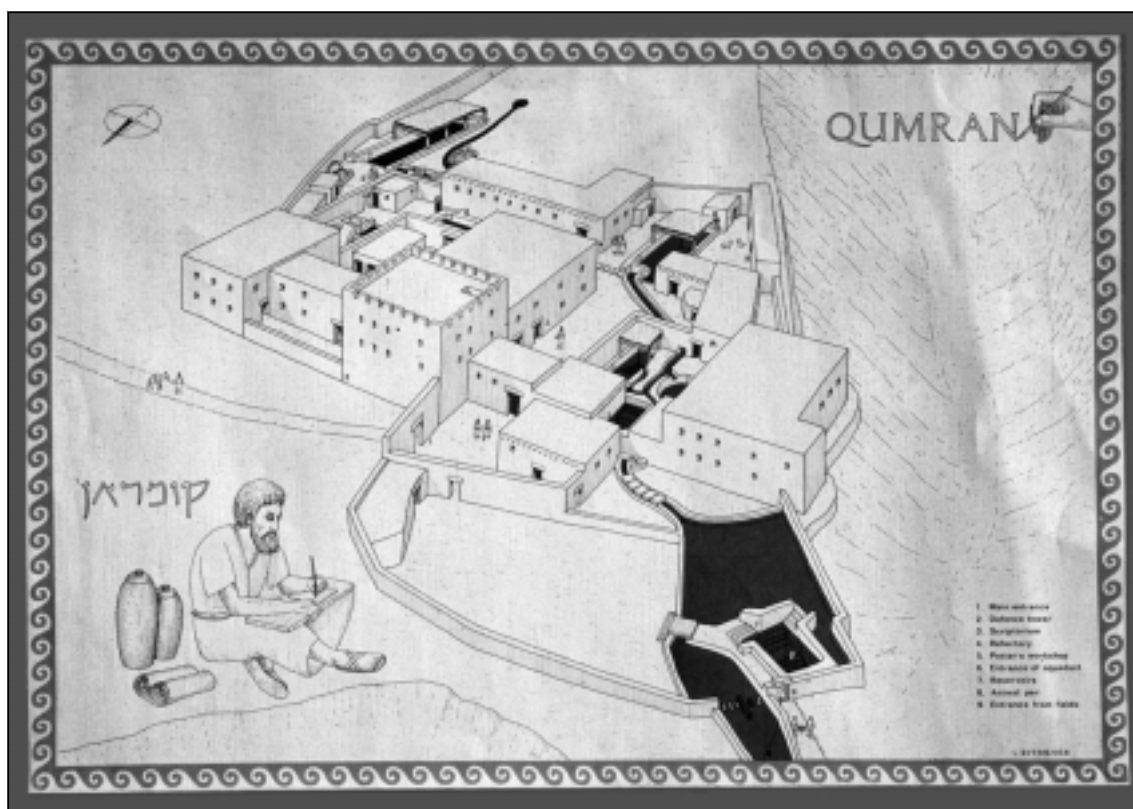
An international team was set up of eight young scholars under the authority of the Jordanian Government. Seven of the members were

Roman Catholics, mostly monks. The other one, John Allegro, an Englishman in spite of his name, was an atheist. That number was inadequate long before all the finds were in, though they did a fair job in the preliminary sorting of the fragments. The leader, Pere ('Father') Roland De Vaux, made it quite clear that no Israelis would be permitted to see any of the finds under the team's control. The team set up a large 'scrollery' in the Rockefeller Museum, opposite the northeast corner of the Old City of Jerusalem, a tantalising few hundred metres from Israeli-controlled territory.

The Israelis mounted a search of caves along the same line of cliffs in areas under their control, north of Ein Gedi. They made important finds from the Bar Kokhba revolt of A.D. 132-135, including messages from the leader, but no scrolls of the Qumran type. In the later great excavation of the fortress of Masada, Qumran-type scrolls were found.

