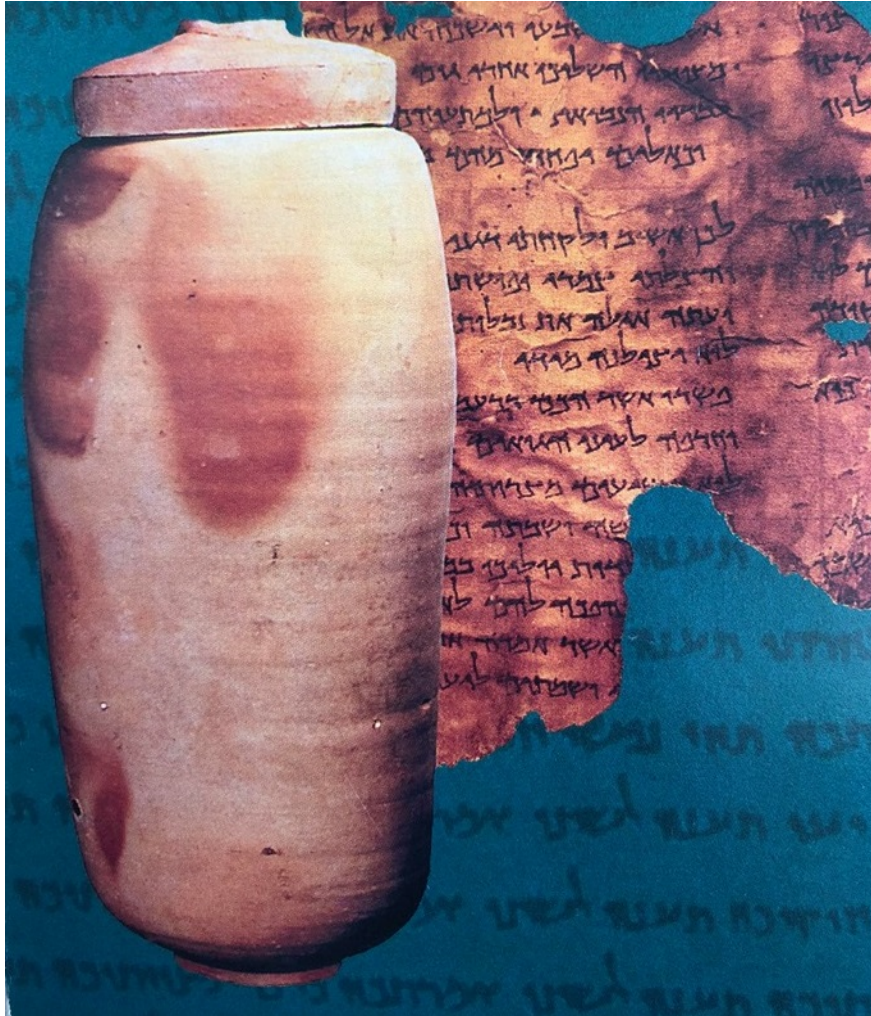


**How An American Woman Saved
the Dead Sea Scrolls...
The True Story**



by Janet V. Crisler

2020

Introduction: The reader might ask, “Why would another American woman, without academic credentials in this field, write about the Dead Sea Scrolls; particularly such controversial ancient documents?” Most of the major scholars involved in the following dramatic story were good friends, particularly the “American Woman” who, because of family connections, vision and generosity was reluctant to speak out. I am without such constraints. For me, it is simply about truth, integrity and friendship with a remarkable friend, whom my beloved husband, B. Cobbey Crisler and I greatly admired for her courage against daunting and aggressive odds. What she did towards preserving humankind’s most valuable documents was to benefit the collective good.

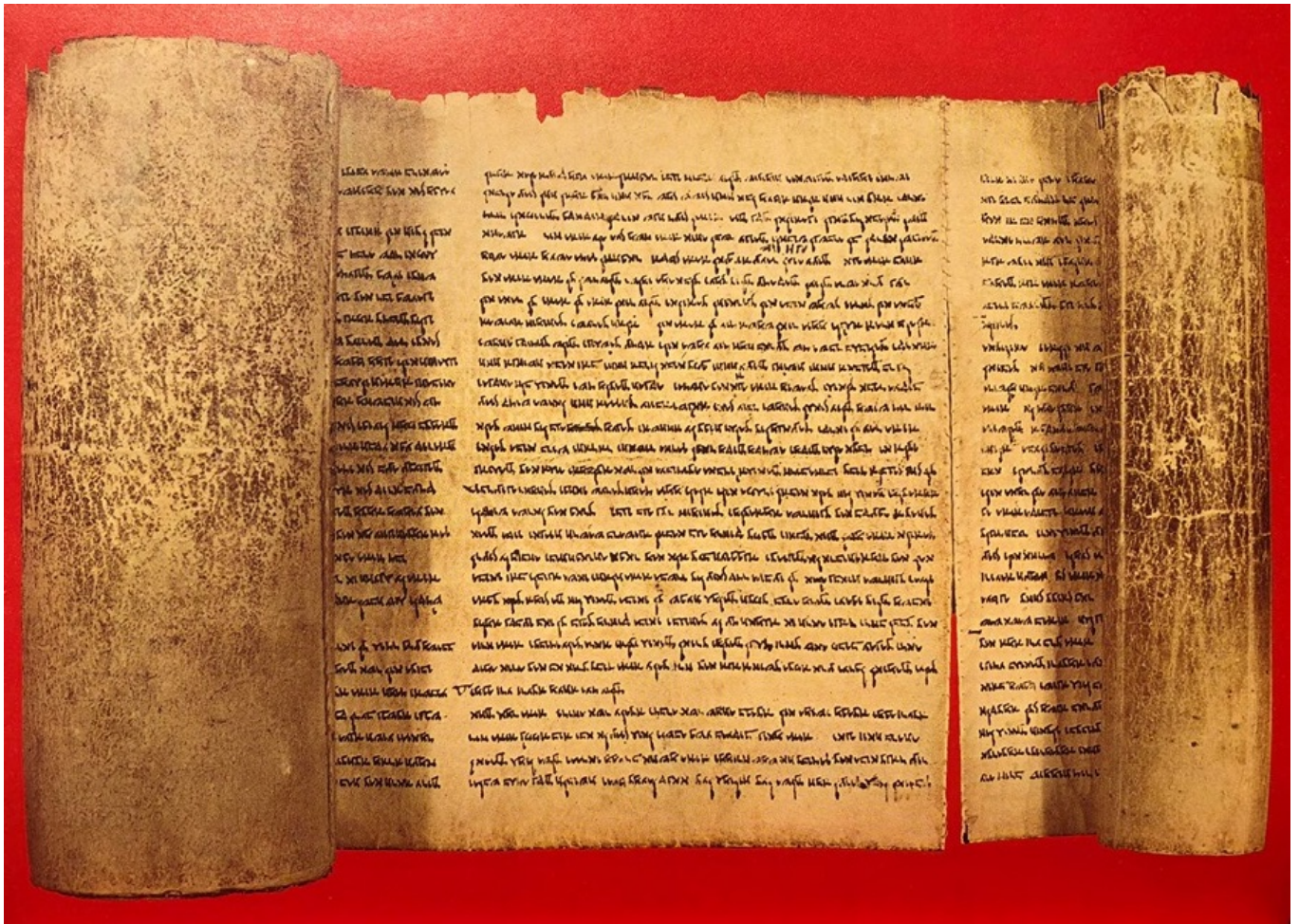
Here now, for the first time since 1973 when my husband and I began learning the truth about the discovery/saga of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which continues today, the truth is told about the discovery and subsequent theft of the scrolls by the Israeli military, on orders from the Israeli government and how literally this American woman, our dear friend saved them from complete disintegration.

