

THE SECRETS OF THE CAVES: DISCOVERIES AND CONTROVERSIES

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790 AD

Once a hunter was in the Dead Sea region. His dog went in a cave and came out with the dog and some scrolls.

This is perhaps the first discovery of the DSS

Occurred in 790 AD

A Syriac Bishop who wrote to someone about these scrolls. He saw they included texts from the Bible. "This matter is a fire in my heart the burns intensely"

The text fell into the hands of a newer Jewish sect called the Karahites.

They knew of a sect from the 1st century AD that stored texts in caves in the Dead Sea Region.

1897 AD

Prof Solomon Shepter, A Prof. at Cambridge University at the time

Heard there were scrolls in a Karahite repository Temple in Ciro Egypt.

He went there and among the thousands of fragments he shipped back with him, there was one fragment that fascinated him

He published it in 1910 calling it "Fragments of a Zadocite work."

This is the first modern discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls where it sat in this Karahite temple for over 400 years.

1946 – 1947 Winter

Shepherds,

Juma Mohamed with Cousin Mohamed Abid.

They were shepherding their flock in this region

Juma was chasing sheep.

Had a dream that he would find buried treasure in this region

He threw a rock in a cave and found the scrolls.

It was too late in the day to explore. They returned to the area a few days later.

Mohamed Adib went back earlier. They found jars, some filled with dirt others filled with scrolls.

Brought the docs back to their camp ground and hung in a bag on a pole for a few months.

They brought the scrolls to some antiquity dealers in Bethlehem. The dealer felt they were stolen from a synagogue.

They sold some scrolls from cave 1 in two lots.

1947 June in Bethlehem (3-4 documents for \$28)

Brought them a second lot for \$97 and the Bedouins took a portion.

The story of the two lots of scrolls is more bizarre than fiction could be.

Lot 1 Hebrew union prof. Eliazar Suchanic

He was the first to see the scrolls and recognize what they were.

An Armenian friend of his connected to the dealer who acquired the scrolls called him to authenticate it.

A time of the British mandate with war between Arabs, Brits and Jews. The British quarters off sections of Bethlehem with barb wire. The two men met at a fence and passed the scrolls between them for viewing. Eliazar focused on the scrolls and immediately knew what he was dealing with.

The oldest scrolls he had ever seen. Worked on old inscriptions so he knew his writing.

Made arrangements to go to Bethlehem to handle the scrolls himself. That night the UN was voting to divide Palestine into a Jewish and Arab State. The vote was delayed and Eliazar went to look at the scrolls.

Sat. Nov 29th 1948

From Eliazar's Journal:

"The dealer brought out two jars in which the bundles had been found; he offered them for our inspection. Their shape was unfamiliar to me. He then produced the two leather scrolls. My hand shook as I started to unwrap them. I read two lines of them. They were 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 that had not been read for more than two thousand years."

The dealer allowed Eliazar to take some scrolls home. That night the UN Was voting on the establishment of a Jewish state. His son kept running in to give him updates on the progress of the UN Vote while he spent the night studying the scrolls.

He purchased the first batch of scrolls for \$324

Lot 2 From Cave 1

Cando, a dealer in Bethlehem.

Upon the advice of his friend he brought the scrolls to a Syrian Priest his title "Metropolitan"

He showed them to some scholars and they felt they were stolen or not real.

He then brought them to Eliazar Sucanic and offered to buy them for \$2,000

But the Metropolitan suspected they may be worth more.

They met to negotiate the price further but he never showed up.

He took the scrolls to scholars at the Oriental Research Center in Israel of America begun by John Albright. A young man was there the day he showed up, his name was John Trevor.

John Trevor is the second person to see the material and recognize them for what they were.

He asked if the material could be left with him and studied them.

His Diary:

"Sleep was almost impossible that night. Numerous questions flooded my mind, how long was the large scroll. How much of Isaiah was there? Could it be authentic? Those few evidences of the correctors hand on the last twelve columns seemed a certain argument for authenticity. But how could such a perfect manuscript be as old as Nash Papyrus. Out of sheer exhaustion I fell asleep still arguing with myself"

The fortunate thing with Trevor was that he was not only a great scholar but also a great photographer. He had an armature photo lab in the basement. He took pictures in the Asor building. HE photographed the scrolls in Lot 2 and are still the best photographs of these.

Trevor sent some of his photos to **William Albright**. Albright replied in a telegram on March 15 1948

"My hardest congratulations on the greatest manuscript discovery of modern times. I should prefer a date around 100 BC. What an absolute incredible find. And there can happily not be the slightest doubt in the world of the genuineness of the manuscript."

Now the metropolitan had dollar signs flashing before his eyes.

