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Dead Sea Lecture Four:  
The Scrolls and the New Testament: Why Such Controversy?

We now come to what I laughingly call “the juicy side” of the Dead Sea Scrolls study, that aspect of the Scroll study that has generated great controversy. Specifically, we look now at the relationship of the Dead Sea Scrolls to the New Testament and the relationship of the Qumran community to early Christianity. There is no doubt that this topic has generated considerable interest, particularly as some scholars have claimed an extraordinarily close kinship between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament, claiming that the Scrolls have been application for understanding the person of Jesus. Some have gone so far as to identify the Qumran community as “early Christian,” or as spawning Christianity. While such claims win considerable attention from the press, the vast majority of scholars would say these claims go too far. The mainstream of opinion notes that there are blatant differences between the two groups and the literature they produced. Let me state from the outset, categorically: the Dead Sea Scrolls do not directly mention Jesus. Indeed, they do not directly mention any New Testament figure. It is generally agreed that no part of any New Testament book, or any early Christian text, has been found among the innumerable scraps removed from the eleven excavated caves. There are parallels between the New Testament texts and the Dead Sea Scrolls, but they are indirect. It is possible that Essene material or themes influenced early Christian writers, but the two movements were distinctly distinguishable from one another, as their respective literature demonstrates.

Yet some scholars have insisted on linking the two communities more closely than the evidence would allow. One of the early scholars of the Dead Sea Scrolls, French writer Andre Dupont-Sommer, was moved to assert some remarkable parallels between the Teacher of Righteousness, the founder and original leader of the Qumran group. I offer a sample of his work:

“The Galilean Master, as He is presented to us in the writings of the New Testament, appears in many respects as an astonishing reincarnation of the Master of Justice [=The Teacher of Righteousness]. Like the latter He preached penitence, poverty, humility, love of one's neighbor, chastity. Like him, He prescribed the observance of the Law of Moses, the whole Law, but the Law finished and perfected, thanks to His own revelations. Like him He was the Elect and the Messiah of God, the messiah redeemer of the world. Like him, He was the object of the hostility of the priests, the party of the Sadducees. Like him, He was condemned and put to death. Like him, He pronounced judgment on Jerusalem, which was taken and destroyed by the Romans for having put Him to death. Like him, at the end of time, He will be the supreme judge. Like him, He founded a Church whose adherents fervently awaited His glorious return.”

Later scholars have noted that Dupont-Sommer's claims rested on a serious misreading of the texts, but his arguments touched a wide circle of readers, not least of which was a popular and serious journalist by the name of Edmund Wilson, who wrote a much-publicized article on the Dead Scrolls that spawned much notoriety. His article, “Scrolls From the Dead Sea,” published in the *New Yorker* in the late 1950's, popularized and promulgated the notion that the relationship of the Essenes of Qumran to the early Christians could be characterized, to use his words, “as successive phases of a movement.” He issued this claim for Qumran: “The monastery, this structure of stone that endures, between the bitter waters and precipitous cliffs, with its ovens and its inkwells, its mill and its cesspool, its constellation of sacred fonts and the unadorned graves of its dead, is perhaps, more than Bethlehem or Nazareth, the cradle of Christianity.” He charged that Jewish and Christian scholars would be reluctant to admit the full extent of what the scrolls implied because it would unsettle their coveted religious assumptions. Jewish scholars, he said, were too anxious to protect the authority of the

Masoretic Text and were unwilling to admit that Christianity was a natural development from any sort of Judaism. The Christians, of course, were nervous lest the uniqueness of Christ be challenged. Wilson concluded, in a oft-quoted line: “It would seem an immense advantage for cultural and social intercourse – that is, for civilization – that the rise of Christianity should, at least, be generally understood as simply an episode of human history rather than propagated as dogma and divine revelation. The study of the Dead Sea scrolls – with the direction it is not taking – cannot fail, one would think to conduce to this.”

Scholars have enjoyed a good chuckle at Wilson’s pronouncements. His sweeping conclusions, based on conjecture drawn from flimsy evidence, while apparently obvious to Wilson, are not obvious to most of them.