Background to the importance of the Dead sea Scrolls:

1. Professor David Noel Freedman was editor of the entire Anchor Bible, member of the original DSS translation committee, Director of Albright Institute in Jerusalem, As the Dead Sea Scrolls(DSS) became so controversial, he thought it was time to write an important volume titled “What Are the Dead Sea Scrolls and Why Do They Matter?”; a paperback for the man on the street. Professor Freedman and Dr. Pam Fox Kuhlken begin Chapter 1 with the following:

*“When it comes to the Dead Sea Scrolls, we have general questions: What are they about? Who wrote them, why and in what language? What’s the big deal?” He then answers the questions, **What are the Scrolls?** (Professor Freedman continues to answer a variety of questions pertinent to the subject to the top of page 9)*

“The Dead Sea Scrolls are fragments of papyrus, leather (sheep or goatskin), and in one case, copper that were once part of the complete books in scroll form. They were originally the property of the Essenes, a Jewish sect who made their home in the caves at Qumran near the Dead Sea. Over 100,000 fragments can be pieced together into over 900 separate documents, with multiple copies of most books, as one would expect of a library. These fragments provide extensive excerpts from the 39 books of the Hebrew Bible (or, as most Christians call it, the Old Testament.) There are also fragments from the Apocryphal or Deuterocanonical works (that is a selection of books accepted as part of the Bible by Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians, but not Jews and most Protestants.)



The Isaiah Scroll

When scholars refer to the DSS however, they usually mean certain non-biblical, sectarian documents such as the Manual of Discipline or the Damascus Document. The oldest Scroll fragments date back to the third century B.C. placing us within 100 or 200 years of the original composition of books like Ecclesiastes or Daniel. Until the discovery of the Scrolls, the oldest copy we had of the Hebrew Bible dated from the ninth century A.D., about 1000 years later than the Scrolls! Thus, the Dead Sea Scrolls bring us much closer to the times when the Bible was actually written.

Did the Dead Sea Scrolls change the course of biblical scholarship?

They changed the course of biblical scholarship in that they prove that the text of the Hebrew Bible that has come down to us is more reliable than previously thought – that fewer scribal or editorial changes or errors had occurred over the centuries than scholars once imagined.

What do the DSS have to do with Islam?

Although the Qur'an doesn't quote from the Hebrew Bible like the Christian New Testament does, the Qur'an does share some of the same history that is recorded in the biblical books found among the Scrolls. The first five books of the Hebrew Bible called the Torah, tell of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Lot and other individuals who also appear in the Qur'an. Therefore, the Torah not only contains the earliest historic records of Judaism and Christianity, but also of Islam.

When were the Dead Sea Scrolls Discovered?



Dead Sea Scroll Caves

The first discovery of scrolls in the caves of Qumran was in 1947. Two young Bedouin discovered them while looking for a lost sheep or goat that strayed into a cave near the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea at Wadi Qumran, a gorge cut in the limestone cliffs by winter rains. One of the boys threw

a rock into the cave and heard the sound of pottery breaking. The boys ran away, scared of hyenas or djinni magical spirits or “genies”, but one of them Muhammed ed-Dhib, later returned, lured by thoughts of buried treasure. (photo of 2 Bedouin)

He found the first batch of Dead Sea Scrolls. Later this cave became known as Cave 1; it yielded seven scrolls, which Muhammed ed-Dhib sold to an antiquities dealer in Jerusalem, Khalil Iskkander Shahin, whose nickname was Kando.

As word of the initial discovery spread, the wasteland was invaded by other Bedouin, who searched thousands of caves. Some of them found scroll fragments, which they circulated from tent to tent. In addition to the documents found near Qumran, another batch was found about twelve miles to the southwest in the Waddi Murabb ‘at, And still others emerged from caves known only to Bedouin further south along the Dead Sea. Bedouin sold the scrolls to antiquities dealers and the dealers in turn sold them to the archaeologists and scholars.

Albright, William Foxwell was a seminal twentieth-century biblical scholar, a pre-eminent Dead Sea Scrolls scholar, archeologist, and paleographer. Albright (1891-1971) directed the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem for 12 years (1920-29), (1933-36) and served as the W.W. Spence Professor of Semitic Languages in the Oriental Seminary of The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, where he mentored David Noel Freedman. It is not an exaggeration to



American School of Oriental Research, Saladin Road, Jerusalem

say that Albright influenced most biblical scholarship of the twentieth century.

Dead Sea Scrolls: *Hailed as “the greatest archaeological discovery of the twentieth century” the Dead Sea Scrolls were found by two Bedouin shepherd boys in the Dead Sea region of Palestine in 1947. Originally the property of a monastic group known as the Essenes, the Scrolls – fragments of papyrus, leather, and, in one case, copper – represent 39 books from the Hebrew Bible and the so-called Apocrypha that were once part of complete books in scroll form. However, when scholars refer to the “Dead Sea Scrolls,” they often mean the non-canonical, sectarian documents such as the Manual of Discipline or the Damascus Document found at Qumran.*

Was there a conspiracy to keep the Scrolls from the public?

