JOURNAL OF

THE TRANSACTIONS

OF

The Victoria Institute

OR

Philosophical Society of Great Britain

VOL. LXXXII

1950

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY
THE INSTITUTE, 12, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1

891ST ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, 27TH MARCH, 1950.

JACOB LEVEEN, ESQ., B.A., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed.

The CHAIRMAN then called on F. F. Bruce, Esq., M.A., to read his paper entitled "Recent Discoveries in Biblical Manuscripts."

RECENT DISCOVERIES IN BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPTS.

By F. F. BRUCE, Esq., M.A.

SYNOPSIS.

Whereas the gap between the time when the New Testament documents were written and that to which our earliest extant copies of these documents belong is now almost negligible, there has been hitherto a gap of over a thousand years between the date of the latest Old Testament documents and the earliest known Hebrew copies of these. Until recently evidence to bridge this gap was provided by early versions, the Samaritan Pentateuch, quotations in Mishna and Talmud, and fragments recovered from the Cairo *geniza*. The scrolls and fragments recently discovered at 'Ain Feshkha, in Palestine, which include one complete and one incomplete copy of the Book of Isaiah in Hebrew, appear to have revolutionised the whole position. This is especially true if those are right who date them in the two centuries preceding A.D. 70, but even if they are several centuries later than that, their contribution to our knowledge of the history of the Old Testament text is of very high value. Much work remains to be done on them, but it already seems clear that Professor Albright has good reason to describe them as "unquestionably the greatest manuscript find of modern times."

THE sudden but much belated interest shown by the British Press in recent manuscript discoveries in Palestine during the summer of 1949 brought to the attention of the general public a subject which Biblical scholars had already been following keenly for a year and a half. Early in 1948 the announcement of these discoveries in the world of learning had incited sober and distinguished Biblical scholars to apply to them

adjectives like "sensational"[1] and "phenomenal"[2]—words more commonly associated with popular journalism than with professorial pronouncements. Of these manuscripts the one which excited greatest interest was a complete parchment scroll of the Book of Isaiah in Hebrew. When this scroll was examined by experts of the American Schools of Oriental Research, it was judged by them to be older by far than any copy of Hebrew Scripture previously known. Professor Millar Burrows of Yale assigned it to the first century B.C.;[3] Professor W. F. Albright of Baltimore put it even earlier, "about the second century B.C."[4] These suggested dates themselves explain the excitement which the news of the discovery caused, for, if they are anywhere near the truth, then "the script of this parchment" (to quote Professor Albright) "is easily a thousand years older than that of the oldest Hebrew Biblical roll hitherto known."[5]

It is well known that, although the New Testament did not begin to be written until all the books of the Old Testament were in existence, we have until now had extant copies of the Greek New Testament far older than any extant copies of the Hebrew Old Testament. We have copies of the Greek New Testament written in the fourth century A.D. (notably the Vatican and Sinaitic codices), very substantial fragments written in the third century (notably the Chester Beatty Biblical papyri), and some pieces which have survived from the second century (notably the Rylands papyrus fragment of the Fourth Gospel, the oldest extant piece of the New Testament, dated less than fifty years from the composition of the Fourth Gospel itself).[6] But when we turn to our earliest copies of the Hebrew Bible, we find them separated by a much greater lapse of time from their autographs. The Revisers' Preface to the Old Testament (1884) states in a footnote that "the earliest MS. of which the age is certainly known bears date A.D. 916." This is a Leningrad codex of the Prophets. Another early Hebrew manuscript at Leningrad is a codex of the whole Old Testament belonging to the first

[1] W. F. Albright in *BASOR*, No. 110 (April, 1948), p. 2.
[2] G. E. Wright in *BA* 11 (1948), p. 21.
[3] *BA* 11 (1948), p. 21.
[4] *BASOR*, No. 110 (April, 1948), p. 3; cf. No. 115 (Oct. 1949), pp. 10 ff. Albright first arrived at this conclusion by comparing the Isaiah scroll with the Nash papyrus and judging it to be older. Albright dates the Nash papyrus in the 1st cent. B.C.; other scholars have dated it rather later.
[5] *BASOR*, No. 110 (April, 1948), p. 3.
[6] See Sir F. G. Kenyon in *Journal of Transactions of the Victoria Institute* 77 (1945), p. 117.

decade of the eleventh century. Oxford possesses an almost complete codex of the Hebrew Bible nearly as old as this, and at Aleppo there is a codex a little older. Older still are a Hebrew Pentateuch codex in the British Museum, usually dated in the ninth century, and a Cairo codex of the Prophets completed in A.D. 895.[1]

The relatively late date of our oldest extant Hebrew manuscripts is bound up with the veneration with which copies of Holy Scripture were regarded by the Rabbis. When these were too old and worn to be of further use for reading, they were reverently interred. It was thought better that they should receive honourable burial than that the name of God inscribed upon them should run the risk of being profaned by unworthy use of the material. Before they were buried, however, they were laid aside for a time in a *geniza*—a store-room attached to the synagogue where documents no longer in use were stored or hidden (the word literally means " hiding-place ").