Eliazar Suchanic went public

William Albrights man Trevor went public

The Metropolitan brought them to USA. They went on a lecture tour. The problem was no one offered money for them. Some said the metropolitan was asking 1 million.

There was Legality issues of ownership.

Jordan was claiming a national claim to the scrolls.

Israel claimed they owned the scrolls

The Metropolitan claimed to own them

Trevor already published his pictures.

All of these claims scared away buyers.

The Metropolitan puts an ad in the Wall Street Journal in 1954

"The Four Dead Sea Scrolls: Biblical Manuscripts dating back to at least 200 BC are for sale. This would be an ideal gift to an educational or religious institution by an individual or group. Box F 206, the Wall Street Journal."

BY another amazing twist of Fate the Son of Eliazar Suchanic, Yigal Yadin, a general of Israel army and Avid archeologist, he inherited from his father. Already written a commentary on the scrolls his father had. Was in USA lecturing in John Hopkins University. Asked Albright Why is no one buying them? Albright said, legal issues, no one has the money. Etc. Yadin's heart burned and wished he could find a way to obtain the scrolls.

Yadin Yadin Seeks to get the scrolls:

Receives a call from a reporter "Have you read the Wall street journal" .. Yadin said "No, I don't have stock". He said get it and look on page ... and call me back.

Yadin saw the article. Got a team of medium people representing him for the scrolls? July 1 1954 purchased these scrolls from the metropolitan for \$250K

More Scrolls

In 1949 Some UN Military people found where cave 1 was. And dug a bit. Found a few fragments.

More Bedouins returned in 1952 and found more scrolls and they began appearing on the market in Israel

Roland Devoux, the official archeologist overseeing the excavation at Qumran tracked down the Bedouins who found these scrolls. The scrolls were different from the ones found in Qumran, but old.

Roland said "I don't believe they are authentic"

Devoux was very clever. They said "Oh no, the cave is real and the place we found them exists. If you were to see you would know these scrolls are authentic. Devoux, being a witty man took advantage of the opportunity and said "Very well, I accept your invitation to see the cave". He didn't stop there but said they should have the Israel antiquity director come since rogue digs are illegal. He also said we should have the police escort come too.

Went to Wadi Murabba'at. Devoux conducted some excavations there and Nahal Hever, a little lower took place by Yigal Yadin where he found scrolls from 132-135 AD and were actual letters from the Bar Koptva revolt.

This legendary figure from history comes alive with letters from his own hand

WE now have 16 letters by and to Bar Kopta from these digs by Devoux and Yadin. This region was the last resting place of these people before they were massacred by Rome

Back to Qumran

More Qumran caves were being discovered. Caves 2 and 3

Cave 3 yields the "copper scroll"

Written in poor handwriting further back from the other scrolls.

A list of 64 locations all unknown to us with a list of treasure in all these locations

The descriptions are cryptic.

Shortly after the scrolls were assigned to a team and assigned to scholars, John Allegro, a scroll team scholar makes an unauthorized translation of the copper scroll and does his own clandestine treasure hunting that comes to nothing.

No one ever found any treasure. It's a mystery if it's not real treasure, a temple treasury

The mother lode was found in Cave 4. Greatest amount of scrolls were found in cave 4. But all were small fragments. Lots of fragments none like the Isaiah scroll. But many fragments none the less.

It seems cave 4 is the remnant of the community's main library. Over 600 manuscripts with 130 were biblical. Of these 600 manuscripts with tens of thousands of fragments.

The dump or storage of scrolls

The library that was ripped by the Roman army

Perhaps another theory we don't know.

Sold for \$2.80 per square centimeter for this material

Thousands and thousands of manuscripts came in.

The archeologist found the cave the Bedouin were getting these from and gathered them

An international committee was formed in 1953/1954

John D Rockefeller underwrote this project.

8 scholars from different nations to put the fragments together.

The material was not released to the public till 1992.

Some have called this the scandal of the century.

John D Rockefeller died in 1960 so funding slowed and many of these men returned to their teaching jobs.

Shortly after the discovery of cave 4 more caves discovered Caves 5-10

They were washed and eroded

1956 cave 11 is discovered (found by the Bedouin).

Large scrolls found there

Psalms

Temple scroll

Yigal Yadin comes back on the scene

Dealer in Bethlehem "Cando" had the temple scroll

The six day war happens.

Yadin is a general and sends a military man to cando and asks him to hand over the scroll.

Cando sued Israel for the incident and they gave him 200K for his trouble.

Some called it a missing book of the torah,

Types of material found

200 biblical manuscripts

Apocrypha and Pseudopigrapha (Ben Sira, Tobith, Testament of the Patriarchs.

Sectarian literature i.e. literature written by their community.