

QUMRAN



THE QUMRAN LIBRARY SCROLLS



Library of Congress
December 8, 2004

These scroll fragments were displayed in the exhibit at the Library of Congress, May - August 1993. The exhibit captions and translations (below) provide background on the fragments and their relationships with the other Dead Sea Scrolls, the Qumran Community, and its Library.



The Enoch Scroll

One of the most important Apocryphical works of the Second Temple Period is Enoch. According to the biblical narrative (Genesis 5:21-24), Enoch lived only 365 years (far less than the other patriarchs in the period before the Flood). Enoch "walked with God; then he was no more for God took him." The original language of most of this work was, in all likelihood, Aramaic (an early Semitic language). Although the original version was lost in antiquity, portions of a Greek translation were discovered in Egypt and quotations were known from the Church Fathers. The discovery of the texts from Qumran Cave 4 has finally provided parts of the Aramaic original. In the fragment exhibited here, humankind is called on to observe how unchanging nature follows God's will.

Reference: Milik, J. T. *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* Oxford, 1976.



The Hosea Commentary Scroll

This text is a commentary, or "pesher" (interpretation) on the prophetic biblical verses from the book of Hosea (2:8-14). In the commentary, the unfaithful ones have been led astray by "the man of the lie." The document states that the affliction befalling those led astray is famine. Although this famine could be a metaphor, it may well be a reference to an actual drought cited in historical sources of that time. The manuscript shown here is the larger of two unrelated fragments of the Hosea Commentary found in Cave 4. The script, which is identical to that of a commentary on Psalms, belongs to the rustic, semiformal type of the Herodian era.

References: Allegro, J. M. *Qumran Cave 4: I (4Q158-4Q186)*. Discovered in the Judean desert, V. Oxford, 1968. Horgan, M. *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books*. Washington, 1979.



The Prayer For King Jonathan Scroll

The King Jonathan mentioned in this text can be none other than Alexander Jannaeus, a monarch of the Hasmonean dynasty who ruled Judea from 103 to 76 B.C.E. The discovery of a prayer for the welfare of a Hasmonean king among the Qumran texts is unexpected because the community may have vehemently opposed the Hasmoneans. They even may have settled in the remote desert to avoid contact with the Hasmonean authorities and priesthood. If this is indeed a composition that clashes with Qumran views, it is a single occurrence among 600 non-biblical manuscripts. However, scholars are exploring the possibility that Jonathan-Jannaeus, unlike the other Hasmonean rulers, was favored by the Dead Sea community, at least during certain periods, and may explain the prayer's inclusion in the Dead Sea materials.

This text is unique in that it can be clearly dated to the rule of King Jonathan. Three columns of script are preserved, one on the top and two below. The upper column (A) and the lower left (C) column are incomplete. The leather is torn along the lower third of the right margin. A tab of suntanned leather, 2.9 by 2.9 cm, folds over the right edge above the tear. A leather thong remains of which were found threaded through the middle of the leather tab, on the right edge, probably tied the rolled-up scroll. The form of the tab--probably part of a fastening--seems to indicate that the extant text was at the beginning of the scroll, which was originally longer. Differences between the script of Column A and that of B and C could indicate that this manuscript is not the work of a single scribe.

This small manuscript contains two distinct parts. The first, column A, presents fragments of a psalm of praise to God. The second, columns B and C, bear a prayer for the welfare of King Jonathan and his kingdom. In column A lines 8-10 are similar to a verse in Psalm 154, preserved in the Psalms Scroll (11QPsa) exhibited here. This hymn, which was not included in the biblical Book of Psalms, is familiar, however, from the tenth-century Syriac Psalter.

Reference: Eshel, E., H. Eshel, and A. Yardeni. "A Qumran Scroll Containing Part of Psalm 154 and a Prayer for the Welfare of King Jonathan and His Kingdom,"



The Leviticus Scroll

This scroll was discovered in 1956, when a group of Ta`amireh Bedouin happened on Cave 11, but it was first unrolled fourteen years later, at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. Inscribed in the scroll are parts of the final chapters (22-27) of Leviticus, the third book in the Pentateuch, which expounds laws of sacrifice, atonement, and holiness. This is the lowermost portion (approximately one-fifth of the original height) of the final six columns of the original manuscript. Eighteen small fragments also belong to this scroll. The additional fragments of this manuscript are from preceding chapters: Lev. 4, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18-22.

The Leviticus Scroll was written in an ancient Hebrew script often referred to as Paleo-Hebrew (identical to the Phoenician alphabet). The almost uniform direction of the down strokes, sloping to the left, indicates an experienced, rapid, and rhythmic hand of a single scribe. The text was penned on the grain side of a sheep skin. Both vertical and horizontal lines were drawn. The vertical lines aligned the columns and margins; the horizontal lines served as guidelines from which the scribe suspended his letters.

Reference: Freedman, D. N., and K. A. Mathews. *The Paleo-Hebrew Leviticus Scroll*. Winona Lake, Indiana, 1985.



The Sabbath Sacrifice Scroll

The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, also known as the "Angelic Liturgy," is a liturgical work composed of thirteen separate sections, one for each of the first thirteen Sabbaths of the year. The songs evoke angelic praise and elaborate on angelic priesthood, the heavenly temple, and the Sabbath worship in that temple. The headings of the various songs may reflect the solar calendar. Although the songs bear no explicit indication of their source, the phraseology and terminology of the texts are very similar to those of other Qumran works. Eight manuscripts of this work were found in Qumran Cave 4 (4Q400 through 407) and one in Cave 11, dating from the late Hasmonean and Herodian periods. One manuscript of the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice was found at Masada, a Zealot fortress.

References: Newsom, C. *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition* Atlanta, 1985.

Strugnell, J. "The Angelic Liturgy at Qumran 4Q Serek Sirot `Olat Hassabbat." In *Congress Volume*, Oxford 1959, Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum*, vol. 7, pp. 318-45 Leiden, 1960.