

# **Dr. Jeffrey Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 25, Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls, Part 3**

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This is Dr. Jeffrey Hudon in his teaching on Biblical Archaeology. This is session 25, Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls, Part 3.

Okay, after the scrolls were found and the Jordanian general discovered the cave, there was a need to assemble a team of experts, a team of linguistic experts, and biblical scholars, to edit and study these scrolls.

And so, Roland De Vaux, who was actually excavating the site, recruited a large group of scholars, actually not that large initially, to publish what were thousands of fragments of scrolls being continually purchased from the Bedouin. Again, the Bedouin always beat the scholars and archaeologists to these caves, with few exceptions, one exception in particular. So, initially, seven scholars were brought to Jerusalem, and they began this huge task, which took many decades, ultimately, of piecing together the fragments and figuring out where the missing portions are, and identifying, sometimes very, very small fragments of text, where that fragment is from, whether it's from a biblical text, a sectarian text, or perhaps even a commentary.

So, these scholars came to Jerusalem, usually during the summer. Sometimes they would visit the dig, but usually stayed in working on the scrolls in the Rockefeller Museum in East Jerusalem. And this continued through funding from John D. Rockefeller and other patrons through 1960.

It's important to point out that this was in Jordanian Jerusalem, again. The West Bank was under Jordanian control, so no Israeli or Jewish scholars were invited because of the Jordanians' pressure.

Okay, so we're going to look at some of the personalities involved with this. The first person is Roland Deveau, a French Dominican priest, archaeologist, and biblical historian. He was a director of the Ecole Biblique, and a very highly respected scholar, a very prolific author.

He wrote many books, many of them translated into English. Unfortunately, some of his excavations remained unpublished after his death. His excavations at Qumran are one of those.

Slowly but surely, the final reports are coming out, and the studies surrounding his work at Qumran and again, painfully slow, but they are appearing. His interpretations of Qumran, I think, were sound and carefully considered, but they were very much attacked by many scholars because they thought he was interpreting the site based on his own understanding of monastic living. He identified it more as a monastery.

Of course, his critics saw that as him relying on his own Roman Catholic background. But essentially, what these Jewish zealots and sects were doing was very similar to the later monastic movement in Christianity. A difficult job he had with Lancaster Harding—here's a picture of Deveaux and Lancaster Harding there at Qumran—was to purchase fragments from the Bedouin.

They had to raise funds because the prices for these fragments were, again, much higher than the original purchases. Finally, they agreed on a price with Kondo, the middleman, the Palestinian middleman, of \$2.80 per square centimeter for a Dead Sea Scroll text. They begged and borrowed and got the money together, by any means necessary, to purchase every scroll fragment.

That was their first and foremost endeavor of importance. The first scholar to be asked or invited to help with the Dead Sea Scrolls was a young scholar by the name of Frank Moore Cross. He was a recent Ph.D. student at Johns Hopkins, where he studied under Albright.

He was a brilliant scholar and, again, later in his career, became kind of a successor to Albright as a doyen of American biblical studies. He also worked on an early copy of Samuel's book, and very, very important work that he was editing. And we'll have a slide later on that talks about one of the texts that he worked on.

But one of the things he discovered, and he showed Albright, and Albright agreed, was that sometimes early biblical texts have passages or words that seem to follow the Septuagint closer than the Masoretic text. And that was considered kind of a heresy at this time. The Masoretic text was the official canonical text of the Old Testament.

But he showed, especially with this one passage, that early Septuagint copies may actually preserve an earlier text behind the Masoretic text. He wrote an excellent book called *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, which I believe is still in print. What Cross contributed most was his ability to date texts by their script and paleography.

And he actually chuckled once when he said that the Carbon 14 dating, which came out at the same time to date the papyrus and leather of these texts, was confirmed by his dating of the text by the shape of the letters. Another brilliant scholar was a

Polish priest by the name of Józef Milik. And he was given the majority of the sectarian texts to edit.

He said he was called by some the fastest man with a fragment. He was very prolific in his writing, but that slowed down tremendously in the 1970s.

