

# The Qumran Library

The scrolls and scroll fragments recovered in the Qumran environs represent a voluminous body of Jewish documents, a veritable "library", dating from the third century B.C.E. to 68 C.E. Unquestionably, the "library," which is the greatest manuscript find of the twentieth century, demonstrates the rich literary activity of Second Temple Period Jewry and sheds insight into centuries pivotal to both Judaism and Christianity. The library contains some books or works in a large number of copies, yet others are represented only fragmentarily by mere scraps of parchment. There are tens of thousands of scroll fragments. The number of different compositions represented is almost one thousand, and they are written in three different languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

There is less agreement on the specifics of what the Qumran library contains. According to many scholars, the chief categories represented among the Dead Sea Scrolls are:

## *Biblical*

Those works contained in the Hebrew Bible. All of the books of the Bible are represented in the Dead Sea Scroll collection except Esther.

## *Apocryphal or pseudepigraphical*

Those works which are omitted from various canons of the Bible and included in others.

## *Sectarian*

Those scrolls related to a pietistic commune and include ordinances, biblical commentaries, apocalyptic visions, and liturgical works.

While the group producing the sectarian scrolls is believed by many to be the Essenes, there are other scholars who state that there is too little evidence to support the view that one sect produced all of the sectarian material. Also, there are scholars who believe there is a fourth category of scroll materials which is neither biblical, apocryphal, nor "sectarian." In their view, such scrolls, which may include "Songs of the the Sabbath Sacrifice", should be designated simply as contemporary Jewish writing.

## Scroll Fragments from the Qumran Library

- [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*

## Library of Congress materials relating to the Qumran Library

---

- Continue exploring the Dead Sea Scrolls with [The Qumran Community](#).
- [Outline](#)