I wouldn't make charges of a conspiracy. Facsimile editions (that is, exact copies) and photographs of the Scrolls are now widely available for anyone who wishes to study them. However, if there hasn't been a conspiracy, I would say there has been some secrecy. Not long after the Scrolls were discovered, an international editorial team was organized by three parties: the Palestine Archaeological Museum; G. Lancaster Harding of the British School; and Pere Roland de Vaux of the Ecole Biblique et Archaeologique Francaise in Jerusalem. Harding and de Vaux, in turn invited seven other scholars to join them.

Most of these were Protestant Christian and Roman Catholic scholars; no Jewish scholars were included. Such an omission seems strange to us today. Some people claimed Jewish

scholars were excluded from the team, accusing de Vaux of being anti-Semitic but in fact the political situation after the first Arab-Israeli War of 1948-49 made it impossible to appoint Jews to the research team. Jews were allowed in West Jerusalem, but the Scrolls were in the Palestine Archaeological Museum in East Jerusalem, which was in Jordan's hands.

In any event, the international editorial team assigned each Scroll to a different scholar, and each scholar worked at his own pace to publish a critical edition of that Scroll, complete with notes , analyses, and other scholarly details. Some of these scholars produced quickly, some were much slower, and a few never did complete their assignment! Would there have been a better way to go about publishing the Scrolls? I think so. The Scroll containing the book of Isaiah was published immediately because Millar Burrows (1889 – 1990), Professor of Biblical Theology at Yale, made the best decision of all. Instead of hoarding the manuscripts, documenting them and performing scholarly analysis behind the scenes, he published a facsimile edition immediately and made the Isaiah Scroll available so that everybody would have equal access to it for their research.

When did the actual scrolls become available for public viewing in the United States?

The Scrolls became available to the public in 1991. At that time, the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, had the most extensive collection of photographs of the Scrolls that wasn't directly controlled by the official Scroll editors. When I refer to "photographs" of the Scrolls, I mean detailed, high quality images suitable for study, not snapshots such as you

might take at an exhibit. To quote Prof. David Noel Freedman, "I encouraged William Moffett, the Library Director, to let people see those photographs. Moffett assigned me the task of separating the photographic materials into those that had already been published and made readily available from those which hadn't been seen to date. After being organized, the pictures were released from storage and opened to the public.

Additionally, the Huntington provided microfilm copies of the Scrolls to over 80 other libraries, effectively putting an end to limitations on access to them.

What do scholars consider to be the major contribution of the Dead Sea Scrolls to biblical scholarship?

One of the major results of the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls is a much greater recognition of the value of the Septuagint an important Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. In many places, the Septuagint differs from the standard Hebrew text, known as the Masoretic Text, which was compiled between the third and tenth centuries A.D.

One day in early spring, back in the seventies while working in Palestine, my husband and I stopped by Albright Institute in East Jerusalem to check in with Prof. Freedman, then Director. He greeted us warmly, saying he had received a phone call earlier notifying him of some scroll fragments discovered by someone in Bethlehem and asked if we would like to join him later that evening on yet another "scroll identification expedition". The taxi arrived at Albright at the appointed time and off we sped in a large black Mercedes driven by a very serious driver who might have

been informed about the meeting or so we surmised. The gentleman who met us in a rather dimly lit room greeted us warmly serving the customary hot sweet tea. Noel carefully examined the fragment, as unfortunately he recognized it as yet another forgery. We thanked our host for his hospitality and drove back to Jerusalem very disappointed but Noel explained such instances, at that time, happened frequently.

Section I

John Trever and the scrolls : In the photo below, John Trever photographing the Manual of Discipline

You've actually worked with a Dead Sea Scroll fragment. How did that happen and what was that like?

Frank Cross and I were students of William Foxwell Albright at The John Hopkins University. Sometime in January 1948, Albright summoned us into his office to see photos of ancient biblical texts he had received from John Trevor, who was working at the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem. Albright was very excited about these photos primarily the Isaiah Scroll – and said, “This is the real thing!”