One of these *genizoth*, by a happy chance, continued to house its literary contents for hundreds of years, until they were discovered and made accessible to Hebrew scholars in the closing decades of last century. This was the *geniza* of the Old Cairo synagogue, which formed the subject of Dr. Paul Kahle's fascinating Schweich lectures for 1941.[2] Among the treasures which this old store-room yielded up were portions of Hebrew Scripture older than those already mentioned. These and other documents found with them have added considerably to our knowledge of the textual history of the Hebrew Bible in the period preceding A.D. 900.

It looks as if it was not only wear and tear that led to the removal of old Hebrew Bibles. We know that in the early centuries of our era Jewish scholars were at work on the Hebrew Bible, doing their best to safeguard the purity of the text. They considered (among other things) variant readings found in the manuscripts available to them, and endeavoured to decide between them. About A.D. 100 they produced a standard edition of the consonantal text of the Hebrew Scriptures. Then, in order to preserve the proper interpretation, pronunciation and punctuation of this text, succeeding generations of scholars affixed to it a large number of signs principally intended to

[1] See Sir F. G. Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* (1939) pp. 44 ff.; P. E. Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza* (1947), pp. 36 ff.

[2] *The Cairo Geniza* (Cumberlege, 1947).

guide the public readers in the synagogues in the right enunciation of the sacred writings, since Hebrew was no longer a living vernacular. They also supplied a large body of notes on the text, the longer notes being placed at the beginning and end of manuscripts, and the shorter notes in the margins.

These editors were not exactly guided in their work by the strict canons of textual criticism as they are understood to-day. Their business was rather to edit the text of the Hebrew Bible in the light of the authoritative tradition which had been handed down to them through successive generations of teachers. From this concern with tradition—Heb. *masorah*—these editors received the name by which they are commonly known, "Masoretes"; the text which they established on the basis of their studies is similarly known as the "Masoretic" text. There is reason to think that some of the Masoretic activities in the eighth and ninth centuries were stimulated by the example of Muslim scholars who had already done similar work for the text and pronunciation of the Qur'an.[1]

It must not be thought, however, that in their devotion to traditional interpretation the Masoretes took liberties with the sacred text.[2] On the contrary, they treated it with the greatest imaginable reverence, and devised a complicated system of safeguards against accidental corruption. For example, they counted the number of times each letter of the alphabet occurs in each book; they noted the middle letter of the Pentateuch and the middle letter of the whole Hebrew Bible, and even made much more detailed and complex calculations than these. "Everything countable seems to be counted";[3] and when all the counting was done, they made up mnemonics by which the various totals might be readily remembered.

When the Masoretic text was finally established in this way, it appears that previous copies of the Scriptures were withdrawn from use and consigned to *genizoth* with a view to later interment. The final recension of the Masoretic text became the standard for all subsequent copies of the Hebrew Bible, whether in manu-

---

[1] Kahle, *op. cit.*, pp. 78 ff.

[2] H. M. Orlinsky declares that "the Masoretes of the post-talmudic period merely reproduced by consonants and vowels the text which had been handed down to them" (*Journal of Biblical Literature* 62 [1944], p. 25); *cf.* his review of Kahle's Schweich lectures in the *American Journal of Archaeology* 52 [1948], p. 473.

[3] H. Wheeler Robinson, *Ancient and English Versions of the Bible* (1940), p. 29.

script or (afterwards) in printed editions. Of course, with the best care in the world a few variations have crept into the text in the course of its transmission by hand and press during the last thousand years. Up to recent years printed editions of the Hebrew Bible have followed the text of an edition printed in 1524–25 under the editorship of a Hebrew Christian named Jacob Ben Chayyim. But Dr. Kahle has pointed out that Ben Chayyim's text depended on manuscripts not earlier than the fourteenth century. The latest standard edition of the Hebrew Bible—the third edition of Rudolf Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*, published at Stuttgart in 1937—shows a text prepared by Dr. Kahle on the basis of the Leningrad copy of the complete Old Testament dated 1008–9.[1] This copy is closely related to the Aleppo copy already mentioned (which was not available to Dr. Kahle). In addition to the Leningrad manuscript, Dr. Kahle used photographs of the British Museum codex of the Pentateuch and the Cairo codex of the Prophets, both of which date from the closing years of the ninth century. These copies, along with the Leningrad codex of the Prophets, represent the text as established by members of a Masoretic family of Tiberias in Palestine—the Ben Asher family. On the basis of these early copies a more accurate edition of the Masoretic text has been produced than any previously printed.

The treasures found in the Cairo *geniza* included portions of the Hebrew Bible antedating this final Masoretic recension, and these revealed something of the history of Masoretic work on the text of the Old Testament. There were Masoretes at work in Babylonia as well as at Tiberias in the centuries preceding A.D. 900, although it was the form established at Tiberias that ultimately prevailed.[2] Some of the work of the Babylonian Masoretes was discovered in the *geniza*, throwing light on an earlier stage of the textual transmission of the Hebrew Bible than had been directly attainable until then.

Even so, it might appear that we have a much slenderer guarantee of the accurate transmission of the Hebrew text of

[1] This manuscript was sent from Leningrad to Germany for several years in the 1920s for Kahle's use. The Universities of Halle and Bonn possess photostatic copies. The University of Leeds possesses a photographic reproduction of one of these; this is understood to be the only facsimile of the manuscript in England.