Of course, even to this day, some scholars try to draw Christianity and Dead Sea Scrolls into close relationship. Again, they have won a grand hearing in the media, but their pronouncements have not converted many within the scholarly community. The paleographical and archeological evidence seem conclusively to document that these scrolls were earlier than the New Testament community, and their themes at certain marked points were quite different.

Yet some scholars persist in making dramatic pronouncements: Robert Eisenman, for example, has posited the existence of a “Zadokite” movement that existed for centuries, a line of special priests that included Ezra, Judas Maccabeus, John the Baptist, Jesus and his brother James. Barbara Thiering has identified John the Baptist as the Teacher of Righteousness and Jesus as the “Wicked Priest” of the Qumran texts. She is convinced that the Gospels are coded documents that can be read on the simplistic, literal level (which most of us have done for 1900 years), or they can be read at a more profound, symbolic level, once you have understood the code, which of course she has produced.

The scholar I personally trust most in evaluating the Dead Sea Scrolls is a Notre Dame professor named James Vanderkam, who makes this observation:

“While a series of writers have drawn controversial conclusions about Qumran in relation to Christianity, more scholars have quietly, patiently, engaged in the work of establishing precisely the points of contact and the differences between the two literatures and how one might explain their interrelations.”

One of the first scholars to work with the Dead Sea Scrolls, Miller Burrows of Yale, has written about the similarities of John the Baptist’s preaching to the Qumran community, has noted parallels between Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness, and catalogued the obvious points of coherence in their communal structure: 12 nonpriests in the Qumran council and the 12 apostles; similar forms of worship like baptism and meals; similar practices, like sharing property communally, and similarities of doctrine. But in the end Burrows made this assessment: “For myself I must go farther and confess that, after studying the Dead Sea Scrolls for seven years, I do not find my understanding of the New Testament substantially affected. Its Jewish background is clearer and better understood, but its meaning has neither been changed nor significantly clarified.”

That judgment has been echoed by Krister Stendahl, former dean of the Divinity School at Harvard: “It is true to say that the Scrolls add to the background of Christianity, but they add so much that we arrive at a point where the significance of similarities definitely rescues Christianity from false claims of originality in the popular sense and leads us back to a new grasp of its true foundation in the person and the events of its Messiah.”

#### A. Points of Similarity Examined

Most scholars would say that the two communities were distinct and marked by theological differences. Nevertheless, there are also similarities between the two in theological vocabulary, in theological themes, and in several organization and ritual practices. Each of them saw themselves as participants in a new covenant and each of them was the product of the same foundational parent, normative Judaism.

### 1. Language:

- a. *Use of “the many”*: though the New Testament is written in Greek, we know that Jesus spoke Aramaic, so we do not have his words in the language in which they were spoken. But the Gospels record Jesus as using a Semitic phrase meaning, “the many,” or “the majority,” [ton pleion]. For example, Mark 14: 23-24 says of Jesus: “Then he took a cup and after giving thanks, he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.’” Likewise Paul uses this phrase in Second Corinthians, where he says, “But if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but to some extent . . . to all of you. This punishment by the majority is enough for such a person.” (2 Corinthians 2: 5-6)

Likewise, in the Manual of Discipline full membership at Qumran was designated by the Hebrew word that lies behind Paul’s concept of “the many/majority.” Says the Manual: “And in an Assembly of the Congregation [ha-rabbim = “the many”] no man shall speak without the consent of the Congregation” [ha-rabbim].

- b. The Hebrew word that has been translated in the Dead Sea Scrolls as “*the Guardian*,” [ha-mebaqqer] is the transitional equivalent of episkopos (bishop/overseer) in the New Testament. The description of the role of the Qumran Guardian somewhat resembles the qualifications and role of the “Overseer” as described in some of the New Testament letters.
- c. *Certain Pauline phrases* have Qumran overtones: “righteousness of God,” “works of the law,” “sons of light,” “congregation of God.” Paul’s letter known as 2 Corinthians, has attracted considerable attention for its thematic parallels to Qumran, especially 2 Cor. 6: 14-7:1 : “Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship is there between light and darkness? What agreement does Christ have with Beliar? Or what does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, as God said, ‘I will live in them and walk among them and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters says the Lord Almighty.’ Since we have these promises, beloved, let us clean ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, making holiness perfect in the fear of God.”