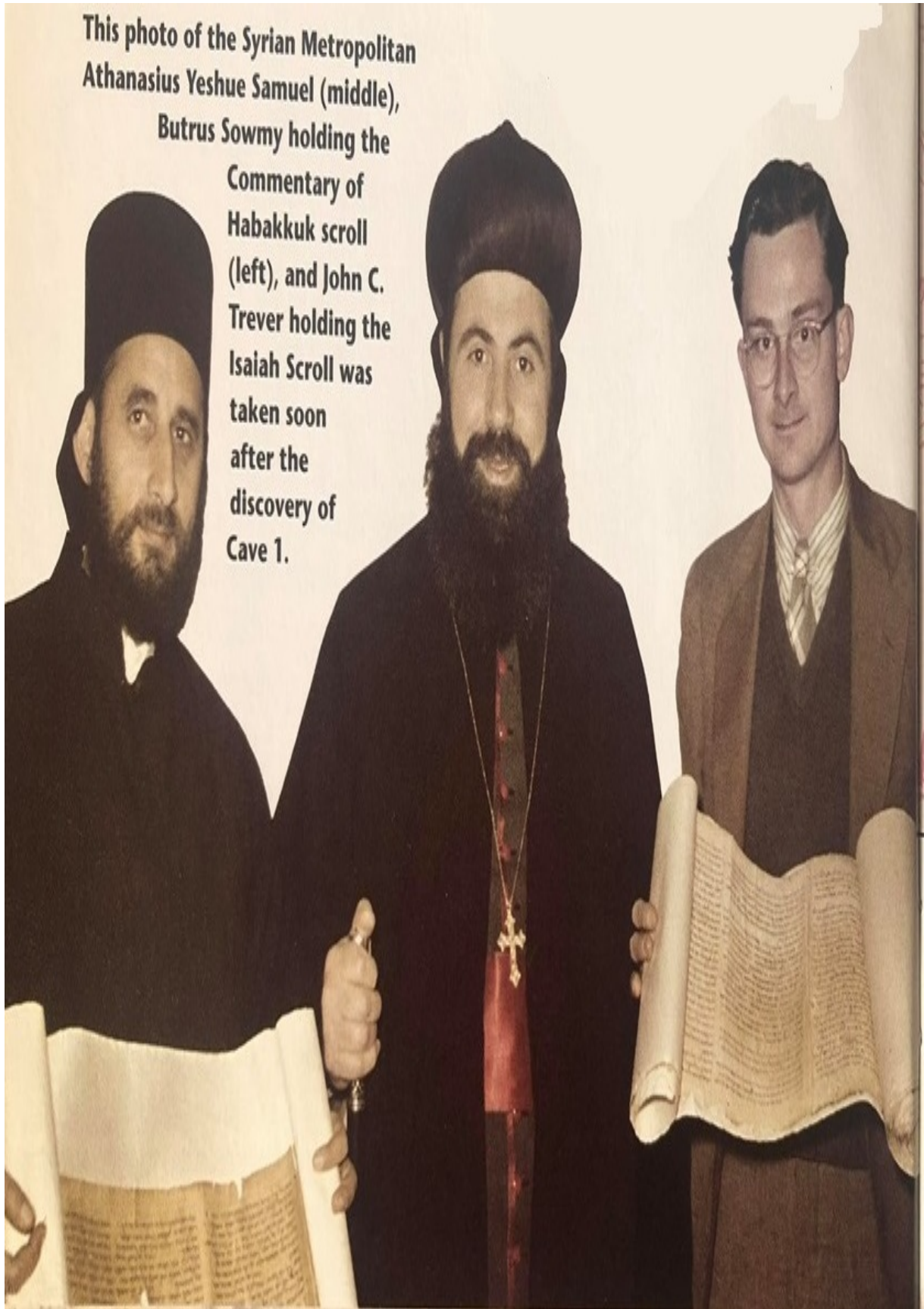


Author photographing Manual of Discipline in A.S.O.R.

We immediately went to work authenticating and dating the Scrolls. Albright was primarily interested in the script and spelling, which was unusual in the Scrolls. Almost immediately, he said, "First century B. C.," making it by far the oldest extensive manuscript of the Hebrew Bible we have. (photo: In time, the Dead Sea Scrolls editorial committee, a group of specialists on the Hebrew Bible, divided the Scrolls among themselves, as I mentioned earlier. It was thanks to my former classmate, Frank Cross, that I was included. The committee assigned Leviticus to me, but they told me I could have access to all of the Scrolls. It was a very difficult job reading the pictures and negative, but it was an incredible experience.

(Please remember the credit for these pictures and negatives is due to the remarkable American woman who literally saved the DSS; her identity yet to be revealed)

The Leviticus Scroll was several feet long and missing its lower third. But for a manuscript 2,000 years old, it was very well preserved and not difficult to read. The script was unusual, but readable after I got used to it. As I mentioned earlier it was in paleo-Hebrew, a script that the Essenes held to be sacred. The Scroll covers about 12 of the 27 chapters of Leviticus, the latter part of the book, so it's not complete, but about two-fifths of the manuscript is better than nothing.



This photo of the Syrian Metropolitan Athanasius Yeshue Samuel (middle), Butrus Sowmy holding the Commentary of Habakkuk scroll (left), and John C. Trever holding the Isaiah Scroll was taken soon after the discovery of Cave 1.

Section II

We will turn now for further information about the scroll saga and Prof. John Trever's participation in it at a talk he gave at my husband's prep school for the community in Greenwich, Connecticut, USA (in the early 70s). My husband B. Cobbey Crisler said in his introduction for Professor Trever's talk; highlighting his "life journey" with the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Dr. John Trever, retired has a broad and unique view of a number of subjects that enable him to scope the depths of his academic interests: archeology, paleography, Biblical studies and photography. He received his Bachelor's Degree from Yale Divinity School, his PhD. In Old Testament from Yale Graduate School and did post-doctoral studies in archaeology as a Fellow of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem. Dr. Trevor was a Professor of Religion and Head of the Department at Baldwin-Wallace College, Berea, Ohio. He is internationally known for the part he played in the discovery and world recognition of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Dr. Trevor is the author of "The Untold Story of Qumran", "Cradle of Our Faith" and co-author of "The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery, I and II.

He has contributed to numerous entries on flora studies in The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible. Dr. Trevor's main objective in this talk is to bring to life the library of ancient Qumran.

The documents which Dr. Trevor explores were written against the backdrop that a small group of people who came to believe in future that a single person was designated by God to be called “the teacher of righteousness”. He was considered to be the final authority for the interpretation of Scripture. How these people viewed their teacher and scripture becomes the beginning of the story about the Dead Sea Scrolls. Dr. Trevor will elucidate upon this process and confers upon the subject substance and dramatic images through Dead Sea Scrolls copies he has in hand; the Isaiah Scroll, the Habakkuk Commentary and the Manual of Discipline.

He will then elaborate upon the visual aspects of what the Qumran community looked like through word and map. It’s a mind tingling adventure to have history of more than two thousand years ago be brought to light by a man who deeply loves and respects those that took the journey into their own understanding of light.

These irreplaceable photographs of The Isaiah Scroll, The Order of the Community, The Peshet of Habakkuk were recorded in a book (now out of print) entitled Scrolls from Qumran Cave 1, by John C. Trever, and edited by Frank Moore Cross, David Noel Freedman and James A. Sanders, fellow Biblical scholars.

The following italicized print is taken from Dr. Trevor’s talk with permission from his family. (1972)

I’d like to make just a brief comment about archaeology in general because I think there are some misconceptions about it. Many people think archaeology has some magical way of

establishing something which has a long history and has many facets to it, but archaeology should not be used in this way. Archaeology is neutral. It has no ability really to prove or disprove, for archaeology largely represents the residuum of cultural remains that have been left behind by generations of people long since gone. Therefore, the work of an archaeologist is a highly specialized work. We don't approach archaeology with the purpose of trying to prove something. We approach archaeology with the purpose of trying to understand and discover the cultural backgrounds and historical background. Therefore, it demands a disciplined mind, a trained hand, care, a good eye, a perception and letting the evidence lead you where it will. That was the way I was trained at Yale University where I did my doctoral work in the Old Testament. I was trained repeatedly, and the emphasis came many times, let the evidence lead you where it will. This is the spirit of a true scientist, and it's the true spirit of an archaeologist, and therefore, we don't go and start digging some place to see if we can't prove something but rather, we go to ask the question of the remains what can you tell us.