[2] P. E. Kahle, *Der masoretische Text des Alten Testaments nach der Überlieferung der babylonischen Juden* (Leipzig, 1902); *Masoreten des Ostens* (Leipzig, 1913); *Masoreten des Westens* (Stuttgart, 1927–30).

the Old Testament than we have of the Greek text of the New, in view of the relatively late date of our earliest Hebrew witnesses. But there are other lines of evidence to be borne in mind. As regards the consonantal text, there has been little change or variation in it since it was fixed in the time of Rabbi Aqiba, early in the second century A.D. This is borne out by the Biblical quotations in the Mishna (*c.* A.D. 200) and the Gemaras of Palestine (*c.* A.D. 350) and Babylonia (*c.* A.D. 500), as also by the character of the text paraphrased or translated in the Aramaic Targums and in the Greek version of Aquila. Unfortunately the Hebrew text of Origen's Hexapla (*c.* A.D. 230) has not been preserved.[1] The second column of his Hexapla, however, contained the Hebrew text of the first column transcribed in Greek letters, and about 150 verses of the Psalms in this second column (as well as in the four following columns which exhibited four Greek translations) were found towards the end of last century by Cardinal Giovanni Mercati in the Ambrosian Library at Milan. Some other Hexapla fragments and portions of Aquila's translation of the Books of Kings were among the discoveries from the Cairo *geniza*. The extant fragments of Aquila's version are specially important for textual criticism, because his version was a slavishly literal rendering of the authorised consonantal Hebrew text fixed in the time of Aqiba, carried out in such a way that it is never difficult to tell exactly what Hebrew word lies behind Aquila's Greek word.[2]

About A.D. 400 Jerome translated the Old Testament into Latin directly from Hebrew. His translation, together with references made to the original text of the Old Testament in some of his other writings, is thus a witness to the character of the Hebrew text five hundred years before the Masoretes concluded their work. Still earlier in the Christian era we have another witness in the Syriac version of the Old Testament, also

[1] Origen's Hexapla was an edition of the Bible in six columns. In the Old Testament these columns exhibited respectively (1) the Hebrew text; (2) the Hebrew text in Greek transliteration; (3) Aquila's Greek version; (4) Symmachus's Greek version; (5) Origen's edition of the Septuagint; (6) Theodotion's Greek version. Origen's Hexapla was preserved at Caesarea in Palestine until the Saracen conquest of the seventh century and there it was consulted by later scholars such as Pamphilus, Eusebius and Jerome.

[2] A good example of Aquila's translation is his rendering of the opening words of Genesis: *en kephalaio ektisen theos syn ton ouranon kai syn ten gen.* The individual words are Greek, corresponding one by one to the words of the Hebrew, but the sentence itself is not Greek; it is quite unintelligible without reference to the original. In particular, his rendering of the accusative particle *eth* by Gk. *syn* makes nonsense in Greek.

translated from the Hebrew.[1] And from the last three centuries B.C. we have the Greek version of the Old Testament commonly called the Septuagint. Although the Septuagint text sometimes deviates from the Masoretic text and occasionally helps us to correct it, yet in general it confirms that no material changes were introduced into the text of the Old Testament during the thousand years and more between the time when this translation was made and the time to which our chief Hebrew manuscripts belong.[2]

Yet another witness, so far as the Pentateuch is concerned, is the Samaritan Bible, which is restricted to these five books. The Samaritan Bible is simply an edition of the Hebrew Pentateuch which has been transmitted along another line than that of the Masoretes. The Masoretic and Samaritan editions are descended from an archetype not later than the fourth century B.C., and possibly much earlier. At any rate, the Samaritan Bible carries the evidence for the text of the Pentateuch considerably farther back than the Septuagint does, and the variations between the Samaritan and Masoretic texts of this part of the Bible are quite insignificant by comparison with the area of agreement.[3]

And now, beyond everyone's expectation, comes this latest discovery, which looks as if it may add very considerably to our knowledge of the textual history of the Hebrew Bible.

In the summer of 1947 a bedouin goatherd of the tribe of the Teammereh, pursuing a straying goat into a cave at 'Ain Feshkha, to the north of the Dead Sea, found a number of ancient scrolls, of parchment and leather, inscribed with Hebrew writing. How many scrolls were in the cave when the discovery was made cannot now be known. Four of them, however, made their way in November, 1947, to the Syrian Orthodox Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem,[4] and three more were secured in January, 1948, by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. (The number of scrolls secured by both institutions was originally reported to be larger, but it turned out in the course of examination that in

[1] Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, pp. 179 ff.

[2] Kahle, *op. cit.*, pp. 132 ff. It must be remembered that we have Septuagint MSS. of much earlier date than the Hebrew MSS. mentioned, as early as the 4th and 3rd centuries A.D., not to mention a fragment of Deuteronomy of the 2nd century B.C.

[3] Kahle, *op. cit.*, pp. 144 ff.

[4] They made their way to the Syrians because a Muslim sheikh to whom they were shown mistook the script for Syriac Estrangelo!

one or two instances what at first appeared to be separate scrolls were really parts of one original scroll.)