Qumran themes abound in this passage: no association between the righteous and unrighteous; the dualism of light and darkness; the name Beliar (or Belial), a term used often in Qumran documents for the Evil One; an exhortation to purity, which is related to holiness. No evidence exists to prove that Paul picked up these ideas from the Essenes, much less copied them from a Dead Sea document, but it is certainly true that his thoughts and those of the Qumran community cohere to a remarkable degree in this particular passage. It is possible that in his travels he became acquainted with their thoughts.

- d. *The Sermon on the Mount* also contains several Qumran-sounding words and phrases. For example, the phrase “poor in spirit,” is found both in Matthew and in the War Rule. Jesus encourages people not to use oaths; so, too did the Essenes. Both Jesus and the Manual Discipline speak of the duty to turn the

other cheek. Jesus' use of antitheses -- "You have heard that was said . . . but I say to you . . ." -- sounds reminiscent of the Dead Sea's "Works of the Torah," which introduces disagreements between the sect and its opponents by saying, "You know . . . but we think/say . . ."

## 2. John the Baptist

In the 1970's a Spanish Jesuit named Jose' O'Callaghan, generated a stir when he declared that Qumran's Cave 7, which had yielded a variety of Greek fragments, contained several scraps of New Testament texts, including, Mark, Acts, Romans, 1 Timothy, James and 2 Peter. Had he been right, virtually every theory about the New Testament's development would have had to be revised. But upon further review scholars have generally rejected O'Callaghan's claim that any of the Cave 7 papyri are fragments of New Testament documents. As I noted above, no one has been able to substantiate a find of any New Testament literature among the thousands of Qumran fragments.

Others have suggested that various New Testament figures are represented in the Qumran documents, though they are referred to in code. Various suggestions have been advanced linking John the Baptist or Jesus with the figure of the Teacher of Righteousness or the Wicked Priest, but these have not won any mainstream backing. Yet even scholars who shy away from audacious pronouncements think it possible that some New Testament people may have had some contact with Qumran.

John the Baptist: He has especially been a candidate for contact with the Qumran for several reasons. First, his father was a priest, and when he was born his father said about him: "And you, child, will be called prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." (Luke 1: 76-79)

Luke adds: "The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel." (1:80)

John's preaching is marked by eschatological preaching, by the necessity of repentance before the great day of judgment dawned. He was known by his unusual clothing and strict diet. He baptized people in the Jordan River. Moreover, he operated in a region close to the Dead Sea, "in Bethany across the Jordan," and "at Aenon near Salim because water was abundant there." While neither site has been identified with assurance, both seem to have been to the north of Qumran, yet his wide-ranging travels and ministry could have brought him in contact with the Qumran people. And his practice of baptism for the purpose of repentance parallels the Qumran community's washing in water for the purpose of cleansing and sanctification. No doubt the Qumran complex, which had stairwells leading into its cisterns, practiced regular ritual baths. True, John's baptism was a one-time event, whereas the Qumran community seems to have practiced baptism as a recurring ritual, but both were baptisms of repentance. And both acts of baptism, unlike the baptism practiced on proselytes from other faiths, were intended for Jews. Moreover, the Manual of Discipline clearly indicates that the Qumran community thought by going into the wilderness, they were preparing the way for the coming of the Lord through their study of the Torah. In that, their purpose compares similarly to John's intent for preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah.

## 3. Shared Practices

One startling truth that makes scholars wonder if the early Christian community had some contact with Qumran is the fact that both groups shared many similar practices. Two of these shared practices in particular are quite striking.

- a. *Shared Property*: Luke, the first Christian church historian, wrote this of the Christian church: “All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.” (Acts 2: 44-45) He added later: “Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common.”