Four scrolls

Although some 870 Dead Sea Scrolls have been identified, scholars now think that a thousand or



Archaeological drawing reconstructing the Qumran settlement. Used with the kind permission of Brother Leen Ritmeyer © Ritmeyer Archaeological Design.

more were found, and that many were sold by the Bedouin through Arab dealers and are now in private collections. One famous 'lot' of four scrolls came early into the hands of the Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of Jerusalem, Athanasius Samuel. For several years Samuel tried to sell the scrolls in the United States, but some scholars then questioned their authenticity and the legality of his removing them from their country of origin. Finally Samuel advertised them for sale in the *Wall Street Journal* newspaper, and the State of Israel bought the four scrolls through an agent for \$260,000. They joined the three bought earlier by Dr. Sukenik as the prize exhibits in the Shrine of the Book museum in Jerusalem, built in 1964 to house them and related finds.

The four scrolls purchased from Archbishop Samuel in New York in 1964 were:

- **The beautiful Isaiah scroll.** This contains all sixty-six chapters on seventeen leather sheets, with a few minor spelling differences from the later Massoretic (Biblical) text. It has two minor tears neatly mended in antiquity.
- **The Habakkuk Commentary.** This small scroll omits the prayer of chapter 3. It is in true 'Peshet' (commentary) style. The author of the scroll quotes a verse or two, or even only a phrase, from the Biblical prophet and adds after each quote his explanation of its 'hidden meaning' in terms of the concerns of his own time. For example, regarding part of our 1:16: "Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag"—this means the Kittim [Romans] who sacrifice to their standards and worship their weapons". His Biblical quotations provide a text 1,000 years older than any previously known copy of Habakkuk.
- **The Manual of Discipline.** This consists of eleven columns of text on five much-used sheets. It is unlikely to be complete. This title was given by the early investigators. The text gives rules for the conduct of the group or groups who were responsible for most of the scrolls; it is a kind of constitution. It gives much information, except that it only refers

to the group as 'Yachad' ('association'). This and related scrolls have given rise to doubts whether it refers to the sect of the Essenes as described by Josephus and others. Later scholars have used titles such as 'The Community Rule' or 'A Constitution for the Association'.

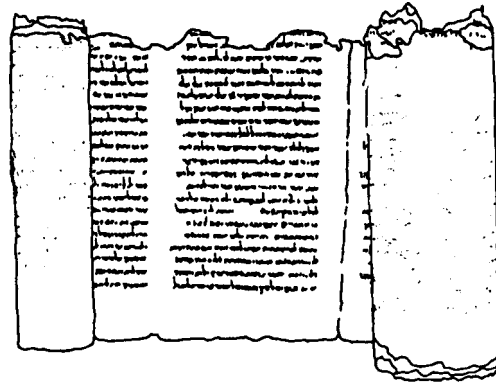
- **The Genesis Apocryphon.** This is a horrible title for a text that retells and amplifies, in Aramaic, the Biblical Genesis. For example, it describes Sarah's beauty, and amplifies the account of the intended sacrifice of Isaac. It was in the worst condition of the four scrolls, being fragile, badly deteriorated and stuck together. Archbishop Samuel refused to let anybody examine it until a price had been agreed for all four scrolls. Clearly he thought it would be impossible to unroll, but it was later opened after great effort.

An important figure in the acquisition of the four scrolls was Yigael Yadin, the son of Dr. Sukenik, the buyer of the first three scrolls. 'Yadin' was the son's code-name when he was chief of operations in Haganah (the Jewish defence force) before independence and then second head of the Israel Defence Force, and he retained it. After war service he followed in his father's footsteps and became Israel's foremost archaeologist. Yigael Yadin was involved in the hazardous recovery of the Bar Kokhbar relics and later led the Masada dig. For both he was able to call on his old wartime contacts to provide equipment and specialists.

The Temple Scroll

Immediately after the Six-Day War, when Israel regained control of the so-called West Bank, Yadin obtained the scroll which he later named 'The Temple Scroll', mentioned in [Part 1](#). The Bethlehem dealer Kando had been hiding it, illegally under both Jordanian and Israeli laws, in appalling conditions in a shoe-box under the floor of his house. Kando was not prosecuted, and was eventually paid a good price for a priceless scroll, though much less than his asking price.

