

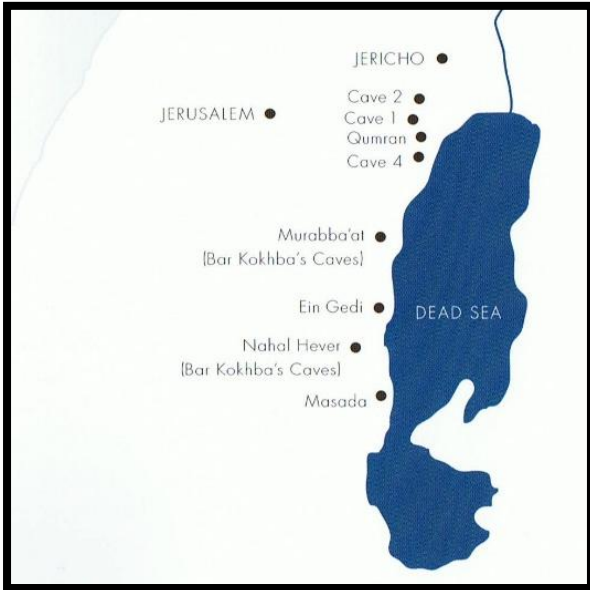
56 Scroll of the Book

Names (also known as)

Dead Sea Scrolls

Location/Description

The Qumran caves are situated 11 kms (7 miles) south of Jericho and 1.6 kms (1 mile) from the Dead Sea.



Brief history

Found by accident in 1947, by a shepherd (Muhammad Adh-Dhib) searching for a lost goat. He threw rocks into a cave in Qumran and heard the sound of breaking potsherds.

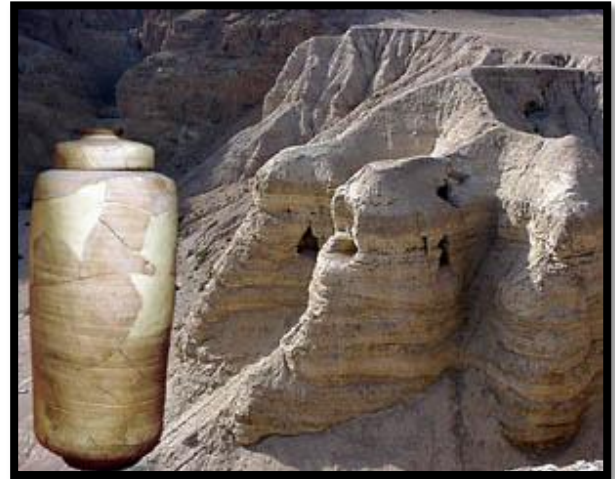
The scrolls dated back to the time of the Essenes – a religious group who lived a life of separateness and were known Bible students.

The scrolls may have been hidden there by the Essenes at the time the Romans invaded the land (mentioned by Josephus).

Excavation:

John Trever (an American Scholar) identified them as scrolls of Hebrew texts and realized one of them to be a copy of the Book of Isaiah.

The scrolls are most commonly made of animal skins, but also papyrus and one of copper. They are written with a carbon-based ink, from right to left, using no punctuation except for an occasional paragraph indentation. In fact, in some cases, there are not even spaces between the words.



Overall, 11 of the 270 excavated caves were found to contain manuscripts. Cave 2 – 100 fragments of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, Job, Psalms and Ruth. Cave 4 – fragments representing all the OT books except Esther. A fragment of Samuel found here is believed to be the oldest known piece of Biblical Hebrew.



Other finds included: 'Treasure Scroll', commentaries on the book of Nahum, Habakkuk, the Psalms, and Isaiah (which was older by 1,000 years than any previous known Hebrew copy of the OT).

They are housed in The Scroll of the Book on the grounds of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem.



Sources:

The Historical Atlas of the Bible – Ian Barnes;
Unger's Bible Dictionary; Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library – Leon Levy
(Compiler – Stephen Macfarlane)