New Testament scholars cannot help but compare this attitude toward property to what the Manual of Discipline, Josephus and Pliny the Elder said about the Qumran community and Essenes. Both groups practiced the merging of people’s private property; both groups seem to have detailed procedure for admitting new members. The practices at Qumran and the practices of the first Christian Church in Jerusalem were remarkably similar in their attitude toward shared property.

- b. *The Communal Meal*: The Gospels speak of the last supper that Jesus shared with his disciples. John says, “While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread and after blessing he broke it, gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the wine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.’”

Likewise Qumran had a meal in which only full members could participate, a meal that featured bread and wine. Only those who had been in the community a full year could eat the food; only those who had been in the community for two years were allowed to drink with the congregation. Those who were guilty of slandering the community, for example, were excluded for the meal for a year. Such a concern for purity within the meal reminds us of Paul who said, “Whoever therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. Examine yourselves and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves. For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.” (I Cor. 1: 27-30)

Hear the Manual of Discipline: “When they meet at the communal table to set out bread and wine, and the communal table is arranged to eat and to drink wine, no one shall extend his hand to the first portion of the bread and wine before the priest. For he shall bless the first portion of the bread and the wine and shall extend his hand to the bread first. Afterwards the Messiah of Israel shall extend his hands to the bread. Afterwards, all of the congregation of the community shall bless each according to his importance.”

Like the Christian Lord’s Supper, the Pure Meal of Qumran was messianic, eaten in the presence of the Messiah of Israel and his priestly colleague. The meal is only for those who are ritually pure. It is meant to be a meal practiced in the last days, as an expressly

eschatological meal, just in the same way we eat and drink of the Lord's Supper, "until he comes." The Meal's messianic character, the prominence of bread and wine, the fact that it is to be taken regularly, the fact it is eschatological in orientation – all these are points of contact between the Christian Lord's Supper and the Qumran Pure Meal.

#### 4. Belief in the Messiah

Both the Qumran and Christian groups were messianic in orientation. Both looked toward the end of history. Certainly there are indications in the New Testament that the early Christians thought the world was coming to an imminent end. So, too, the participants in Qumran were preparing for the end of history by obeying God's open and hidden demands, preparing the way for God's ultimate intervention.

Before it was discovered at Qumran, a copy of the Damascus Document had been discovered around the start of the twentieth century in Cairo. The work was published in 1910. In the document was a phrase: "The Messiah of Aaron and Israel." Scholars had wondered: were they looking for one Messiah who would represent all of Israel, or were there two Messiahs, one from the priestly side of Aaron and one for the rest of Israel? This question remained unanswered until the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. The Manual of Discipline expressly says, "The Messiahs of Aaron and Israel." This plural form was unambiguous evidence that the people of Qumran expected not one but two messiahs. The Rule of the Congregation pictured an eschatological meal at which both Messiahs were present, a priest who presided over the meal -- and the Messiah of Israel. This expectation of a priestly Messiah *and* a political Messiah for the end time are found several times in Qumran documents. The Messiah of Israel will be a descendent of David and receives several titles: Branch of David, Messiah, and Prince of the Congregation. His job is to defeat Israel's foes and execute judgment, effect atonement and defeat the forces of evil. The Priestly Messiah advises the Davidic Messiah. Eventually, the Davidic Messiah carries the day for God in behalf of the sons of light against the sons of darkness; afterward God will raise the dead and execute judgment. For the righteous a new era of communion with God and the angels will commence, and a new Jerusalem will be established, with a new temple, in which the proper worship as established in Qumran will become universal. The parallels to eschatological Christian thought are fairly obvious.

I must comment briefly on the controversy that centers around the "Pierced Messiah text," published in 1991. Robert Eisenman translated a fragment from the scrolls to read that the Messiah would be pierced and killed for the sake of the humanity, a Qumranic pre-figuring of Christ's role as a suffering servant. Eisenman's claim generated great interest. However, as scholars examined the fragment more closely, they became convinced that it is the Messiah who is doing the killing, exterminating the wicked in behalf of God. So what was thought to be a direct parallel to Christianity proved not to be the case.

