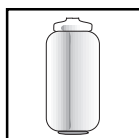


wound onto five separate chromosome structures. It is believed that the code comprises more than 25,000 genes, the templates which the cells use to make proteins. It has taken more than four years of intensive study, costing nearly \$70 million, by laboratories around the world to complete the work. Already it has been noticed that many of its genes are dedicated to maintaining the stability of the genome so that it remains unaffected by widely varying climatic conditions. This is further evidence that plants are in fact programmed to resist evolution.⁶ That such a humble plant should possess such intricate patterns within its cells emphasises again the amazing complexity of all living things and the "finger of God" in their design (Ex. 8:19; Lk. 11:20).

The research will now move into the area of seeking to understand the functions of these

genes, with the object of improving the yields and disease resistance of food crops like soya bean and maize. In fact some scientists have suggested that understanding the plant genome is more important than understanding the human genome, which was also recently decoded, since far more people die from malnutrition than from genetic diseases. Unfortunately much of this work is likely to be performed by multinational corporations seeking more to maximise their profits than to benefit mankind. We look to the time when, through the righteous rule of the Son of God, "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon" (Ps. 72:16).

6. *Creation and Evolution*, Alan Hayward, third edition, 1994, pp. 29,30.



Prophecy, History and Archaeology

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The scrolls and the Book

4. Aspects of the Dead Sea finds

John Carder

THE SERIES of publications entitled *Discoveries in the Judean Desert* (abbreviated to DJD) was made up of the more 'official' releases from the original Catholic-led team of scholars studying the Dead Sea Scrolls (see [previous article](#)). There were also individual reports published in specialist journals. John Allegro, the atheist Englishman, published early and is still the only member of the official team to have published all the material entrusted to him, including the unique 'Copper Scroll'. He soon ran foul of the Catholic members, being publicly criticised, and in turn was the first to accuse the team of deliberately delaying the release of the finds and perhaps suppressing scrolls.

The Copper Scroll

The Copper Scroll was a list of treasures hidden in various places around Jerusalem. The list is scratched, as its name suggests, on a sheet of copper. One of the monks in the team of schol-

ars, Josef Milik, was put on to supervise Allegro, and by trickery put his own report out first, saying that the listed treasures were purely imaginary. The scroll was found in Cave 3 in 1952, and Milik's report was in DJD 3, published in 1962.

Allegro's view, which is now more widely accepted, is that the list is indeed of the temple treasures hidden shortly before A.D. 70. Recent commentators point out that the Romans had teams searching for public and private treasures in other conquered lands (as did the Nazis in World War 2). They suspect that the searchers were largely successful in Israel also. In any case, the Copper Scroll described the hiding places so discreetly that, though they may have been more obvious at the time of listing, they are not known now.

Later, Allegro wrote a book claiming that Christianity and other religions were based on hallucinations derived from use of 'magic' mush-

rooms. His main opponent, Milik, later renounced the priesthood and went into seclusion in Paris, taking his share of the scrolls with him. Perhaps such scandalous events reinforced the Catholic team's determination to stick to its basic line that all the scrolls were the products of an obscure Jewish sect living in a monastery at Qumran and having no connection with or influence on main-line Judaism, and certainly not on Christianity. Their line was that the Copper Scroll must be a fiction from some centuries earlier.

The importance of the scrolls

Increasingly, the view of non-Catholic commentators is veering to what is probably the majority Jewish view: that the scrolls are important on two counts. One is that the Qumran copies of Hebrew Scriptures, over 200 of them, are about a thousand years older than the oldest copies previously known, and are important for showing the integrity of the transmission of the Biblical books.

The second is that, although the non-Biblical scrolls fall into the class known generally as Apocryphal writings, not accepted as Scripture by Jews or by most non-Catholics, they do widen our knowledge of the ideas that were debated, accepted or rejected in the centuries immediately before and after the ministry of Jesus. Some of the words and phrases used by Paul and the other apostles are echoed in some scrolls.

The supposed originals of some apocryphal books have long been known, but only in Greek and other languages preserved by various churches. This category includes the *Book of Jubilees* and *1 Enoch* in Ethiopic, and the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* and *Tobit* in Greek. It was always suspected that they had Hebrew or Aramaic origins, and these have appeared among the Dead Sea Scrolls. It has been hoped that a Hebrew or Aramaic original of the Gospel of Matthew would appear, but no such text has yet been found.

The calendar

On the question of a calendar, the scrolls did not influence mainstream Judaism, which still uses a lunar calendar. Many scrolls describe or assume a solar year of 364 days divided into four equal quarters. Each quarter had ninety-one days, divided into thirteen weeks, and into three months, two of thirty days and the other of thirty-one. The year began in spring, and New Year's Day,

day one of Tishri, as it is in the present lunar calendar, was always to fall on a Wednesday. That was because God made the sun, moon and stars on the fourth day of Creation week.