The scroll includes a detailed description of a future temple, hence Yadin's name for it. This temple has a clear 'family resemblance' to the temples of Solomon and Herod, but differs significantly in detail. Yadin's subtitle, 'The Hidden Law of the Dead Sea Sect', relates to other extraordinary aspects of the scroll. The author has in effect written a new law to guide the true Israel, as he saw them, in the period before God's creation of a new heaven and a new earth. He



The so-called 'Temple scroll' recovered from a cave near the Dead Sea, partly opened to show a column of text and a join between two hides.

has many quotes from the Bible, especially from Deuteronomy, but omits the name of Moses and substitutes 'I' or 'Me'. This makes it seem a direct revelation from God to the author, thus implying that the scroll was a previously hidden writing from the hand of Moses. About a dozen other texts of this type, Moses apocryphas, have now been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, but none so long and elaborate. Some speculate that it was written by the anonymous person who once headed the group, the 'Teacher of Righteousness'.

Publishing the scrolls

Before outlining the sorry history of the 'international' official team, referred to above, perhaps we should note what is meant by 'publishing' in academic circles worldwide. There is a saying, 'Publish or perish'. Academic reputations in any field, scientific, literary or archaeological, depend on getting research results published in some learned journal or in a book. In the case of the scrolls that meant detailed descriptions, translations and theories, and explanations of the texts or fragments 'owned' by each scholar.

That was why each member held on jealously to 'his' fragments until they were safely published. Once published they had no use for the scrolls themselves. In fact it was more convenient to work from pictures of the scrolls than the actual fragments. Whole careers were spent in that way; it became a way of life. Well over half the number of the most important finds had not been seen by anyone outside 'the team' for forty years, until recently.

The attitude of the Israelis was quite different. They regarded the scrolls as national and international treasures. They published them quickly, first in Hebrew and then in other languages, and preserved both the scrolls and fragments. They put the main scrolls on public display in controlled-atmosphere cabinets, first in the university, and, after 1964, in the imaginatively designed 'Shrine of the Book' in Jerusalem.*

Pressure for publication

The Catholic anti-Israel 'official' team's reports, called *Discoveries in the Judean Desert* (abbreviated to DJD) covered a very small proportion of the total finds. In 1968 several texts from Cave 4, the main cave, were published—the first international sighting of them, twenty years after their discovery! Most of these had been prepared for publication before the Six-Day War of 1967. With the Rockefeller Museum now under nominal Israeli control, the official team still refused to cooperate with Israeli specialists but continued to publish a few minor texts from their own archives.

During the 1980s there were increasing international protests over the delays in publication of the bulk of the scrolls. John Strugnell, the American Catholic leader of the team after the death of De Vaux, was made to resign in 1990 after his denunciation of Judaism in general in the press. An Israeli was then appointed as overall editor. He recruited more scholars but maintained the team's monopoly. That monopoly was finally broken in a most curious way.

Change at last

The official team had compiled a concordance of all fragments in their control, which they also kept secret. Just before he resigned, Strugnell released copies of the concordance to several

academic libraries. The concordance listed all decipherable scroll words together with one or two of the words on either side of each listed word.

A graduate student at Hebrew Union College in the USA, Martin Abegg, and his academic supervisor, Ben Zion Wacholder, used a personal computer for the mind-numbing task of reconstructing all the texts from the concordance. They released Volume I of their reconstruction of the scroll texts in September 1991. In the same month, the Director of the Huntington Library in South California announced that his library had photographs of all unreleased scroll material and that specialists would be allowed full access to them. A new era had begun.

Martin Abegg, with two colleagues, Michael Wise and Edward Cook, published their book with their reconstructed texts and commentary in 1996, emphasising that many of its texts had only been seen before by the official team. It is a book suitable for interested and fairly knowledgeable non-specialists. It shows 131 texts, some reconstructed from several part-copies, and includes all the non-Biblical scrolls mentioned in these notes. Their book does not include any Biblical texts as such, apart from the two chapters of Habakkuk embedded in the commentary on the prophet's words, and fragments in other commentaries.

[\(To be continued\)](#)

* According to the magazine *Biblical Archaeology Review* (Nov./Dec. 2000, p. 74), the Isaiah Scroll has been replaced by a replica because it was developing cracks, due to being wound round a drum the opposite way to the way it had been rolled for millennia. This information was provided to the editor, Hershel Shanks, by the new curator, Adolfo Roitman.—T.B.

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