The circumstances of the discovery and identification of the scrolls, and later of the official inspection of the place from which they came, are not without an element of romance, especially in view of the troubled conditions in Palestine at the time. But they also pleasantly reflect a remarkably high degree of helpful co-operation between Muslims, Jews, and Christians of various traditions at a time when racial and religious animosities were burning fiercely.[1]

The Syrian Monastery enlisted the interest of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem in the scrolls which it had obtained,[2] and great excitement and not a little scepticism were aroused when it was announced that one of these scrolls was a complete copy of the Book of Isaiah in Hebrew, dated by some of the American experts as far back as the end of the pre-Christian era. Arrangements were made for the scrolls to be taken to America, where they have since been intensively studied by scholars.

The scepticism which greeted the announcement was natural and healthy. The chances of finding Hebrew manuscripts materially older than the earliest hitherto known were reckoned on good grounds to be so slender that such a surprising piece of news as this seemed too good to be true. Memories of famous hoaxes in the past were recalled, such as the Shapira forgeries of 1883.[3] But the more the scrolls were studied, the more convinced the American scholars became that their original conclusions were right and that anything in the nature of forgery was ruled out by all the circumstances of the case.

The Isaiah manuscript, a parchment scroll twenty-two feet in length, exhibits in general a text in remarkable agreement with the Masoretic text of the later manuscripts.[4] The deviations are much more in the realm of spelling and inflection than in actual wording. The importance of this manuscript for textual criticism,

[1] "It is pleasant, however, to note that Dr. Sukenik has occasion to thank both Christians and Moslems of Bethlehem for aid he received during that terrible period in acquiring the scrolls now in the possession of the Hebrew University" (H. L. Ginsberg in *BASOR*, No. 112 [December, 1948], p. 19).

[2] See J. C. Trever's account in *BA* 11 (1948), pp. 46 ff.

[3] *Cf.* Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, p. 48.

[4] *Cf.* M. Burrows, "Variant Readings in the Isaiah Manuscript," *BASOR*, No. 111 (October, 1948), pp. 16 ff.; No. 113 (February, 1949), pp. 24 ff.; *Orthography Morphology and Syntax of the St. Mark's Isaiah Manuscript*, *J B L* 68 (1949), pp. 195 ff.

as well as for the history of Hebrew writing, spelling and accidence, is obvious, especially if it belongs to the first or second century B.C. And if such an early date can be established, the manuscript may also have some bearing on the literary criticism of the Book of Isaiah. It does not, of course, answer the ordinary questions about Second or Third Isaiah (chapters 40–55 and 56–66, respectively), since these are usually dated in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.; but it does rule out of court attempts to date portions of the book in the Maccabean age or even later (such as B. Duhm's dating of the apocalypse of chapters 24–27 and R. H. Kennett's dating of the Servant Songs). Albright[1] argues that the fact of the manuscript's general agreement with the Masoretic authorities, together with the fact that where there is divergence the Masoretic text is usually better than the newly discovered variants, shows that the Masoretic text (the consonantal text, of course) goes back to an archetype of pre-Maccabean date. If this conclusion could be established, its importance would obviously be immense. But we must wait.

Another of the scrolls owned by the Syrians is a Hebrew commentary on the Book of Habakkuk, in which Habakkuk's prophecy is interpreted, not of the conditions in Habakkuk's own day, but of conditions obtaining under the Macedonian dynasties of Ptolemaic Egypt and Seleucid Syria.[2] These two powers are denoted respectively as the "Kittiim (Greeks) of Egypt" and the "Kittiim of Syria." This internal evidence gives a clue to the date at which the commentary was composed, and indicates that at that time the Book of Habakkuk was acknowledged and used as Holy Scripture. The use made of it, in fact, rather resembles the use made of prophetic Scripture by some of our contemporaries who find in it references to persons and events of our own day. Whatever we may say about such a use of the literature, it at least implies that the literature so used is regarded as divinely inspired and canonical. The date of the actual scroll is another question, but an early examination suggested a date between 25 B.C. and 25 A.D.[3]

[1] In an article "Are the 'Ain Feshkha Scrolls a Hoax?" (reply to S. Zeitlin), *JQR* 40 (1949–50), pp. 41 ff.

[2] See W. H. Brownlee, "The Jerusalem Habakkuk Scroll," *BASOR*, No. 112 (December, 1948), pp. 8 ff.; "Further Light on Habakkuk," No. 114 (April, 1949), pp. 9 f.

[3] J. C. Trever, *BASOR*, No. 113 (February, 1949), p. 23 (in an article, "A Palaeographic Study of the Jerusalem Scrolls"). S. A. Birnbaum, "The Dating of the Habakkuk Cave Scroll," *JBL* 68 (1949), pp. 161 ff., places it between 100 and 50 B.C.

Yet another Hebrew scroll in this collection, which has been called the "Sectarian document," seems to be some Jewish sect's manual of discipline. The sect in question may have been identical with the sect which has been thought responsible in the first instance for storing all these documents in the cave at 'Ain Feshkha. Whether the sect can be identified with any hitherto known to us is doubtful. Some have thought of the Essenes, who are known to have had coenobitic communities in the Dead Sea region and who have been called upon to account for so many phenomena in Judaism and Christianity in the closing days of the Second Temple. Somewhat less improbable is the attempt to equate them with the "Covenanters of Damascus" known from the so-called Zadokite Fragment; in that case they will have stored the scrolls in the cave before migrating from Palestine to Damascus.[1] But we really do not know.