The twenty-four courses of priests named in 1 Chronicles 24:7-18 served in rotation in the temple for a week at a time. In the fifty-two weeks of a year each course would serve twice, and four courses would serve a third time. Only after six years would each course have served an equal number of weeks. Some scrolls stress the importance of that six-year cycle. A cycle of forty-nine years, that is, a Jubilee, was also important, and one scroll mentions a 294-year cycle of six Jubilees.

Other finds

Previous to the Qumran discoveries, the earliest known copies of the Hebrew Scriptures were a book of the prophets called the Ben Ashur Codex, dated A.D. 895 and found in a synagogue in Cairo, and a whole copy of the Hebrew Bible dated A.D. 929, which was held in a Sephardi synagogue in Aleppo, Syria. The finding of a whole library of scrolls near Qumran made a context for some earlier reports of Biblical and non-Biblical texts which had seemed isolated finds, mere curiosities that had been viewed as of no great importance. The details are as follows:

- Origen, a Christian Bible scholar (A.D. 185-254) who worked in the Land, reported that he had found a translation of the Psalms "with other Hebrew and Greek books in a jar near Jericho";
- In the late A.D. 700s the Patriarch of Seleucia wrote of "books of the Old Testament and others in the Hebrew script found in a rock dwelling near Jericho". They were found by an Arab out hunting who followed his dog into a cave—very similar circumstances to the story of the finds in 1947;
- In the 800s a Karaite commentator (a member of a non-Orthodox Jewish sect) wrote of another sect, which he called 'the Sect of the Cave' because their books were found in a cave. He also noted that the sect had a calendar of its own and composed books interpreting the Bible;
- In 1896-7 a Jewish scholar, Solomon Schechter, found two incomplete medieval copies of the most revealing Qumran text now variously called 'the Manual of Discipline' or 'the Damascus Rule'. He found them in an ancient

synagogue in Cairo, in its *genizah*, the burial place for worn-out religious items, which were not allowed to be destroyed. He took them to Cambridge University and published them in 1910 under the title *Fragments of a Zadokite Work*, which he so named because of its frequent mentions of priests of the line of Zadok. Against opposition at that time, Schechter argued that the originals of the copies he had found were probably composed in the era before Herod.

The mention by Origen of a jar which contained his finds leads back to the oldest clue of all, in Jeremiah 32:14, in the account of Jeremiah being told to buy a field in Anathoth. He was told to put the scroll of the deeds "in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days". The Qumran scrolls were also found in and with jars of a type not known to have been used elsewhere or for any other purpose. The roof of the central part of the Shrine of the Book in Jerusalem, directly over the Isaiah scroll, has been designed to support the lid for such a jar.

The finding of a whole library of Qumran scrolls has made it easier to make sense of quite short fragments if they contain key words related to other scrolls. The book by Wise, Abegg and Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls—A New Translation*, includes some quite short but important fragments.

Their book is not the first to offer a translation of the various texts into English for the general public. A very good earlier one was *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* by G. Vermes, first published as a Pelican Original in 1962. Geza Vermes, a gentle old Hungarian-Jewish scholar who lectured at Oxford University, was moved to write that the delays in publication by the Catholic official team were "the academic scandal of the century". His second, and enlarged, Pelican edition of 1976 gave English translations of some thirty texts (compared with 131 by Wise, Abegg and Cook), including a preliminary summary of the 'Temple Scroll' from Yigael Yadin's Hebrew report.

The present position

The present position in regard to the Dead Sea Scrolls is that over 200 copies or parts of Biblical texts have been found. All the Hebrew Scriptures are represented except the Book of Esther. Several hundred non-Biblical texts have been found, all of them religious in a fairly broad sense. No texts have been found, for example, on agriculture or the crafts and trade.

The non-Biblical texts include works well-known for a very long time, at least to scholars. Some of the Apocryphal works had previously been known in languages such as Coptic, Armenian and Greek, but now it has been shown that they had Hebrew or Aramaic originals. Those originals disappeared when they were not accepted by the Jews as inspired, but their contents were maintained by Christians in translation.

Some non-Biblical texts, including those disclosed for the first time in the 1990s, were entirely new even to scholars. These included: psalms attributed to David and Joshua; some 'prophecies' attributed to Daniel, Jeremiah and Ezekiel; the 'last words' attributed to Joseph, Judah, Levi, Naphtali and the father of Moses; and the second coming of Melchizedek in a Jubilee year related to the Qumran calendar. Finally, there is a very varied group of texts related to horoscopes and to angels, some in code.