#### 5. Dualistic Themes:

An emphasis on the great antithesis between good and evil, light and darkness, is found in both Qumran documents and Christianity. Consider this passage:

"God has created man to govern the world, and has appointed for him two spirits in which to walk until the time of His visitation: the spirits of truth and falsehood. Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of falsehood spring from a source of darkness. All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of

Light and walk in the ways of light, but all the children of falsehood are ruled by the Angel of Darkness and walk in the ways of darkness.”

I could tell you that this passage comes from the New Testament and you might struggle to find it, yet you would suspect it is there. In fact, it is a quote from the Manual of Discipline. Yet the same kind of rhetoric is found in Paul and John. Paul asks, “What fellowship is there between light and darkness?” John quotes Jesus as saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the Light of life.” Or: “The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. . . . While you have the light, believe in the light so that you may become children of light.”

Both Qumran and the Christian community saw themselves as children of light, and both looked toward a day when the Messiah would bring judgment upon all creation and would establish a realm of peace and proper fellowship with God. Though the two communities may not have known each other existed, their similarities in thought and practice point to the currents of intellectual thought and theological themes that were extant among Palestinian Jewish groups during this time, thoughts and themes that came to be crystallized in two distinct movements, one of which was forcibly extinguished around AD 70, the other that continues to this day. It can also be said that while Christianity was deeply nourished by the Jewish soil in which it was rooted, Christianity’s emphasis on the historical Jesus as the Messiah, their understanding of Jesus’ crucifixion as a revelation of the nature of God, and his resurrection as a manifestation of God’s eschatological power, distinguished the Jewish Christians from all their compatriots.

## B. Why did the Dead Sea Scrolls Become So Controversial?

The Dead Sea Scrolls in the last twenty years have generated considerable public controversy and scholarly acrimony. As we close our study of these works I want to spend a few moments explaining why this has been the case. Part of the problem rooted in the difficulty of scholarship, part in difficult scholars.

We go back to where we began, with the first seven manuscripts that were found in the first cave. These were made available to the scholarly world with commendable speed. That was true partially because most were in rather good condition and presented comparatively few problems in reconstruction and reading. The Biblical scrolls didn’t even need to be translated since they were virtually identical to the Masoretic text which has been the basis for all translations of the Hebrew Bible, our Old Testament. By 1956, all the texts of the first cave were made available to any who wanted to examine them.

And yet as these texts were moving toward publication, new caves were being explored and new texts were being discovered. These were handled by a small group of scholars assigned to work on them. Most of these texts involved the so-called minor caves, Caves 2-3; Caves 5-10. Manuscripts from Cave 11, which were in mostly excellent condition, were handled somewhat differently. Many were purchased by foreign institutions. But virtually all the materials from these caves were published in the 1960’s and 70’s.

Cave Four was where most problems originated. This cave yielded thousands of fragmentary documents, which were purchased by the Jordanian government and brought to the Palestine Archeological Museum in east Jerusalem. The task of handling these thousands of fragments presented a gargantuan challenge, requiring a great investment of time and specialized expertise. As more fragments came into the museum, those in charge suggested that an international team of scholars be appointed to work on these materials, and a blue-ribbon panel was brought together for that purpose, led by Frank Moore Cross. This group, appointed in the 1950’s, did not include any Jewish scholars, at the insistence of the Jordanian government. But these scholars worked throughout the 1950’s in Jerusalem, funded by a grant from J. D. Rockefeller Jr. who gave enough money to

fund the work for six years. This group produced a concordance that listed every word that occurred in the thousands of fragments that they had examined. This concordance was produced to help the editors check and counter check where words might identify in these documents. By 1960 the team had identified about 500 different manuscripts in Cave Four. The group published a concordance that contains words from all the fragments, but they did not publish the fragments themselves.