Now the Dead Sea Scrolls happen to come on the borderline of the nearest approach to this larger dimension that most people want, that is, to prove something, but we should not approach the scrolls in this way. For the Dead Sea Scrolls....any manuscripts....if you can translate (them) properly, and exactly the way the traditional writer intended ...then...you have the opportunity to communicate with the ancient mind and...you come closer to the matter of trying to uncover the relationship to our Bible or ancient history if it is related. (And too), when

you have a piece of pottery, such as those that are out in the case, they simply tell you of a cultural process that went on at certain periods of history which we gradually learn about by an inductive process of reasoning....so with manuscripts and with pottery, we must have that discipline of scholarship that lets the evidence lead us where it will. Many have approached the Dead Sea Scrolls on the basis of trying to support something they have already believed, and the result is a plethora of books that are very misleading. We do not know the whole story of the Dead Sea Scrolls. There are a vast number of manuscripts that have not yet been published and because of political circumstances many of them have been delayed for many more years than any of wished. But now as a result of my book, I think, at least, we have at last found a breakthrough (with) the political problem so that there will now be a series of volumes on the rest of the Dead Sea Scrolls appearing in the next five or ten years, but it is a slow, arduous process. The scholars who are working on this process are not trying to hide anything from anybody. We have all been through agonizing experiences. We just want to know the truth and thus as we work with these manuscripts we are seeking to know the truth.

The scholars connected early on with the DSS all knew the historic truth and controversy swirling round these documents and to whom; what country they rightfully belong. However, because of their professional and academic positions they have been reluctant to speak out. I am without such constraints. For me, (Janet Crisler, author) it's all about truth, integrity and friendship with a remarkable friend whom we

greatly admired for her courage, foresight and generosity, Elizabeth Hay Bechtel. Returning now to Prof. Trevor's talk:

Now there is so much I want to tell you about this library, but I want to tell you what has happened to it. I'd like to point out just one thing very quickly and then move to the tragic story of what's happening to the scrolls now.

This is a picture (a slide photograph projected on a large screen) of a Daniel fragment that was my privilege to work on and to publish; what I believe to be the most ancient, the latest of all the Dead Sea Scrolls. In other words, it was not too difficult to establish the earliest manuscripts from Qumran, but the problem was where to put the terminus ad quem...as we say, the final writing process from Qumran. I have believed for many years that this Daniel fragment represents the very latest document written, and I believe settles the matter for all time. These five words (he points to them on the screen) appeared in a journal from a manuscript found at Masada and when I looked at those my heart jumped, I said that those words were written by the same scribe who wrote my Daniel fragment and so I wrote to Dr. Yadin (excavated Masada) and said could you possibly send me some more of that manuscript.

It's the Song of the Sabbath Sacrifices Scroll that was found at Masada....when the Romans captured Masada in AD 73. This manuscript was left in the debris left behind...(in a layer written prior to, AD 73). When I saw these then, I was convinced that we were dealing with the proof of the final days of the Dead Sea Scrolls because no other fragment or manuscript from the Qumran community can be dated after that time.

The manuscripts from Cave 1 finally came into the Shrine of the Book, (a strange building built by the Israelis to house the scrolls) in Jerusalem that was opened in 1965. Here is the great drum on which the Isaiah Scroll was mounted. My wife and I went to the Shrine of the Book on June 2nd 1966, the next year, and I walked up to this drum and looked at that scroll and my eyes just, I couldn't believe my eyes, for it was not the scroll that I worked so carefully on in 1948; it is seriously disintegrated. The story of disintegration of these manuscripts was slow in coming. The humidity is what's destroying these manuscripts. The humidity of Jerusalem is very serious because five months of the year it's very high and other times it gets very low....the changes in humidity are such that, I'm sure, this is what's causing the disintegration of the manuscripts.

If the reader sincerely wishes to know more about these valuable documents, I am sure the internet will locate Prof. Trevor's book, " The Untold Story of Qumran" by John C. Trevor

The following is a quote from the book: *On that fateful night of November 29, 1947 when word came to Jerusalem that the United Nations, urged by Great Britain and America, decided to partition Palestine, a rage and fury emoted by the Israelis against the Palestinians sending thousands from their homes and lands.*

The "**back-story**" in this, involved Lord Balfour's fear that the Jews remaining in Europe would pour into England. Given the fact that he was an anti-semite, a deal was struck with Lord Daniel Rothchild to offer Palestine to the Jews. Subsequent

meetings were held in the US and at the UN; to partition the sovereign country of Palestine. Perhaps one day the United Nations will recognize their egregious decision, made on that fateful day in 1947, towards demanding either a two-state solution simultaneously returning land and property belonging to its rightful ownership; generations of Palestinian families.

Professor Trever at the conclusion of his talk then entertained questions from the floor.

Questions:

All those scrolls have lasted for so many centuries, why has it become such a problem now?

Well, it is difficult, in fact, I could hardly believe my eyes when I first realized what was happening, moisture in relationship to leather has an amazing ability to disintegrate and if you get enough of it, well, you know that leather is just a bit removed from glue anyway; it becomes a gelatinous mass...it's moisture that seems to lead to this. Now I've talked to chemists about this and there are lots of theories about it. Some claim that light and oxygen and so forth are oxidizing, but it is moisture that is the main enemy, but remember these are very old documents. They've been in a place where there is practically no moisture at all; there is no humidity. A few of them apparently were in such positions where they may have gotten just a little bit of moisture during the brief rainy season. The ones in the jar....the Isaiah Scroll along with another manuscript were in the jar that Muhammed Ahmed and el-Hamed found in January – February , 1947.

I have interviewed all the Bedouins who discovered these materials. These were way in the back of a twenty five foot deep cave. They were far removed from a small opening that was eighteen inches in diameter and a ledge overhung the entrance which protected them from the driving rain. Well, that was the only exposure those documents had for almost two thousand years.

Now, you take manuscripts of other places, we wish we had manuscripts from other parts of Palestine because it was a custom of Jews to bury their documents, but there isn't a scrap from areas where there is high humidity.

Question:

Will you tell about the first verse that you noticed in Isaiah that enabled you to identify?

