

Dead Sea Scrolls

A Lesson in God's Preservation of the Word



Matthew 24:35

**Heaven and earth will disappear, but
my words will never disappear**

John 10:35

...the Scripture cannot be broken...

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of the soul and the spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.



William F. Albright

“I repeat that in my opinion you have made the greatest manuscript discovery of modern times – certainly the greatest biblical manuscript find...What an incredible find!”

**William F. Albright to John C. Trevor
(March 1948)**

Qumran



Jerusalem is 15-20 miles North West of Qumran

Discovery of the Scrolls

The Dead Sea Scrolls are ancient manuscripts that were discovered in 1947 in 11 caves among the limestone cliffs of Qumran, overlooking the Dead Sea.



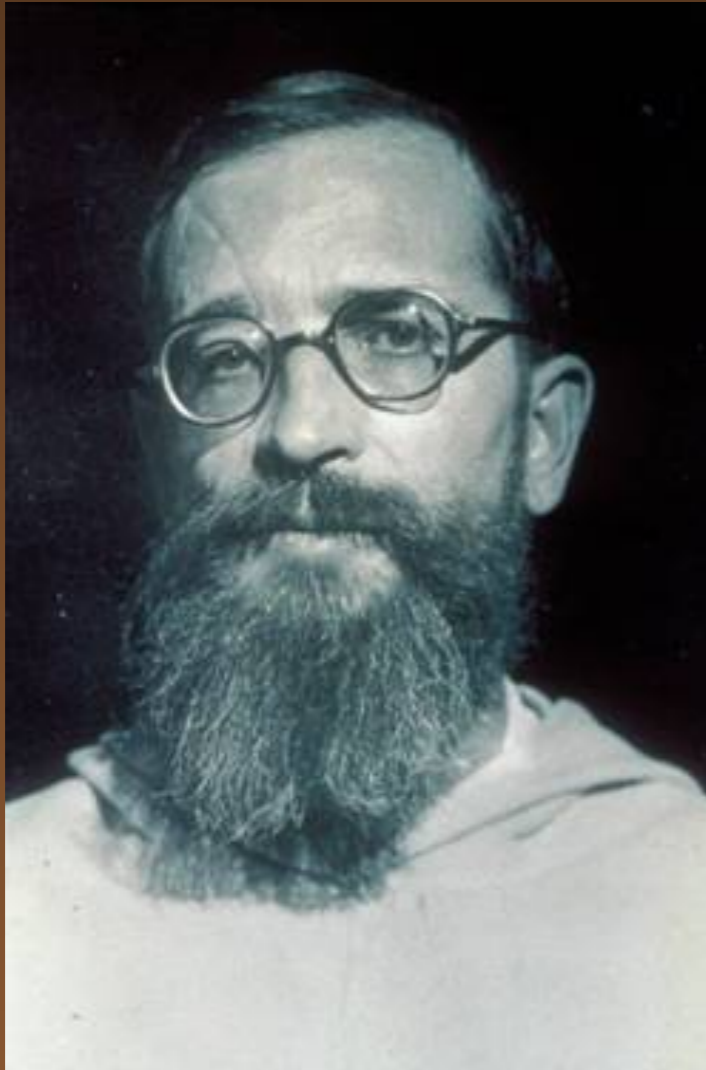
Caves of Qumran



Dead Sea near Qumran

The Scrolls were discovered by a young Arab shepherd boy, Muhammad edh-Dhib, as he searched for his lost goat.