The fourth scroll in the Syrian collection is taking longer to unwrap, owing to the very brittle character of the material; but when a detached fragment was inspected it proved to be an Aramaic work of Enochic character. Whether it is (as some hope) a copy of the Aramaic original of First Enoch, or something very like it, it looks like being of extraordinary importance for our knowledge of the rise and development of apocalyptic thought and literature in the period between the Testaments.[2] The Aramaic is said by Albright to belong to the late Persian period.

The scrolls which were secured by the Hebrew University belong to three Hebrew works: (1) a military manual which Professor Eleazar Sukenik has called "The War between the Children of Light and the Children of Darkness"; (2) a collection of Hymns of Thanksgiving; (3) another copy of part of the Book of Isaiah, containing about eleven chapters from chapter 48 onwards. The Hymns of Thanksgiving plainly depend upon the canonical Book of Psalms, and may therefore help to fix a *terminus ad quem* for the completion of the Psalter. Professor Snkenik produced a preliminary report of these manuscripts with facsimiles in a volume entitled *Megilloth Genuzoth*, published

[1] M. Burrows, *BA* 11 (1948), p. 58; H. L. Ginsberg, *BASOR*, No. 112 (December, 1948), p. 21. The Zadokite Fragment referred to was discovered in the Cairo *geniza* and edited by Solomon Schechter under the title *Fragments of a Zadokite Work* (Cambridge, 1910). See the translation in R. H. Charles's *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* ii (1913), pp. 793 ff. There are one or two striking contacts between the Habakkuk commentary and the Zadokite Fragment.

[2] J. C. Trever, in *BASOR*, No. 115 (Oct. 1949), pp. 8 ff., identifies the work with the lost *Book of Lamech*, possibly one of the sources of First Enoch.

by the Bialik Foundation at Jerusalem in the latter part of 1948. We look forward to receiving further information about the scrolls in this collection—particularly, of course, the portion of Isaiah which they include.[1] It is noteworthy that the latter, in common with the complete Isaiah scroll of the St. Mark collection, agrees with the Septuagint in reading the opening words of Isa. liii, 11, as: "From the travail of his soul he shall see *light*."

The truce in Palestine made it possible to visit and inspect the cave in February and March, 1949. The inspection was supervised by Mr. G. Lankester Harding, director of antiquities for the Hashimite Kingdom of the Jordan, which at the time of the truce was in control of the district where the cave was situated. With Mr. Harding was Père R. de Vaux of the Dominican École Biblique in Jerusalem, and they were visited twice in the course of the work by Professor O. R. Sellers of the American School and Mr. D. C. Baramki of the Palestine Museum.[2] Not much was left in the cave, as there had already been unofficial inspections. But the identity of the cave was established beyond doubt. The pottery which was left in the cave indicated that at one time about two hundred rolls had been deposited there in jars, covered with inverted bowls. The date of the pottery agreed remarkably with the date assigned to the manuscripts on palaeographical grounds; it was plainly late Hellenistic, with the exception of a lamp and cooking-pot of the Roman period. These last-mentioned objects suggested a visit to the cave in the Roman period, and some people have wondered whether this visitor might not have been Origen! We know that Origen found Hebrew and Greek Biblical manuscripts about A.D. 217, hidden in one or more earthenware jars, in the Jericho neighbourhood, which he used in the preparation of his Hexapla.[3] But perhaps we should resist the temptation to ventilate our strange surmises, and stick to identifications for which there is reasonable evidence.

---

[1] See also H. L. Ginsberg, "The Hebrew University Scrolls from the Sectarian Cache," *BASOR*, No. 112 (December, 1948), pp. 19 ff.; F. M. Cross, Jr., "The Scrolls in the Hebrew University," *BA* 12 (1949), pp. 36 ff.; H. Danby's review of Sukenik's book in *JTS* 50 (1949), pp. 169 ff.

[2] O. R. Sellers, *BASOR*, No. 114 (April, 1949), pp. 5 ff.; G. E. Wright, *BA* 12 (1949), pp. 32 ff.; R. de Vaux, *Revue Biblique* 56 (1949), pp. 234 ff., 586 ff.; G. L. Harding in *The Times*, August 9, 1949, and in *PEFQ*, 1949, pp. 112 ff.

[3] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* vi, 16. Eusebius is now known to have based his report on notes left by Origen, which were rediscovered and republished by Cardinal Mercati in *Studi e Testi* 5 (1901), pp. 28 ff. See Kahle, *op. cit.*, pp. 160 ff.

Some manuscript fragments lying in the cave had clearly been torn from the scrolls already known. Hundreds of other fragments were discovered as the floor of the cave was excavated. But it looks as if some more had already been removed by bedouin or other unofficial visitors, and it is to be hoped that these will soon see the light of day.