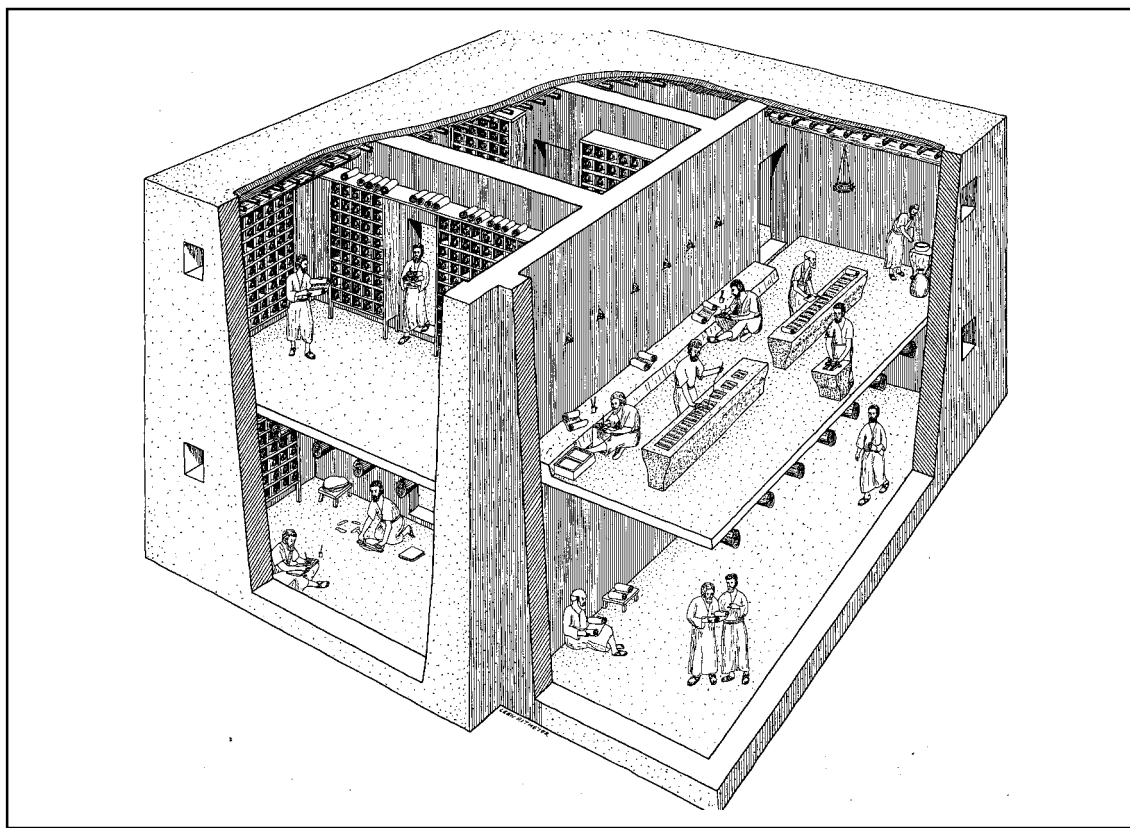
Dating

Most of the scrolls appear to be copies made after 100 B.C., though some scrolls appear to be earlier. Dating the copies does not automatically give a date for the original documents, except of course that the original must be earlier than the copy.

As noted previously, many of the scrolls refer to members of the group or their opponents only by titles such as 'The Teacher of Righteousness', 'The Instructor', 'The Wicked Priest', 'The Liar', and so on. It is tantalisingly unclear whether they are all separate persons, or whether some are alternative names for one person.

However, five historical persons of the century before the birth of Jesus receive brief incidental mentions in the 'Nahum Commentary' and in the fragments of two calendar scrolls released only in the 1990s. They are three rulers of Israel who were of the Maccabean dynasty, a king of Syria, and Scourus, a Roman general on the staff of Pompey and responsible for the capture of Jerusalem in 63 B.C. that led to the annexation of the Land to the Roman Empire.

The three Maccabean rulers of Israel are mentioned in the scrolls by their Hebrew names: Shelamzion for Salome, and 'King Jonathan' (or Yehonatan or Yannai) apparently for her husband Alexander Jannaeus (his more-familiar Greek name). For over a century before the Roman conquest the Land had been in turmoil, due especially to the conflict between the Sadducees and the Pharisees, who were then growing in



Archaeological reconstruction drawing of the scriptorium at Qumran. Reproduced by kind permission of Brother Leen Ritmeyer © Ritmeyer Archaeological Design.

power. Jannaeus was an oppressor of the Pharisees, while his widow favoured them and became completely dominated by them.