Qumran Excavations

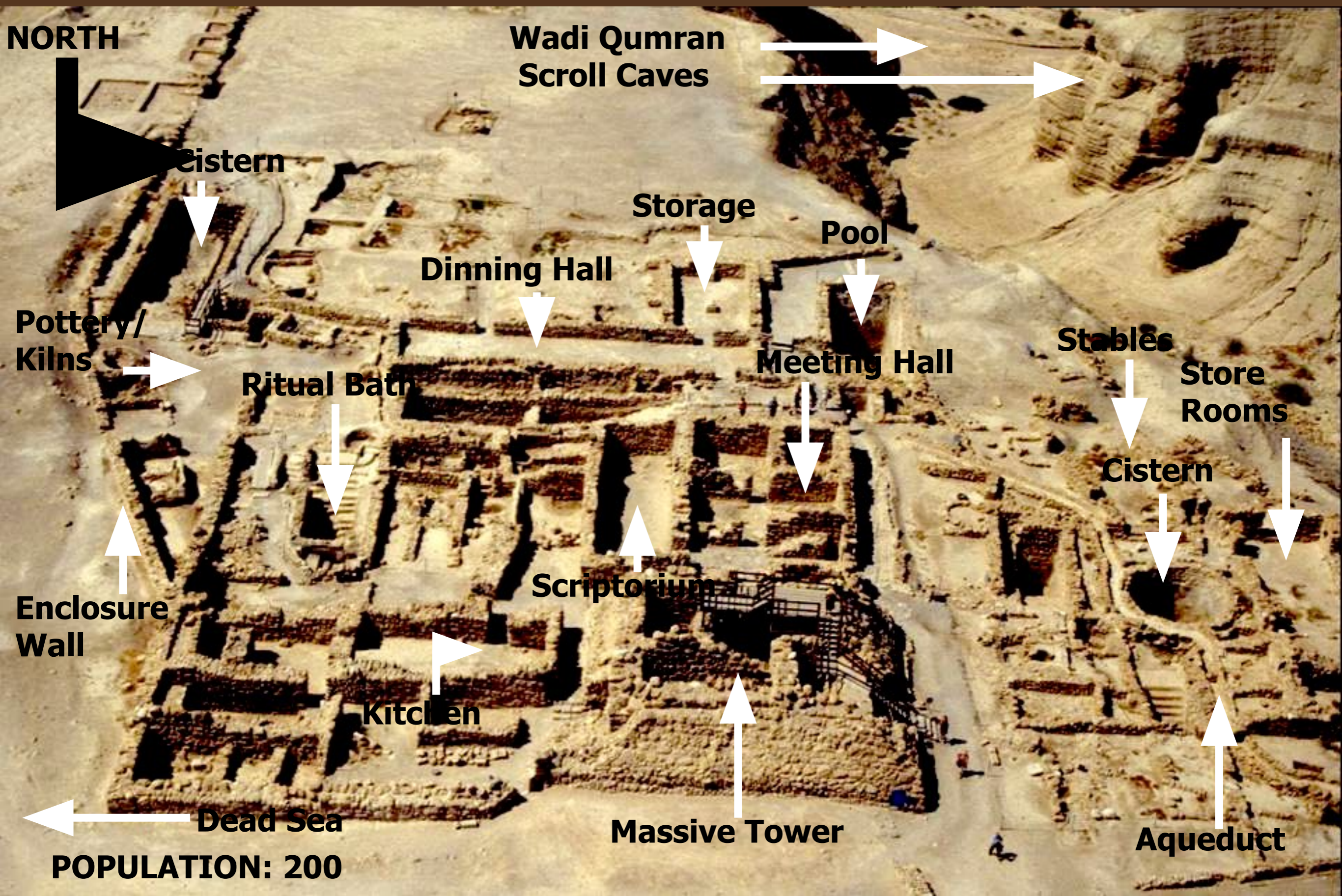


Pere Roland de Vaux

Pere Roland de Vaux, a Dominican monk, was the original archaeologist who conducted excavations at Qumran from 1951 through 1956.

- He posited that a religious sect of Judaism inhabited Qumran known as the **Essenes**
- He discovered **structural remains** such as aqueducts, ritual purity baths, dining rooms, cisterns, meeting halls, scriptorium and evidence of earthquake damaged
- From 1994 through 2006 Qumran **continued to be excavated**

Ruins of Qumran - 250 BC - AD 68



NORTH

**Wadi Qumran
Scroll Caves**

Cistern

Storage

Pool

Dinning Hall

Meeting Hall

Stables

**Store
Rooms**

**Pottery/
Kilns**

Ritual Bath

Cistern

**Enclosure
Wall**

Scriptorium

Kitchen

Dead Sea

Massive Tower

Aqueduct

POPULATION: 200

Qumran Excavations

The narrow **aqueducts** on the right were used to channel water from the cliffs in the west to the Qumran community to fill their ten ritual baths and cisterns.



Cistern

Aqueduct

View looking southeast from Qumran toward the Dead Sea

Qumran Excavations

Viewing west from Qumran towards the cliffs, there are several caves in which thousands of manuscripts and fragments were discovered.

Scroll Cave 4



Acquisition of the Scrolls



delivered seven scrolls

Bedouin Shepherds

from cave 1 to **Khalil Sahin (Kando)**, a Christian antiquities dealer in Bethlehem.