These fragments more recently discovered are now being studied by Père de Vaux in Jerusalem and published in successive numbers of the *Revue Biblique*. (Some are receiving special treatment in the British Museum.) They include portions of Genesis, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Judges and the Book of Jubilees (all in Hebrew). The Leviticus fragment (chapters 19–22) is written in a much older script than the others, approximating to that used in the Lachish letters of the early sixth century B.C.[1] A fragment containing Deuteronomy xxxi, 1 shows a text agreeing rather with the Septuagint than with the Masoretic reading.[2] Among some other fragments from the cave which the Syrian Monastery acquired early in 1949 (probably from some unofficial investigator) were three fragments of the Book of Daniel from two different scrolls, showing portions of Dan. i, 10–16; ii, 2–6 (including the place where the Hebrew gives place to Aramaic), and iii, 23–30. It will be specially interesting to know what the palaeographers think of the date of these fragments.

Whatever variations there may be in the dating of the various scrolls and fragments found at 'Ain Feshka, there is a fairly wide consensus of opinion that they all belong to the period preceding the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70. Such is the conclusion not only of the scholars of the American Schools of Oriental Research but of Professor Sukenik of the Hebrew University, Père de Vaux of the Jerusalem École Biblique, Mr. Jacob Leveen of the British Museum,[3] Dr. S. A. Birnbaum of the London School of Oriental and African Studies,[4] and others. There are other views, of course. Professor Solomon Zeitlin of Philadelphia, persists in regarding the whole *cache* as a mediaeval hoax.[5] All the evidence is against this; but there are other scholars who

[1] "A good deal like the alphabet of the Siloam Inscription," says O. R. Sellers in a letter quoted in *BA* 12 (1949), p. 32.

[2] J. Leveen in *The Times*, August 26th, 1949.

[3] *The Listener*, August 25th, 1949; *The Times*, August 26th, 1949.

[4] "The Date of the Isaiah Scroll," *BASOR*, No. 113 (February, 1949), pp. 33 ff.; "The Dating of the Habakkuk Cave Scroll," *JBL* 68 (1949), pp. 161 ff.; *The Times*, August 25th and September 13th, 1949.

[5] *JQR* 39 (1948–49), pp. 235 ff., 337 ff.; 40 (1949–50), pp. 15 ff., 57 ff.

deprecate any untimely haste in dating the manuscripts.[1] Professor G. R. Driver has suggested that, as the text of the Biblical manuscripts resembles that underlying the Vulgate more than that underlying the Septuagint, a date of around A.D. 400 is more likely, pointing out that even in that case the find is a most important one.[2] He urges that two technical investigations should be made—on the character of the ruling (both horizontal, guiding the lines of writing, and vertical, dividing the columns) and the composition of the ink. Ruling with lead and the use of metallic ink, he points out, would (so far as our present knowledge goes) be signs of considerably later date than that assigned to the manuscripts by most of those who have hitherto examined them.[3] Professor D. Winton Thomas of Cambridge has also emphasised the necessity of suspending judgment, until the manuscripts have been studied by a much wider range of scholars, but agrees that "on one matter scholars are not likely to disagree, namely, that these new documents antedate by centuries the oldest Hebrew Biblical manuscripts hitherto known."[4]

What we now await for impatiently is the publication of complete facsimiles of these manuscripts, so that scholars of all lands may be able to study them. Facsimiles of those being studied by the American Orientalists are being prepared under the direction of Professor Burrows, and we expect to see them soon, that of the Isaiah manuscript first of all. We must also hope to receive further reports by other kinds of experts on the condition and age of the writing materials and ink, for the issues at stake are so important that the genuineness and date of these documents must be established as thoroughly as possible.[5]

[1] *Cf.* E. R. Lacheman, "A Matter of Method in Hebrew Palaeography," in *JQR* 40 (1949–50), pp. 15 ff.

[2] *The Times*, August 23rd, 1949. J. Leveen replied to him in *The Times*, August 26th, and T. C. Lethbridge in *The Times*, August 31st. Driver has since made it clear that he does not *deny* the earlier dating (he hopes it is right); but he wishes scholars to bear other possibilities in mind at this initial stage in the study of the scrolls.

[3] *The Times*, September 22nd, 1949.

[4] *The Times*, August 25th, 1949.

[5] Whatever may be the result of an investigation of the ink along the lines suggested by G. R. Driver in his letter to *The Times*, September 22nd, 1949, J. Leveen (letter to *The Times*, August 26th, 1949), quotes Dr. H. J. Plenderleith of the British Museum to the effect that the age of the writing materials cannot be dated within a narrower margin than about a thousand years. In an account of the British Museum fragments (reported in *The Times*, August 12th, 1949), Dr. Plenderleith said that their ink is "a carbon ink, and quite stable."

Already, however, sufficient evidence has been adduced to confirm Professor Albright's view that this is "the greatest manuscript discovery of modern times."[1] A new and undreamed of chapter has opened in Biblical studies.[2]

DISCUSSION:

Mr. J. LEVEEN (Chairman), after paying tribute to the lucid exposition of the subject by the Lecturer, said: There have been some attacks upon the genuineness of these Scrolls, particularly those made by Professor Zeitlin, of New York. In order, as he thought, to clinch the matter, this professor conjured up a Genizah fragment, dated 750 A.D., and asked us to believe that the writing of this document was similar to that of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Unfortunately for the professor, there are two flaws in his arguments. In the first place, there is no real resemblance between the writing of the Scrolls and the Genizah document, as any Hebrew palaeographer could see at a glance. Secondly, it was recently proved convincingly by Dr. J. L. Teicher, of Cambridge University, that the Genizah document's real date was 1050 A.D., the scribe (as sometimes happens) having omitted the "hundreds" in the date.