When I first saw the scrolls, I was so excited about the indications of great antiquity that I didn't even try to think about identifying the document at first, and then also I noticed the strange characters and I wasn't just sure about every letter, and so I didn't really try, so instead I just took a part that was quite clear, and I thought, I'll just copy this exactly as it is because paleography was a thing that I knew would be the clue to dating the documents. None of this information about the Qumran community was known to me when I first saw the scrolls in Jerusalem on February 19, 1948. And so I just copied out a couple of lines, and then after the people who had brought them over from the Assyrian Orthodox Church took them back, and I was alone, I started in checking this and very quickly discovered that it was from the 65th chapter of the book

of Isaiah, verse 1, and I didn't even bother to translate it at the time. I just was so excited and thought, this is the book of Isaiah.

Then all the flooded questions that came to my mind, what was this book, and how much of it was there, and then I began to realize I hadn't checked the things that a scholar is supposed to check to see if it was authentic. I'd just forgotten about the fact that you always check for authenticity, and so that night I could hardly sleep and I was so worried about it and decided I had to see the documents again and answer all these questions that I should have asked the first time.

So, I went over to the monastery the next day and then did these checks that should have been done. Well, then I was convinced that these documents were very old. But it was not until months later that I thought, say what was that passage that I used to identify this as Isaiah, for I was just working with the Hebrew script and didn't pay much attention to its meaning, and I opened up a Bible, I was in a hotel room, I remember at the time and the thought came to me, and I opened up one of the Gideon Bibles and here it says, "I am sought of him who asked not for me; I am found of him who sought me not."

Question: Would you describe a little bit of what the political problem has been between the Arab and Jew thing.....about the translation?

It's been a very complex story. There's a great deal of politics that have entered in this situation because of the tensions in the Middle East and I'm very much concerned about this aspect

of it, and it is a long story but perhaps I should condense it maybe by simply saying that after the partition of Palestine, and of course this happened, I was in Jerusalem just before the partition. I was there during the last eight months of the British Mandate and left from Lydda airport, according to what they told me on the next to the last commercial flight from Lydda Airport, and it was a tense situation. We were working under fire.

It was a tense situation. I was caught in a cross fire of battles several times and was shot at by snipers; it was a bit rough but I was so excited about working on the Scrolls that I am afraid I was a bit careless at times, but those were tragic days, and I have deep feelings about this whole problem because I had a chance to see it in its growth and development, and I have studied about it a great deal since, but this whole thing became caught up in the political struggle that was going on there. And then, of course, with partition and the battles that followed in the summer of 1948, and this struggle continued through the years. In 1967, of course, the Sixth Day War and then with nationalization of the museum just the previous fall by the Arabs, and then by the annexation of Jerusalem, all of these political acts caught the Dead Sea Scrolls up into an impossible dilemma for the scholars who were working on them, because the Arab authorities had made certain agreements with certain scholars for the publication and the preparation of this material.

Of course, the Israelis had their principles about the publication of their material, and I was caught in the middle because I was

over here, and the Israelis wanted to control my material, and I didn't care to have them to do that because I felt I had some rights to them myself. The big problem was that they wanted me to put "Israel" on this. Of course that immediately prejudices us against the Arab(Palestinians). I do not want to be caught in the dilemma because the Arabs(Palestinians) are my friends and the Israelis are my friends. So, if we were to put the name Israel on this book then I could very well lose all my relationships with Palestinian scholarship and the future of my relationships there I wanted to protect.

The Israelis insisted because these are Hebrew documents they want to make claim to all of them and yet they belong in the West Bank, and the community center was located in the West Bank which became part of Jordan by the will of the people in January/February of 1949. The whole thing is caught up in a very difficult situation. Now in 1967, the Israeli army made a beeline for the museum to capture the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Temple Scroll was actually captured by an act of war. In other words, the Dead Sea Scrolls are a part of a whole struggle of the Middle East. In fact, you might say they are symbolic of struggle in the Middle East. What the solution is, I don't really know, except that justice is what the Bible teaches should be done in dealing with other people, and therefore since if justice is to be done, the Israelis will have to recognize the rights of the Arabs(Palestinians) to their part of the material and recognize others rights too. Whether this will be done or not is still a question that has to be settled. I believe we have had a breakthrough though, by the fact that the scholars are now going to be able to publish a little more freely than they have

for a long time, but we never know from day to day whether this will all change because the political situation is still in turmoil and therefore one decision made one day may not be held at a later time, so we have to wait and see.

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Here in this segment of our story to reference again, Professor Trevor's dismay when he and his wife, returned to Jerusalem; visited the new Israeli Museum, Shrine of the Book built in 1965 now home to stolen property, The Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Trevers were shocked to witness the incorrect climatic control and the irreversible damage it was doing to the great Isaiah Scroll. When the Trevers returned home to America, John called Elizabeth Bechtel and said with great anxiety in his voice. ***"Betty, we are losing the scrolls."*** Immediately she realized the predicament and replying with confidence, ***"We'll***

get the NASA camera” and because of family connections, she did just that, grasping in that phone call the rapid and serious deterioration of the scrolls; the necessity to immediately capture the images before complete deterioration, beyond readability.

Section III The involvement of the Bechtels

When our dear friend Elizabeth Hay Bechtel and her husband, Kenneth became seriously involved in the scroll saga, the manuscripts were properly climatically protected in the Palestine Archaeology Museum (later under Israeli occupation renamed the Rockefeller Museum) owned and managed by Palestine and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

