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DEAD SEA SCROLLS: TEXTS

Introduction to the Texts

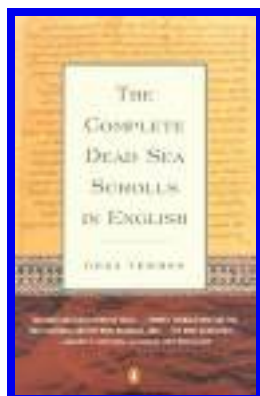
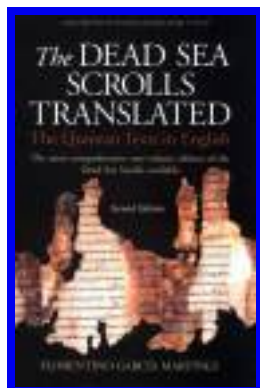
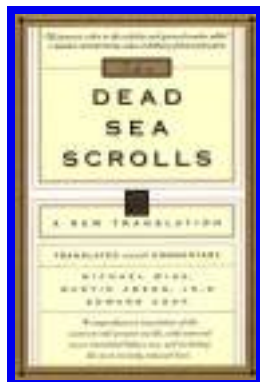
Working from many thousands of scroll fragments recovered in eleven caves near Qumran, researchers have identified approximately 800 different original manuscripts. A few scrolls were fairly intact when found, others have been tentatively pieced together, still more exist only as small scraps of parchment. The preserved portions of a scroll often give only glimpses of what might have existed in the complete text. (See the [Introduction](#) to the collection for more background information.)

DSS texts are identified by a number and letter combination, indicating the cave from which they were recovered: "1Q" indicates the text was found in Qumran cave 1; "4Q" means found in Qumran cave 4. This initial code is followed by either a second number (the catalog file number assigned to each fragment as it was archived) or by a few letters that abbreviate an alternative name given to a fragment by researchers, usually the supposed title of the text. Many important scrolls existed in more than one copy. Surviving pieces of these were sometimes found in different caves. For example, the section of text from the *Book of Secrets* (listed below), is reconstructed from fragment 27 found in Qumran Cave 1 (1Q27) and fragments 299-301 of a different copy found in Qumran Cave 4 (4Q299-301).

A variety of literary forms can be identified among the surviving texts. Although there is no generally accepted system of categorizing the scrolls, roughly speaking the manuscripts fall into one or more of the following genres: Biblical texts, pentateuchal stories and commentaries; legal and ritual texts; prophets stories and commentaries; psalms and poetry; wisdom literature; prophecy and apocalypics (visions); sectarian literature; and "miscellaneous things that don't fit anywhere else". Some texts can be assigned to

[Bookstore:](#)

***The Dead Sea Scrolls -
in several different
editions***



several categories, depending on the subjective reading of the interpreter, which is why no system works very well. The great variety manifest in DSS texts has led some scholars to question whether a single sect at Qumran would have created or maintained such an apparently eclectic collection.

(While the resources archived here at *The Gnosis Archive* are permanent and have been stable resources for over 15 years, many other internet sites do suddenly disappear. We apologize for any links below to defunct resources at other internet locations -- this is beyond our control; a Google search might find them in a new location.)

Visit the [Bookstore](#) for a complete listing of current editions of the complete Dead Sea Scrolls in translation.

Texts Archived in the Gnostic Society Library

This is a varied collection of short texts, representative of several types of DSS literature. One will note several unique mythical motifs developed in the DSS manuscripts, as well as imaginative or visionary reworking of traditional themes. Study of the DSS has given new understanding of how dynamic and heterodox Judaism was in the intertestamental period.

[The Divine Throne Chariot](#)

[The Book of Secrets \(1Q27, 4Q299-301\)](#)

[The Thanksgiving Psalms \(1QH^a\)](#)

[The Parable of the Bountiful Tree \(4Q302a\)](#)

[A Baptismal Liturgy \(4Q414\)](#)

[The Coming of Melchizedek \(11Q13\)](#)

[Tongues of Fire \(1Q29, 4Q376\)](#)

[The Book of Giants \(4Q203, 1Q23, 2Q26, 4Q530-532, 6Q8\)](#)

Texts Presented in the Library of Congress Exhibit

The Dead Sea Scroll Exhibit at the Library of Congress included translations and high-quality photographs of

selected sections of several scrolls - portions of the exhibit are archived here in our collection, below. Each scroll text is accompanied by a short commentary, a complete physical description of the scroll or fragment, and a list of references.

[Psalms *Tehillim*](#)

[Phylactery *Tefillin*](#)

[The Community Rule *Serkeh ha-Yahad*](#)

[Calendrical Document *Mishmarot*](#)

[Some Torah Precepts *Miqsat Ma`ase ha-Torah*](#)

[Enoch *Hanokh*](#)

[Hosea Commentary *Pesher Hoshe`a*](#)

[Prayer for King Jonathan *Tefillah li-Shlomo shel Yonatan ha-Melekh*](#)

[Leviticus *Va-Yikrah*](#)

[Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice *Shirot `Olat ha-Shabbat*](#)

[Damascus Document *Brit Damesek*](#)

[The War Rule *Serekh ha-Milhamah*](#)

The Digital Dead Sea Scrolls: Israel Museum, Jerusalem

This excellent resource became available in September 2011. Complete digital reproductions of five principal scrolls from the Dead Sea are provided online; each text can be "clicked" to see translations of the section. The high-resolution images of the scrolls are accompanied by several introductory video presentations. The following Scrolls are featured in the exhibit:

[The Great Isaiah Scroll](#)

[The Temple Scroll](#)

[The War Scroll](#)

[The Community Rule](#)

Complete Scholarly Translations of Scroll Texts with Commentary

Great Isaiah Scroll (Fred Miller) -- This site presents the most impressive internet presentation of a complete scroll from the DSS. While the site offers little of interest to a casual reader, it gives glimpses into the issues involved in the analysis and translation of a scroll. It includes black & white plates of each column of The Great Isaiah Scroll (one of the first seven scrolls found in Cave 1, and the oldest extant Hebrew biblical manuscript), along with detailed notes on the physical condition of the manuscript and comparison of its orthography and wording with the standard Masoretic text. The technical discussions of the site are obviously intended for scholars familiar with Hebrew.

Fragments of the Book of Enoch from Qumran Cave 7 (Ernest Muro - pdf file) Again, a document of limited general interest. It is dedicated to the detailed analysis of a tiny scroll fragment in Greek, once argued (inaccurately, it appears) to be from a New Testament text. (Of course, the presence of a Christian text in the DSS find would have supported the original efforts to link the Qumran texts with Christian history; this tiny fragment of Greek text therefore became a focus of debate.) This site illustrates the complex task of reconstructing, identifying and then interpreting DSS fragments. It includes photos of the fragment with transcription and translation, as well as two articles (by E. Muro & E. Puech refuting claims that these are fragments of New Testament texts. (We have here archived a copy of the files which are not longer available on the internet.)

Detailed Images of Two Major Scrolls

Great Isaiah Scroll -- Exhibition at the Israel Museum Jerusalem (The Dorot Foundation Dead Sea Scrolls Information and Study Center) with a detailed reproduction of the scroll.

The Temple Scroll -- Exhibition at the Israel Museum Jerusalem (The Dorot Foundation Dead Sea Scrolls Information and Study Center) with a detailed

reproduction of the scroll and [further detailed information](#) on the scroll.

The Dead Sea Scrolls Collection at The Gnostic Society Library

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