He left the priesthood, married, and essentially, or eventually, gave his text that he was assigned to others. I want to point out this picture here of him working on some Dead Sea Scroll text while smoking a cigarette right above his work. So, the early work with the text was very sloppy and very careless concerning its conservation and preservation.

Of course, that would never be done now. But back then, things were much more loose and open. And they even used scotch tape to tape fragments together.

That would be unthinkable now. Subsequent years saw a lot of work, restoration work, to clean that tape residue off of these 2000-year-old texts. Another scholar, a young British linguist, John Strugnell, was a Light Cross Presbyterian.

He later converted to Catholicism. But he was brilliant, but as you can see, quite erratic. Didn't publish very much.

He was very critical of the work of others. He eventually became the editor of The Scroll Project but had an issue with alcoholism. He was interviewed by an Israeli journalist while he was under the influence and called Judaism a horrible religion. And, of course, that brought his downfall, not only from the team but from Harvard University, where he was teaching.

His defenders point out that Strugnell brought Jewish and Israeli scholars into the Dead Sea Scroll team, whereas they weren't involved before. And he was always helpful and pleasant with Jewish colleagues. So, again, he was an alcoholic and had what he claimed was manic depression as well.

So, he unfortunately had a sad, kind of sad ending. But he did publish an important letter with Elisha Qumran that was supposedly written by the leader of the Qumran community. And it has had a lot of controversy around that as well.

Patrick Skehan died early. You can see him in the center of the picture there on the top with the beard. And he was a Catholic scholar.

And he was, again, politics got in a little bit. But at 45 years of age, he was a Catholic scholar. And he was a Catholic scholar.

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And he was a Catholic scholar and he was old.

He was the oldest scholar of the group, which is still quite young, in my opinion, and worked mostly on biblical scrolls. His student, Eugene Ullrich, who retired from Notre Dame recently, took over his publication duties when he died in 1980.

Jean P. Starkie was a French Dominican scholar. He was a monk and scholar, and he was an expert in Aramaic and Nabataean script. He was teaching in Beirut when he was asked to join the team, and his texts, which he did not complete, were completed by others when he passed away.

The most controversial scholar who was invited was a young scholar named John Allegro. He was a British Protestant who became an atheist or agnostic during this time, and he taught at the University of Manchester.

He was a person that Frank More Cross called one of the few amoral people I've ever met in my life. He would take material from other scholars, take scrolls, borrow them and then publish them without any kind of permission. He wrote several books trying to simply sensationalize the scrolls and his later works were simply unreadable.

They were so ridiculous, such as the Sacred Mushroom and the Cross, and I won't describe his conclusions in that book, and he died in disgrace in 1988. Sadly, recently now, he's kind of been propped up as some sort of a hero by liberal scholars, and ironically, some of his worst works have been republished. Now the scholars that worked on the Dead Sea Scrolls worked at the Rockefeller Museum.

This is a museum that was opened in 1938 in East Jerusalem and this is a scollery or room that they pieced together the text. Here you've got Patrick Skehan and John Allegro working on them and it must have been an enjoyable time being one of the scholars working on the Dead Sea Scrolls and working with your colleagues and the joy of discovering a text or a passage or identifying something that hasn't been identified before. It was certainly a heady day.

This is a picture of G. Lancaster Harding himself working on some scrolls and again smoking that cigarette right above two thousand-year-old bits and pieces of text. So, what were these people that had this community? Again most scholars believe, obviously some don't, there's all sorts of wild interpretations about the Dead Sea Scrolls and Qumran, but most scholars believe they were some sort of sect close to or identified with the Essenes. They called themselves HaYahad, the community, and this is an interesting artist's depiction of the teacher of righteousness talking to the followers at Qumran.

The Hasidim or pious one was a movement that began around 160 BC devoted to the law, very strict Orthodox Jews, and they believed that the coming of Messiah was

hindered because of the lack of righteousness shown by the Jews and especially by the priestly class and the rulers. And, of course, the three philosophies or branches of Judaism that Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian, told us were the Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots. And, of course, the Essenes he described as extremely pious Jews who lived simple lives as separatists in communities.