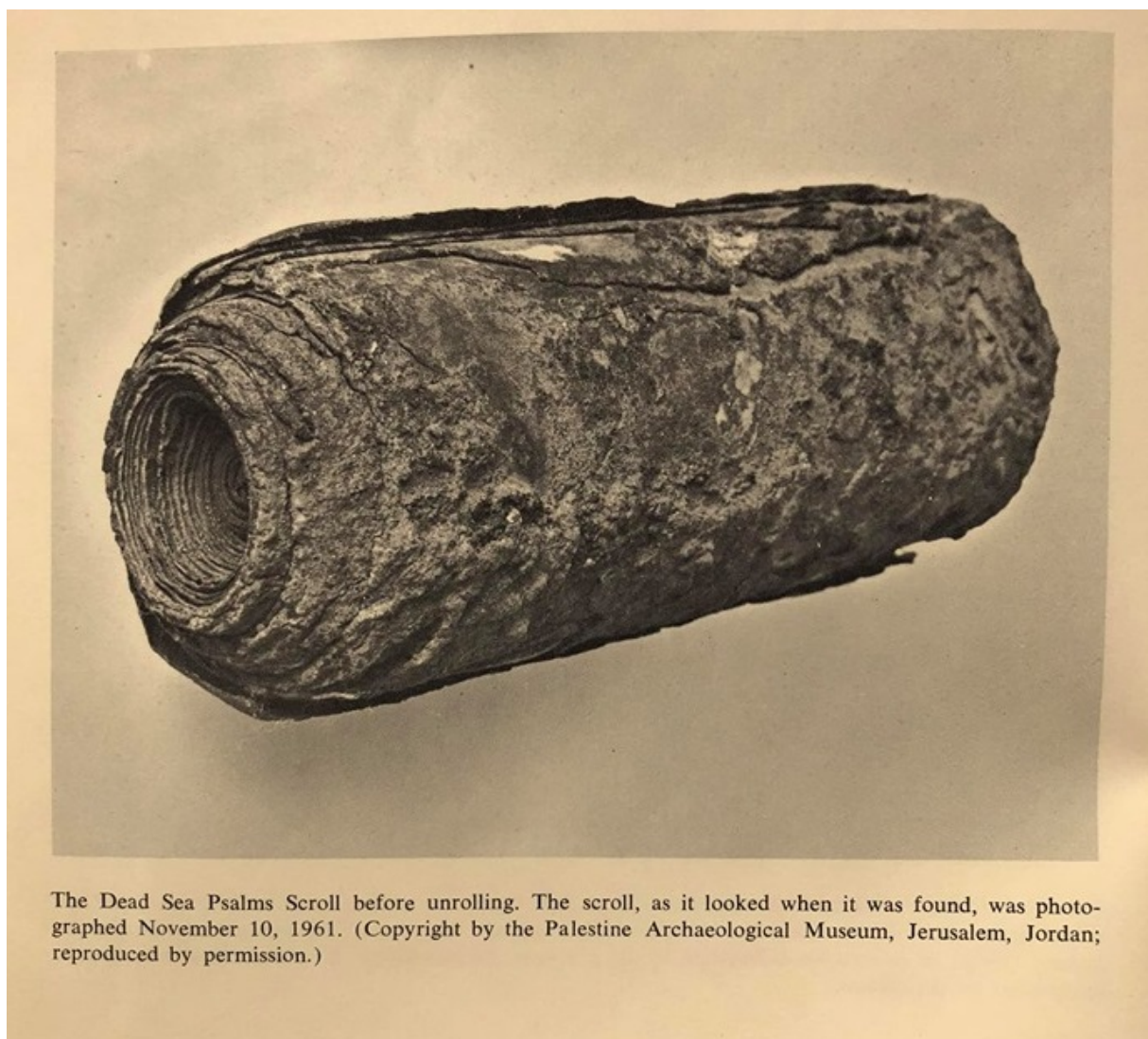
Jordan, not a monetarily wealthy nation, was experiencing an additional financial burden in caring for 750,000 Palestinian refugees fleeing for their lives, from their homes and lands in Palestine, under siege from the Israelis.

The Bechtels wanted to help. They wanted to help ease Jordan’s financial burden and somehow protect the scrolls; the later equation to be revealed some years later in 1958. Arrangements were made in 1958 for them to purchase a well-preserved Psalms Scroll (IIQPSS) safe and sound in Amman, that Betty had admired.

Kenneth Bechtel told King Hussein how enamored Betty was with the Psalms Scroll, and could he just purchase it, also helping to ease the heavy financial Palestinian refugee problem. (photo of Psalms Scroll before unravelling) Betty on occasion over the years would tell us about that singular

historic moment when the Psalms Scroll was first placed in her hands at the time of purchase.

She never told us what her husband had paid for it in an effort to relieve some financial burden from King Hussein, caring now for hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees. The careful unrolling of the Psalms Scroll and translation would be performed later by Dr. James Sanders at the Palestine Archaeological Museum. Dr. Sanders tells the story about that particular episode in his book, "The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll" and the unravelling of this precious document; a riveting story in his book.



The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll before unrolling. The scroll, as it looked when it was found, was photographed November 10, 1961. (Copyright by the Palestine Archaeological Museum, Jerusalem, Jordan; reproduced by permission.)

(The Elizabeth Hay Bechtel Portrait)



Here is where we return again to “truth-telling” of how Elizabeth Hay Bechtel became the savior/preservationist, literally saving the Dead Sea Scrolls from complete deterioration for future generations, while under Israeli control. With her husband Kenneth, they both had a sincere appreciation and love for history of the Bible.

Given my husband’s fascination with the whole subject, from a serious scholarly standpoint we were fortunate for the Bechtel’s precious friendship. Betty was a woman of great foresight, a serious preservationist; historically a woman who established the vanguard for manuscript preservation.

These venerated manuscripts swirled with turbulence, intrigue and yes violence. How could a California girl, born Elizabeth Hay July 26, 1904 in Los Angeles, California of Scottish descent appear center stage decades later on one of the most controversial and dramatic world scenes?

