

Biblical Scrolls of July-September Exhibit

1. Paleo-Leviticus 11Q1

Scroll type: Biblical text

Date: 1st century CE (1-50 CE)

Language: Hebrew (written in paleo-Hebrew script)

Discovered: Cave 11, 1956

Leviticus dwells on legal rules and priestly ritual. Probably composed by the Jerusalem priesthood, this book addresses the details of sacrifice, purity, and observance of holy days. Leviticus also defines the rituals of the New Year Festival (Rosh Hashanah), the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), and the Sabbath, still observed by modern Jews. This scroll corresponds in varying degrees to later versions of Leviticus in Hebrew, Greek, and Samaritan texts.

2. Deuteronomy (NEW) 4Q31

Scroll type: Biblical text

Date: 125-75 BCE

Language: Hebrew **Discovered:** Cave 4, 1952

Deuteronomy 3:14-4:1

Thirty-two Deuteronomy scrolls were discovered at Qumran—the text is second only to Psalms in its popularity. The biblical book of Deuteronomy contains Moses' farewell speech to the Israelites, chronicling their history and journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. The text includes teachings of the law and emphasizes God's "covenant" with Israel, a common theme in the Qumran community's writing.

This text celebrates the success of some Israelite tribes in occupying territories east of the Jordan river, including the famous passage where God tells Moses to look across the river to see the Promised Land that he will not be permitted to enter.

3. Isaiah (NEW) 4Q56

Isaiah 5:15-28

Scroll type: Biblical text **Date:** 1st century BCE (75-1 BCE)

Language: Hebrew

Discovered: Cave 4, 1952

Twenty-one copies of the book of Isaiah were discovered at Qumran, making it the third most popular text in the Dead Sea Scrolls library. The most famous—the "Great Isaiah Scroll" from Cave 1—is the longest biblical scroll discovered. The Qumran Isaiah scrolls span more than 185 years, from 125 BCE to 60 CE.

The sayings of the prophets-Isaiah son of Amoz, so-called "second Isaiah" and "third Isaiah"—emphasize predictions of the end of times, a theme prevalent at Qumran. Many Judaic groups during the Second Temple Period and beyond (including the Gospel writers) quoted from the book of Isaiah. They interpreted events in their own age, as if predicted by the biblical prophet. The scrolls at Qumran include at least five commentaries on Isaiah.

4. Psalms 11Q5

Scroll type: Biblical text

Date: 1st century BCE (1-50 BCE)

Language: Hebrew

Discovered: Cave 11, 1956

Column XX Ps 139:8-24; 137:1

Column XXI Ps 137:9-138:8; Sirach 51:13-19

Column XXII Sirach 51:30; Apostrophe to Zion; Ps 93:1-3

Column XXIII Ps 141:5-10; 133:1-3; 144:1-7

Column XXIV Ps 144:15; 155:1-19

The book of Psalms, represented by 35 manuscripts from 250 BCE to 50–68 BCE, is the most frequently found biblical book in the Qumran caves. This scroll (a portion of the Great Psalms Scroll) is the earliest known copy of the book of Psalms and the most substantial, with 51 individual psalms.

The text names King David as author of the psalms and demonstrates the ancient tradition of David as the greatest of poets. The order and content of psalms in this scroll does not correspond with present versions of the Bible.

5. Targum Job (NEW) 11Q10

Scroll type: Biblical text

Date: 1st century CE (30-50 CE)

Language: Aramaic

Discovered: Cave 11, 1956

Job 30:13-20; 30:X, 27-31:1; 31:8-16

Four manuscripts of the book of Job were discovered at Qumran. These fragments are from one of two targums, or translations, of the original Hebrew of Job into Aramaic, the predominant language of Judea after the Babylonian Exile. This text is the earliest targum of a biblical book.

The Hebrew text of Job, full of contradictory ideas and grammatical problems, is the most difficult book in the Hebrew Bible to understand. Around the time of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Job probably challenged the most educated of readers. The story of Job's suffering raises difficult issues regarding God and his intentions toward humanity. The Aramaic deviates from the Hebrew version, which illustrates the difficulty of translating the scroll.

6. Minor Prophets in Greek 8HevXIIgr

Scroll type: Biblical text

Date: 1st century BCE

Language: Greek

Discovered: "Cave of Horror" in Nahal Hever, 1952-1962

Habakkuk 1:11-Zephaniah 3:7

The presence of Greek biblical texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls illustrates that many Jews of this time could speak and read Greek, rather than or in addition to Hebrew. During the last four centuries of the Second Temple Period (536 BCE-70 CE), the Greeks and then the Romans conquered the land of ancient Israel and Judah, and many Jews also dispersed throughout the Middle East under Greek influence.

Although the scroll text appears in Greek, this translation follows the Hebrew original, rather than the widely-used Greek translation from 300-200 BCE called the Septuagint. The so-called "minor prophets" appear as 12 individual books in the Greek Septuagint and in the Christian Old Testament, but as a single volume in the Hebrew Bible. Dead Sea Scroll fragments contain prophetic writings of Jonah, Nahum, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Zechariah.