In England scepticism has so far been confined to one Semitic scholar, Professor G. R. Driver, of Oxford. But his attitude has not been marked by such extremism as that of Zeitlin.

Regarding the dates of these scrolls, we have a weight of circumstantial evidence:

1. There are the MSS. themselves. The forms of the letters are conclusive, especially the elongated final ם, together with ד, ת, ס, י, ע. All the evidence converges on the unassailable antiquity of the documents. We can dismiss the idea of a hoax, or of modern date.

2. The *jars* in which the scrolls were contained are of the second or third century B.C., and the jars cannot be much older than the MSS. Scrolls would not be put into ancient jars, but into new ones—possibly even made at the time for the purpose.

[1] In a letter to J. C. Trever, quoted in *BA* 11 (1948), p. 55. *Cf.* his editorial remark in *BASOR*, No. 110 (April, 1948), p. 2: "unquestionably the greatest manuscript find of modern times."

[2] Three excellent summaries of the discovery and its significance are given by B. J. Roberts in *The Expository Times* 60 (1948–49), pp. 305 ff., in *Religion in Education*, Autumn 1949, pp. 7 ff., and in *The Listener*, September 8th, 1949, pp. 401 ff.

3. We have also the nature of the text as revealed by the fragments. For instance, in four columns of "Isaiah B" there are a dozen variations from the Masoretic text in each column: the text is intermediate between this and the text used as a base for the Septuagint. There is one striking instance where there is a reading corresponding to the Septuagint version: the addition of the word אור in Is. 53: 11—מעמל נפשו יראה אור[1].

This is further evidence of early date.

Dr. Solomon A. Birnbaum said: May I first of all thank the Committee for their kind invitation to this lecture. It was a model of lucid exposition.

There is one observation I should like to make. The lecturer has mentioned that "the date of the pottery agreed remarkably with the date assigned to the manuscripts on palaeographical grounds," but it would have been useful if he had discussed what, to my mind, is *the* decisive evidence—the palaeographical.

Internal as well as archaeological evidence are very often open to most different interpretations, so that in dating a newly discovered document the results may differ by many centuries. Palaeographical evidence, however, provides a safe basis, if handled by a palaeographer. Here we have something tangible to work on, something which can be measured by instruments. Measuring is the basic method of palaeography. By working out a comprehensive system of measurements, letter by letter and age by age, it is possible to establish an unassailable palaeographical basis. Once we have that to start with, it is easy to relate to it the script of any newly discovered document.

A palaeographer can sometimes tell by even a few letters at what time they were written. A good number of columns from the Cave Scrolls have been published, so that the amount of material has been entirely adequate for perfectly reliable palaeographical dating.

These Scrolls are a treasury of material, and work on them will go on for years to come—but as far as the question of their date is concerned, there is no need to suspend judgment. That they are pre-Christian is certain beyond a shade of doubt. Their dates vary: the oldest one is Isaiah Scroll A. Its script is from about 175–150 B.C.E. while that of most of the other Scrolls is from about the middle of the

[1] From the travail of his soul he shall see *light*.

first century B.C.E. The Leviticus Fragments, in the Palaeo-Hebrew script, date from about 450 B.C.E.

Dr. H. J. PLENDERLEITH (Keeper of the Research Laboratory, British Museum) said he had followed with much interest the discussion between palaeographers and archaeologists regarding the supposed antiquity of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the dates assigned to them. Unable to agree among themselves, all parties turned to the Scientist in confident expectation that he would, by testing the writing materials and the ink, be able to resolve their difficulties and assign to the documents a definite date. This, unfortunately, was more than science at present could do. Dr. Plenderleith went on to say that the fragments with which he was personally concerned in the Laboratory were the gleanings from the cave which Mr. Lankester Harding and Père de Vaux had excavated. Twenty-five years of experience in the handling of antiquities had convinced him at once that the materials were genuine, a conviction which was, subsequently, fully justified when the fragments were submitted to scientific examination. Leather and parchment were both identified, but deterioration had changed the microscopic structure to such an extent that it was impossible to tell from what animals the skins were derived, nor how old they were. Some parts of the manuscripts had completely decomposed, and here the material had run together to form a pitch-like solid, highly viscous and sticky, having the characteristics of glue rather than of leather.