Kando

- Soon after, **E.L. Sukenik** of Hebrew University acquired three of the scrolls
- In 1949, the remaining four scrolls were sold to **Mar Athanasius Samuel** of the Syrian Jacobite Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem, then traveled to America
- On June 1, 1954, Samuel runs ad in **Wall Street Journal** offering for sale "The Four Dead Sea Scrolls"

Acquisition of the Scrolls

Samuel's advertisement was brought to the attention of **Yigael Yadin**, E.L. Sukenik's son.

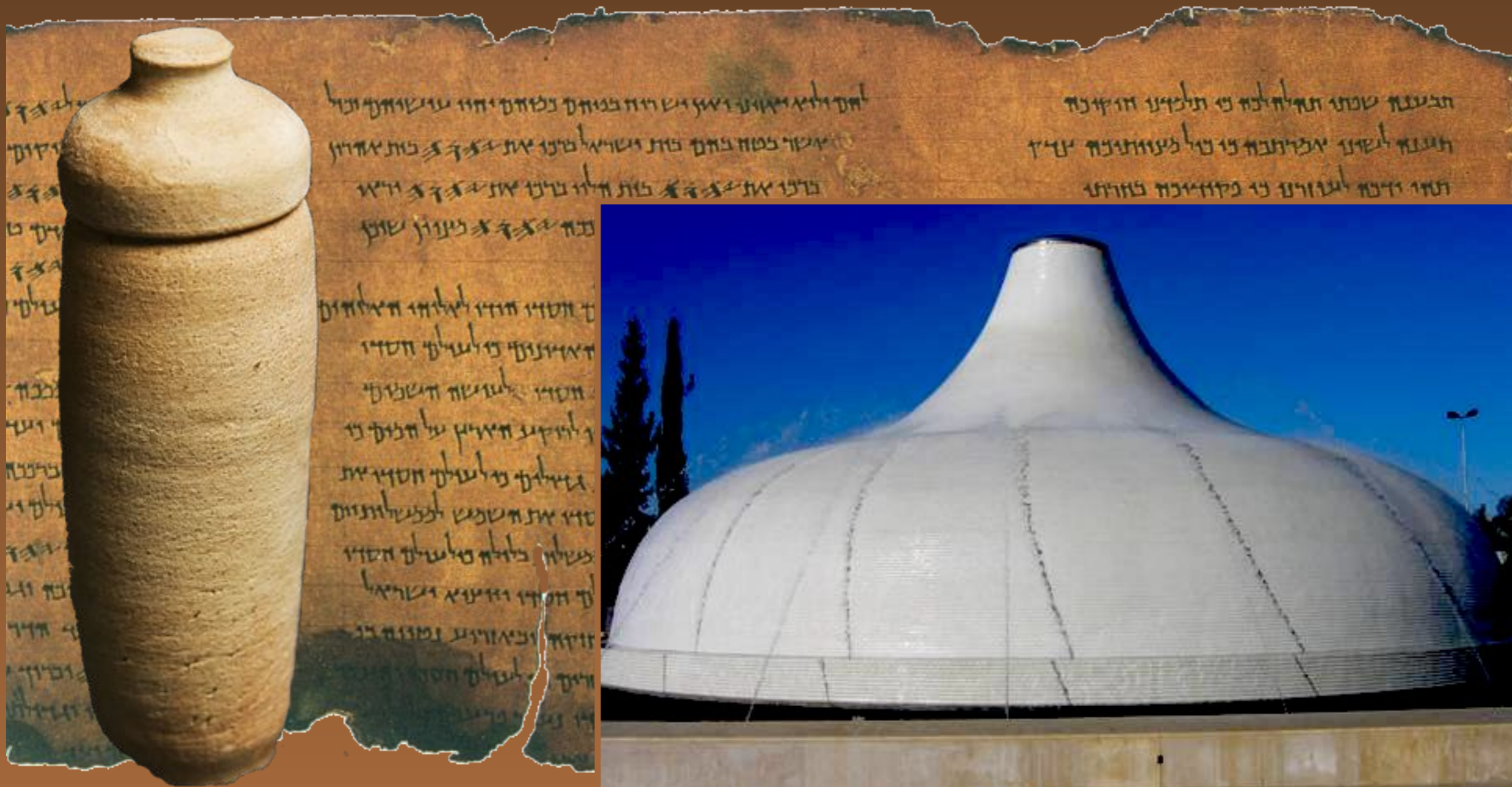
- Yadin, with the help of D.S. Gottesman, purchased the four scrolls for approximately **\$250,0000**
- The four scrolls were returned to **Israel** and added to Sukenik's three scrolls
- Currently, the 7 scrolls from cave 1 are housed in the **Shrine of the Book** in **Jerusalem**



Yadin

Shrine of the Book

The shrine was built at the **Israel Museum** (Jerusalem) to display many of the early scrolls such as Isaiah A-B, Habakkuk Commentary, Thanksgiving Scroll, Community Rule, War Rule, and the Genesis Apocryphon.