Along came the 1967 Six-Day War. Israel captured East Jerusalem and along with it, the Palestinian Archeological Museum, thus taking the scrolls over from Jordan. With the aging of the scholars and the political upheaval, publication of the Cave Four documents dwindled. Some scholars published fragments from their particular areas, but this proved to be a mixed blessing. For example, John Allegro, an English agnostic and member of the elite scholarly team, produced one of the earliest translations of several Cave Four documents, but his haste for speed seems to have come at the sacrifice of quality. Others of his colleagues eventually published a detailed correction of much of his work. Allegro's response was to claim that this elite group was too dominated by Catholics, and that the reason the Cave Four documents were not being published more quickly was because this cave contained material harmful for Christianity. All of the other members of the team quickly refuted the charge, but the hint of conspiracy was in the air.

Moreover, though ten thousand fragments emerged from the Cave, the numbers of scholars assigned to the team was never increased, so progress was painstakingly slow. Two scholars who had written about Qumran, Robert Eisenman of California State and Phillip Davies of Sheffield, England, asked the team to be allowed to study the Cave Four documents and were refused permission. This prompted scholar Hershel Shanks to start a campaign for the immediate publication of the scrolls and to question how they were being handled. After all, it was now 40 years after the first cave had been opened and not all the materials had been published. There was talk of a "Dead Sea Scroll cartel," creating the connotations of scholars acting like drug lords or colluding oil producers with reference to these documents.

In 1991 however, the director the Huntington Library in California announced that his library had a complete set of photographs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and anyone who wanted to study them was welcome to do so. Robert Eisenman, who had already caused such controversy over the Scroll publication process, was one of the first to look at these pictures and soon produced this press release:

"Robert Eisenman, the first scholar given access to the Huntington Library's collection of the Dead Sea Scrolls microfilms, has announced the discovery of a text that refers to the execution of a Messianic leader. 'This tiny scroll fragment puts to rest the idea presently being circulated by the Scroll editorial committee that this material has nothing to do with Christian origins in Palestine,' said the California State University, Long Beach, professor of Middle East religions. 'Leading scroll editors have been saying there is nothing interesting in the unpublished scrolls and that they have nothing to do with the rise of Christianity in Palestine.' "

Eisenman is quoted as saying that the text "makes concrete reference to 'the putting to death' of the leader of the community." As we have already discovered, Eisenman's reading was in fact in error: the Messianic leader was the one doing the killing. But Eisenman's charge was widely circulated, giving the impression that the official team was engaged in a cover-up because they were trying to protect Christianity's reputation. The scholarly community did not pay Eisenman much heed, partially because of his claim that the Teacher of Righteousness was none other than Jesus' brother James.

The year 1991 also saw another weird development: a book was published that more than any other has spread misconceptions about the contents of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh authored a book called *The Dead Sea Deception: Why a Handful of Religious Scholars Conspired to Suppress the*

*Revolutionary Contents of the Dead Sea Scrolls.* In this work the authors put forth the idea that the delay in the scrolls' publication was to suppress information that would undermine the truth of Christianity. Roland De Vaux, long-time head of a team of Dead Sea Scroll researchers, was depicted as a criminal mastermind who enacted a vast Vatican conspiracy to suppress the scrolls. Baigent and Leigh echoed Eisenman's claim that the delay in the fragments' publication was due to an effort to protect the Christian faith from damaging new revelations. Subsequent publications of virtually all the scroll material have proved their charges to be baseless, indeed, ludicrous. Yet their work became a best-seller. Indeed, if their theme sounds familiar, it should be. Baigent and Leigh's equally ludicrous book "Holy Blood, Holy Grail," provided novelist Dan Brown the "evidence" he needed to write the best-selling *Da Vinci Code*.

As we speak, most, though I would not say all, of the Cave Four writings have been published. It might be fairest to say that all that can be published has been published. Controversies about the Scrolls' meaning continue to be the fodder of academic debate, and the sundry Scroll controversies have made minor-celebrities of some academicians. But the majority of scholars interested in the study of the Scrolls have resolved that when we stumble upon the twenty-first century's cache of documents that parallel the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls, they intend to handle the translation and publication of these materials in a more timely and orderly fashion. But of course, there is no guarantee that when that time comes, their resolve will govern what transpires.

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February 22, 2006