Now they were expelled or left Jerusalem during this time and then founded these isolated communities simply to wait, study, live righteous lives, pious lives, and wait for the Messiah. Some of their sectarian literature had this idea of a war that would happen between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness, and that was one of the earliest scrolls found in the caves of Qumran. So, the Hasidim, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, all right.

Essenes separated themselves physically from other Jews to attain moral perfection and ritual purity and avoided pollution and the perverse side of society at that time. Life in the desert and again looking ahead to the Christian monastic movement, you can see the parallels here. Rigorous simplicity and discipline while they wait for their new birth or resurrection as a new Israel, the new covenant, the last days, a new exodus, a new conquest, prepare the way of the Lord.

It is interesting to find out that one of the first seven scrolls found was a beautifully preserved copy of Isaiah, and when you go to Isaiah 40 there is a marked space that they leave in the text when the words there say, Kol Korei Ba Midbar, Panu Derek Adonai, a voice crying in the wilderness, wilderness Midbar, again they lived in the wilderness of Judah, Panu make straight, open up, again imperative form, open up a way for the Lord. So, Essenes lived in the belief that they were priestly apocalyptics rather than true ascetics. They were both, but they really saw the end of the world as coming and coming soon if they could live righteous enough lives. They lived throughout Judea, not just at Qumran, again isolated communities and villages.

Josephus numbered them to around 4,000 individuals, camps and congregations were used for these groups that were dotting the landscape of Judea. Qumran may have been a mother's settlement of the group, and individual followers could have lived in caves and cells and then united or brought together for certain ceremonies and meetings. Essenes practiced communal living with shared quarters, meals, clothing, and common treasury, as well as self-appointed poverty.

So again, as I mentioned, they could have lived in individual cells coming together for certain purposes while others could have had more of a living together in a normal way. Communal meals were especially sacred, ritual bathing was carried out, and again, you have ten mikvehs at Qumran showing that. So interesting, fascinating lives, and again, one of the questions that many people have is why these weren't mentioned in the Gospels. Was there interest in Jesus from these people from these groups? And the answer is probably yes.

John the Baptist certainly could have been associated with a group and very likely was in some capacity, but they were looking for a different outcome. They were looking for a different apocalyptic ending and a rabbi from Nazareth preaching love and again allowing himself to die the death on a cross was not what they were looking for. So, I think most of them simply did not think and did not see Jesus for who he was, unfortunately.

His cryptic references in the sectarian literature of a wicked priest could be a code name instead of the name for John Hyrcanus or Alexander Janais, the two Hasmonean kings in the early 1st century BC. The rulebook for the community was called the Rule of the Community, Serek Ha Yahad, and the Damascus document, and both of those give some insight into this fervently religious group, but still, it's somewhat cryptic. All right.

Interesting to point out that Josephus mentions an actual Essene quarter in Jerusalem, and it apparently was located in the southwestern part of the city on Mount Zion, or modern Mount Zion, and it was located close to a gate called the Essene gate, and the reason for this is which is somewhat comical because if you've been to Jerusalem and walked through the city, you'd understand this is that they saw Jerusalem is so sacred and so holy they would refuse to defecate inside the city so they had to run out of the city to do their natural need to fulfill their natural need so they did not pollute the city and so the Essene gate had to be close and as one of my professors, Israeli professors, said you would see these pious Essenes holding their bottoms running out of the city from time to time so they would go to a place called Beit Sol and that would be their place to relieve themselves outside of the city. Excavations in the 1980s on Mount Zion uncovered three superimposed gateways that the excavator Bargil Pixner who is this gentleman here identified as the site of the Essene gate and that was published in both in journals and in one of the Jerusalem revealed books that describe the various excavations around the city so again Jerusalem at during the New Testament period again encompassed Mount Zion and the Western Hill like the later centuries of the Old Testament Jerusalem and this Essene gate was above right above the Hinnom Valley and this is probably where the Essenes lived as a community. It's important to note, too, that in this vicinity, there have been several mikveot discovered, which seem to agree with the Essenes using that area.

Another picture of artist reconstruction of the Essene gate and Beit Sol or the place to use the restroom and what the Essene gate looked like. Okay, with that that leaves, that leaves us at the end of our discussion of the Dead Sea Scrolls and archaeology and our archaeological presentation. Thank you very much.

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