As for the ink, Dr. Plenderleith continued, carbon alone was used. Had iron been present it would have shown up at once as some trace of tanning agent could still be detected in the leather fragments, and tannins in the presence of iron cause staining—that is, the fragments would have been virtually stained by iron ink. This absence of iron ink is taken by some scholars to indicate an early date for the documents, but Dr. Plenderleith drew attention to the fact that when man discovered the intricate process of converting skins into leather by using vegetable tannins, he was well on the way to discovering iron ink, as the presence of any soluble iron would, together with the tanning agent, make ink. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that the nature of the ink cannot be regarded as vital evidence for dating purposes. In discussing ink, reference had

been made in *The Times* correspondence to Blau's *Hebräisches Buchwesen*, and Dr. Plenderleith felt that he should take this opportunity of pointing out the danger of accepting at their face value the old recipes quoted there. It is stated, for instance, that the metallic ink which was used at the time of the Talmud was made with copper, whereas, in fact, tannin combined with copper could never result in ink. This is a common error which, no doubt, sprang from the unfortunate name "Copperas" given to ferrous sulphate, a constituent of iron ink. In spite of its name, it contains no copper whatsoever, and for this reason has been responsible for much confusion in technical literature.

Another technical point adduced as a possible means of dating is the presence of ruled lines on which to place or hang the script. In a scroll fragment examined by Dr. Plenderleith, there was exhibited a series of blind tooled parallel lines emanating from a row of ink dots in the margin (possibly intended to be cut off) and it was asserted that the presence of this ruling is evidence that the scrolls must be of a later date. Dr. Plenderleith was unable to agree with this, and was more inclined to support the chairman's suggestion that ruling must have grown up almost simultaneously with writing. He had examined the Codex Sinaiticus (fourth century A.D.) which clearly showed the membranes pricked (in the text) and lines ruled by blind tooling, and an even earlier document, a Ptolemaic papyrus, was also found to be ruled. This latter example was particularly interesting, as the fibres of payrus are usually sufficiently parallel to function as natural lines.

The results of trying to date the MS. by scientific investigation had, so far, proved disappointing. The only positive contribution that science has been able to make is with regard to the actual material itself. When it came into the laboratory it was very brittle, and for the most part glued together by the decomposed tissue, and it was necessary to relax the membrane so that the pages could be separated without breaking, and at the same time solidify, by refrigeration, the decomposed tissue which threatened to engulf and obliterate the script. This was successfully accomplished, and the material restored to a condition suitable for the purposes of study.

Finally, in reply to a question on the possibility of using the radio

carbon figure as an estimate of age, Dr. Plenderleith said that this had already been carefully considered. It was generally agreed that it was possible to date the material by this new scientific method to within 500 years, but this would involve destroying some of the MS. To arrive at a closer approximation it would, in the present state of our knowledge, be necessary to sacrifice more of the material than seemed desirable.

A question was asked, What were the Shapira forgeries, referred to on page 138 ?

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION.

Dr. BASIL ATKINSON wrote :

" May I be allowed to add to the excellent summary of the recent discoveries, which has been made by my friend Mr. F. F. Bruce, a few words to say that early in the present month Professor Sukenik lectured on these scrolls to a representative audience in the University of Cambridge ? In the course of his lecture he expressed the opinion that the scrolls in the cave came from a *geniza*, and his conviction, for which he gave a series of convincing arguments, that they antedate the Maccabaean period. In fact his *terminus a quo* was the Alexandrian conquest in the late fourth century B.C.

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

I have little to add to my paper save to express my warm gratitude to Mr. Leveen for his kindness in taking the chair and placing his palaeographical experience at our disposal as he has done, and to Dr. Birnbaum and Dr. Plenderleith for honouring my lecture with their presence and contributing to the discussion as experts in their respective fields. My failure to emphasize the primacy of the palaeographical evidence for dating the scrolls, as I ought to have done, has been rendered innocuous by the authoritative remarks of two such eminent palaeographers as Mr. Leveen and Dr. Birnbaum.

The first instalment of complete facsimiles from the Syrian collection has now appeared, and Sukenik has published a " Second Survey " of *Megilloth Genuzoth*. These, together with the facsimiles to follow, will engage the close attention of scholars for a long time to come.

The only other point to which I need refer at present is a lecture

delivered in Paris by Professor A. Dupont-Sommer on May 26, 1950 (reported in the *Manchester Guardian* on May 27) and published as a 32-page brochure, *Observations sur le commentaire d'Habacuc découvert près de la Mer Morte* (Paris, 1950). In this he ascribed the composition of the Habakkuk commentary to the year 41 B.C. or thereby, on the basis of its historical allusions, and argued that this and the other documents were hidden at the time of the war of A.D. 66-70. The sect which owned the documents, identified by him with the Covenanters of the Zadokite Fragment, had features closely similar to those of the Essenes. We must wait for further study before deciding between this view and Sukenik's—not to mention the others which have been and will yet be propounded. But a date before A.D. 70 for the documents is becoming increasingly probable.

In answer to the question about the Shapira forgeries, it may be said that these were portions of Deuteronomy in Hebrew, written in characters similar to those on the Moabite Stone, and therefore presumably dating (as it was claimed) from the 9th century B.C. The " discoverer " of these documents, an antiquarian dealer named Shapira, was soon proved to have written them himself on strips of leather cut from the margins of an ordinary synagogue scroll. The exposer of the hoax, the French archaeologist Clermont-Ganneau, wrote of it in *Les fraudes archéologiques en Palestine* (1885); a sympathetic and slightly fictionalized account is given by Shapira's daughter, Myriam Harry, in *La petite fille de Jérusalem* (1914).