There seems to be some favourable mention of 'King Jonathan', but the authors of most scrolls show that they were strictly opposed to the Jerusalem temple hierarchy, which, during Jesus's earthly ministry, was dominated by the Sadducees. The sect of the scrolls withdrew from the Jerusalem temple and its priests, and their calendar, and moved to 'Damascus', hence their foundation document 'the Damascus Rule', of which many copies have been found.

In 2 Corinthians 11:32,33 Paul says: "In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands". The city was thus under the rule of the Nabataean king Aretas, whose capital was at Petra, when Paul (then Saul) set out for Damascus to arrest the believers, as recorded in Acts 9.

This account raises an interesting sidelight. The Jerusalem high priest's power was such that he could have sent Saul/Paul to the Syrian Damascus to arrest the followers of Jesus. Some recent commentators have asked whether it was really the city of Damascus in Syria, ruled by non-Jews who were then, as even today, enemies of Israel. Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 11 are quite definite. But in the Dead Sea Scrolls it is possible that the sectarians were using 'Damascus' as a codeword for wherever their members were dispersed—equivalent to the Greek term 'Diaspora'.

The Qumran ruin

In the 1950s De Vaux excavated the Qumran ruin near the caves in which the scrolls were found, but, although there were some preliminary reports, he never wrote a final review of his findings. The interim reports established the theory that Qumran was a monastery-like establishment with a scriptorium in which the scrolls found hidden nearby were copied. In recent years

non-Catholic scholars have challenged just about every aspect of the official team's views. Some have suggested that the 'scriptorium' was a dining hall of what was a 'retreat' or training school for the sectarians, but there is no widespread agreement.

Critics have even doubted whether a prominent crack in a staircase in the Qumran ruin was caused by an earthquake, as De Vaux said, or happened in the final destruction of the buildings in unknown circumstances. The earthquake theory was part of the official team's dating of the history of the site based on circumstantial evidence.

Dating by coins

One substantial line of evidence that De Vaux turned up, which did not altogether support his theory, was the hoard of hundreds of coins found in and around the ruin. Three pots containing a total of 561 silver coins were found under a doorway. They included mostly shekels and half-shekels minted in Tyre, of types which were ac-

ceptable in Jesus's day in payment of the temple tax and for voluntary gifts. That coins from such a source were approved for such purposes seems incredible, and provides an extra example of the reasons that led Jesus to say about the denarius ('penny' in the AV), the Roman coin also in common use in his day, "render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's" (Mt. 22:21).

The finds also included silver coins ranging in type and date from four-drachma coins of the Seleucid kings of Syria Antiochus VII and Demetrius II (136-126 B.C.), to some Roman Republican coins from the 50s B.C. The coins in the pots seem to be too early to be hastily buried at the same time as the scrolls were placed in the caves, presumably in A.D. 70. Many bronze coins were found scattered around the ruin, mostly dated to two periods, 103-76 B.C. and A.D. 6-67, with a few as late as A.D. 136.

Finally on the scrolls, the first to be found in modern times came to light more than fifty years ago, but there are still many puzzles to be solved.

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

What is kabbalism?

Tony Benson

ANYONE WHO has investigated Judaism today will have come across references to kabbalism. What is kabbalism? It comes from the word *kabbalah*, meaning 'that which has been received', and it refers to a form of Jewish mysticism which developed at the end of the Middle Ages and has become popular today. The meaning of the word indicates what kabbalism is all about—a claim to additional knowledge over and above that which is revealed in the Bible.

The central text of kabbalism is the Zohar, a work originating from thirteenth-century Spain, where kabbalism originally developed. It is a book supposedly giving an account of the wanderings of a rabbi, Shimon bar Yohai, and his disciples, in the second century A.D. After the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, Jewish kabbalists settled in Safed, in the hills west of the Sea of Galilee. Here a young Jew from Egypt, Yitzhak (Isaac) Lurie, taught an elaborate system of kabbalah to a group of disciples, who then spread his teachings throughout the Jewish world.

Kabbalism was particularly taken up by Jews in Eastern Europe, especially by the hasidic movement, the origin of the black-garbed Jews familiar to all who visit Jerusalem. It is today prominent in Israel and growing in popularity, not just amongst the hasidim. Elsewhere in the world, especially in the USA, it has also become more popular; prominent people in the entertainment industry, such as the pop singer Madonna and the film actress Elizabeth Taylor, are reportedly into it. It is popular amongst both extreme right-wing Jews and liberal thinkers.

But what is it all about? It is difficult to say, for the whole point of kabbalism, as with other forms of mysticism, is that it claims to provide initiates, after study, with an inner light. Indeed, much of kabbalistic teaching seems to centre round 'divine light' entering the 'soul' or 'inner being'. Initiates claim to have 'experiences' not unlike those claimed within Christendom as resulting from the supposed influx of the 'Holy Ghost'. Kabbalism claims to be able to put people into a state of direct communication with