



The Lynde and Harry
BRADLEY FOUNDATION *Presents:*



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the Dead Sea Scrolls?

The Dead Sea Scrolls are ancient manuscripts that were discovered between 1947 and 1956 in 11 caves near Khirbet Qumran, on the northwestern shores of the Dead Sea.

How old are the Dead Sea Scrolls?

The Dead Sea Scrolls date from the third century before the Common Era (BCE) to the first century of the Common Era (CE). The scrolls contain some of the oldest-known copies of biblical books, as well as hymns, prayers, and other important writings.

How many scrolls were found?

Over 100,000 fragments of text were discovered, and scholars have pieced these together into more than 900 separate documents.

What is the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls?

The Dead Sea Scrolls are widely acknowledged to be among the greatest archaeological treasures linking us to the ancient Middle East, and to the formative years of Judaism and Christianity. More than 200 biblical manuscripts are more than 1,000 years older than any previously known copies of the Hebrew Bible. In addition, there are scrolls that appear to represent a distinct form of Judaism that did not survive the Roman destruction of the second Temple in 70 CE. These "sectarian scrolls" reveal a fascinating stage of transition between the ancient religion of the Bible and Rabbinic Judaism, as well as the faith that would become the world's largest, Christianity. Both of these traditions, in turn, influence Islam.

What material are Dead Sea Scrolls made of?

The majority of the scrolls are written on leather parchment, and there are also some texts written on papyrus (reed paper). One scroll, known as the Copper Scroll, is inscribed upon metal.

In what languages have the Dead Sea Scrolls been written?

The majority of the scrolls are written in Hebrew and paleo-Hebrew (an older form of Hebrew); and there are a few texts in Aramaic and Greek.

Who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?

Many scholars believe the scrolls were created by an Essene sect, a group of Jews who broke away from mainstream Judaism to live a communal life in the desert. The ruins of Qumran, near the caves where the scrolls were found, are believed by many to be the communal quarters of these Essenes. However, other scholars believe at least some of the manuscripts were written in Jerusalem and deposited in the caves at Qumran when the city was threatened by the Romans.

What kind of texts are the Dead Sea Scrolls?

The manuscripts fall into three major categories: biblical texts, other religious writings, and sectarian documents. The biblical manuscripts comprise more than 200 copies of biblical books, representing the earliest evidence for the biblical text so far found. Apocryphal manuscripts (works that were not included in the Hebrew biblical canon) had previously been known only in translation, or not known at all. The sectarian manuscripts reflect a wide variety of literary genres: biblical commentary, religious legal writings, liturgical (prayer) texts, rules for communal living and compositions that predict a coming apocalypse.

How do the scrolls relate to the Quran ?

The Quran is influenced by the Hebrew Bible and the Christian New Testament. The Quran does not borrow from these texts directly; however, it does contain some of the same history, most notably from the Torah (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible). Those familiar with these biblical books will recognize figures in the Quran such as Abraham, Moses, Lot, Noah and others. The scrolls are important to Islam because they contain the earliest-known text of part of their history, as well as the history of Jews and Christians.

Where are the Dead Sea Scrolls now?

The majority of the scrolls are housed in Israel under the care and control of the Israel Antiquities Authority (eight manuscripts at the Shrine of the Book and all others at the IAA Conservation Laboratory). There are also some scrolls in Jordan, Europe and the US.

Are the scrolls coming to the Museum authentic Dead Sea Scrolls?

Yes. They are the same scrolls excavated from the caves surrounding Qumran in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

***Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible* will run for over four months. Will all the scrolls remain on exhibit the whole time?**

Most of the scrolls will be on display for the duration of the exhibition, but a small number will be replaced with different pieces halfway through the exhibit run.

In addition to the Dead Sea Scrolls, what else will the Milwaukee exhibition feature?

The artifacts in the exhibition include actual scroll fragments as well as numerous ancient artifacts from various sites in Israel dating to the period when the scrolls were written (organic remains including textiles, sandals and a comb, pottery, coins, stone ossuaries, glass, metal, etc.). Also we will exhibit a section of the intriguing Copper Scroll, as well as the unique Jeselsohn Stone ("Gabriel's Revelation"), a stone document with writing reminiscent of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Early New Testament texts on ancient papyrus, the oldest known version of the Hebrew Masoretic Bible, from the 10th century, and later Bibles from the Middle Ages to the present day will explore the transmission of the biblical text over the last 2000 years.

Where did the Milwaukee Public Museum acquire the artifacts for this exhibit?

Materials in *Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible* are on loan from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, the Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church for the Eastern USA, Dr. David and Jemima Jeselsohn of Zurich, the École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem, the British Library, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Saint John's Abbey and University in Collegeville, MN and the University of Michigan Library. Dr. Weston Fields, director of the Dead Sea Scrolls Foundation, assisted in development of *Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible*, along with the San Diego Museum of Natural History and other partners.