What Scrolls were Found?

Overall, **11 caves** yielded over **900 biblical and non-biblical texts**, composed of tens of thousands of manuscript fragments.*

- Over **220 texts of the Hebrew Bible** except the book of Esther
- The scrolls are written in **Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek** dating from 250 BC to AD 68
- Of these texts, over **400 are apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature**



Genesis Fragment

What Artifacts were Found?

Of the remains discovered in the Scriptorium (bottom right) at Qumran, a copper inkpot and stone benches and tables lend evidence to a manuscript producing environment.



Scrolls of Cave 1

A complete **book of Isaiah (A)** was discovered, which now is the oldest complete manuscript of any book of the Bible.

Also found were:

- **Incomplete book of Isaiah (B)**
- **Habakkuk Commentary**
- **Various non-biblical books** such as the **Thanksgiving Scroll** and **Manual of Discipline**
- **Fragments of Genesis, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Judges, Samuel, Ezekiel, Psalms and Daniel 2:4** where the Hebrew language



Portion of Isaiah A

Isaiah Scroll



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Isaiah (1QIsa A) was written in Hebrew on parchment (animal skin) dating to 125 BC and is approximately **26 feet long.**

Scrolls of Cave 2

Though cave 2 was not as productive, by 1952 it produced hundreds of fragments including:


- Two of Exodus
- One of Leviticus
- Four of Numbers
- Two of Deuteronomy
- One of Jeremiah, Job, Psalms
- Two of Ruth



Fragments of Leviticus 23-24 were purchased in 2005; originally found near the Dead Sea

Scrolls of Cave 3

Though of no biblical significance, a unique discovery in cave 3 produced a Hebrew text in two rolls written on copper, known as the **Copper Scroll** (3Q15).

- Text lists **60+ sites of buried treasure** (gold, ingots) in the area of Judean desert
- **No treasure** has been found
- Too fragile to unroll, it was **X-rayed** to discover its content, then was cut into **strips** 



Scrolls of Cave 4

Cave 4 produced **100 biblical books** and contained more than **50,000 fragments**. Among them was partial copies/fragments of:

- **Genesis**
- **Daniel 7:28 to 8:1 (Aramaic changes to Hebrew)**
- **Commentaries on Psalms, Isaiah and Nahum**



40,000 fragments found beneath the floor of cave 4

Messianic Testimony

Discovered in cave 4 in 1952, this **1st century BC Hebrew manuscript** (aka "Testimonia") contains **messianic passages** from the Hebrew Bible, identifying Him as prophet, priest and king. In order they are:

- Deuteronomy 5:28-29 (Prophet)
- Deuteronomy 18:18-19
- Numbers 24:15-17 (King)
- Deuteronomy 33:8-11 (Priest)
- Joshua 6:26



4Q175

Scrolls of Cave 5-6

- **Cave 5** had produced fragments of up to 50 biblical and non biblical texts



Cave 5 in foreground

Cave 6 yielded fragments Genesis, Exodus, Daniel, Deuteronomy, Ecclesiastes

Scrolls of Cave 7-10

- **Cave 7** unearthed Greek fragments (7Q3-18) which may be the earliest portions of nine New Testament books (Mark 6:52-53)
- **Cave 8** contained fragments of Genesis and Psalms
- **Cave 9 and 10** was unproductive yielding only a single ostraca along with leather materials used for storing and bundling scrolls

Scrolls of Cave 11



In 1956, a partial copy of **Leviticus** and an **Aramaic Targum of Job** was found. Including:

- Partial copy of **Psalms** (above), including **151st Psalm**
- Scholars now possess nearly **40 canonical Psalms** ranging from Psalm 90 to 150
- Two of the three non-biblical **Temple Scrolls**, the longest measuring **nearly 28 feet**

Reliability: Copy Accuracy

How accurate was the copying process during the 1300 year interval?

Dead Sea Scrolls



125 BC

Aleppo Codex
Masoretic Text



900 AD

Closed interval by 1000+ years



95% identical
to the
Masoretic Text

The Veritas Torah Manuscript

AD 1500s

Genesis - Deuteronomy