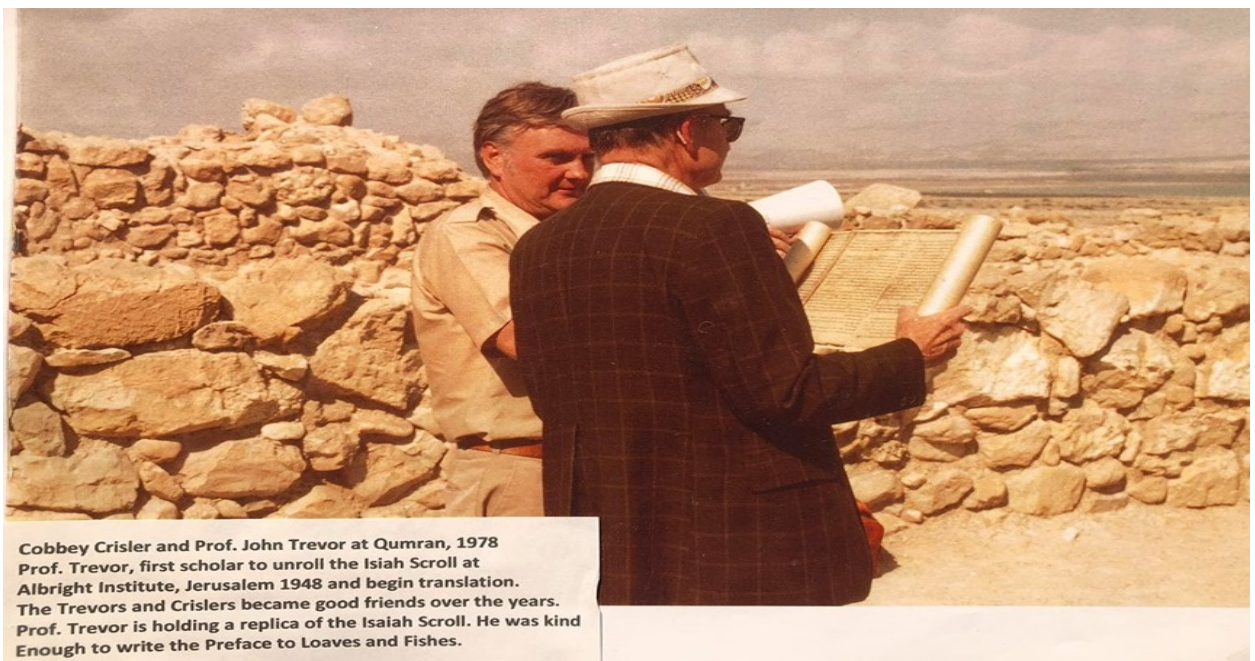
Elizabeth’s father, John Hay immigrated to America from Scotland and later became a successful Los Angeles real estate developer. Elizabeth came along a few years later after the birth their first child, Ruby Hay.

For her higher education Betty chose Mills College in Oakland, California not far from the University of California at Berkeley where she was to meet her future husband Kenneth Bechtel. They were married in 1926. Kenneth and Betty often found themselves in the Middle East because of family business. During the 1950’s they became involved and fascinated in the unraveling saga of scroll ownership and preservation.

The Bechtels, became acquainted with a whole cast of Dead Sea Scroll personages including many of the Dead Sea Scrolls scholars i.e. Professor David Noel Freedman, Millar Burrows, John Strugnell, and others. We referenced Prof. Trevor's involvement with the Scrolls previously, who in 1948 mentioned he had been a visiting scholar at the American Schools of Oriental Research in Jerusalem (Albright Institute) and remembers well, on that beautiful Wednesday, February 18, 1948 taking the phone call from Father Butrus Sowmy at St. Mark's Syrian Orthodox Monastery in the Old City, saying some scrolls in archaic Hebrew had come into his hands and he didn't know anything about them. Could he be helped.

The Director of Albright at that time was Dr. Millar Burrows. He would have taken that phone call but had left for a few days, leaving John Trevor in charge, while he visited Agatha Christie's husband's excavations in Baghdad.

The Isaiah Scroll at that time; the day John Trevor made his photographs was in pristine condition.



Cobbey Crisler and Prof. John Trevor at Qumran, 1978
Prof. Trevor, first scholar to unroll the Isaiah Scroll at Albright Institute, Jerusalem 1948 and begin translation. The Trevors and Crislers became good friends over the years. Prof. Trevor is holding a replica of the Isaiah Scroll. He was kind enough to write the Preface to Loaves and Fishes.

The idea of this edition of the Psalms Scroll is a result of the vision, imagination, and interest of Elizabeth Hay Bechtel, for whom the scroll is named and to whom all students of the Psalter and of the Dead Sea Scroll literature owe an enduring debt of gratitude. Mrs. Bechtel, who provided the funds necessary for purchase and study of the scroll, has since the beginning of her interest in it urged that there be “a popular, American edition” of the scroll, to be designed for all readers rather than for scholars only. Mrs. Bechtel’s wish in this regard has been a command that has been an inspiration to attempt to fulfill. Professor James A. Sanders

Returning to the original subject as to how an American woman became the saviour /preservationist of the hallowed Dead Sea Scrolls whose origin, identification and translations swirled with turbulence, intrigue, and yes violence. Betty was a woman of great foresight, a preservationist, a mother, and historically a woman who established the vanguard for manuscript preservation.

Let us return to that moment when John Trevor called Betty Bechtel to give her a message that changed the continuing disintegration was having on the scrolls, under Israeli control. She responded to John’s anxiety, “Never mind. We will get the NASA camera.” It is the same one used in space; powerful enough to photograph even those ancient Hebrew letters seriously disappearing to the human eye. Striking a “deal” with Israel, who now, not only had the scrolls in their possession but tightly controlled every issue pertaining to the Scrolls. Time was of the essence! The only way forward, towards launching

the NASA Camera Dead Sea Scrolls Preservation Project would be for Mrs. Bechtel sacrifice; to sacrifice ownership of her precious Psalms Scroll; to “gift” it to the Israeli Department of Antiquities in exchange for getting their permission for the project. Would not, one would think, their gratitude would be expressed in an exceedingly cooperative and grateful manner but simply the reverse throughout the entire process and the Bechtels would be paying for the entire project.

This meant getting the NASA people with camera to the Shrine of the Book, Museum where the Dead Sea Scrolls under Israeli control were shriveling day by day. And an important note to remember is that Kenneth Bechtel paid King Hussein of Jordan considerable sums of money for the Psalms Scroll, which helped defray Palestinian refugee expenses in Jordan. Such generosity and unselfishness for the benefit of humanity’s heritage inscribed on fragile leather is beyond comprehension!

Finally, the photographs were made. One set was kept in Jerusalem with the Dept. of Antiquities; another set came to America to be held in a special vault, but where? Now she needed to build a vault for the scroll images in the United States. The answer came to build an Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center at the Claremont School of Theology in Claremont, California. This was and would be a monumental achievement symbolizing a cherished dream for Betty and for the Director, Dr. James Sanders of the Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center. The most prominent scholars connected with the scrolls and friends all attended the Grand Opening. The Crislers were happily among the honored guests on that

most auspicious occasion. Now at last was a place where the American translation committee could gather for serious work on the scroll images.

In June of 1980, Dr. James Sanders on behalf of Mrs. Bechtel called Robert Schlosser, Head of the Photography Department at the Huntington Library (previously with Eastman Kodak) to ask him if he was willing to make a trip to Jerusalem to create a set of negatives of the Dead Sea Scrolls using the NASA camera.

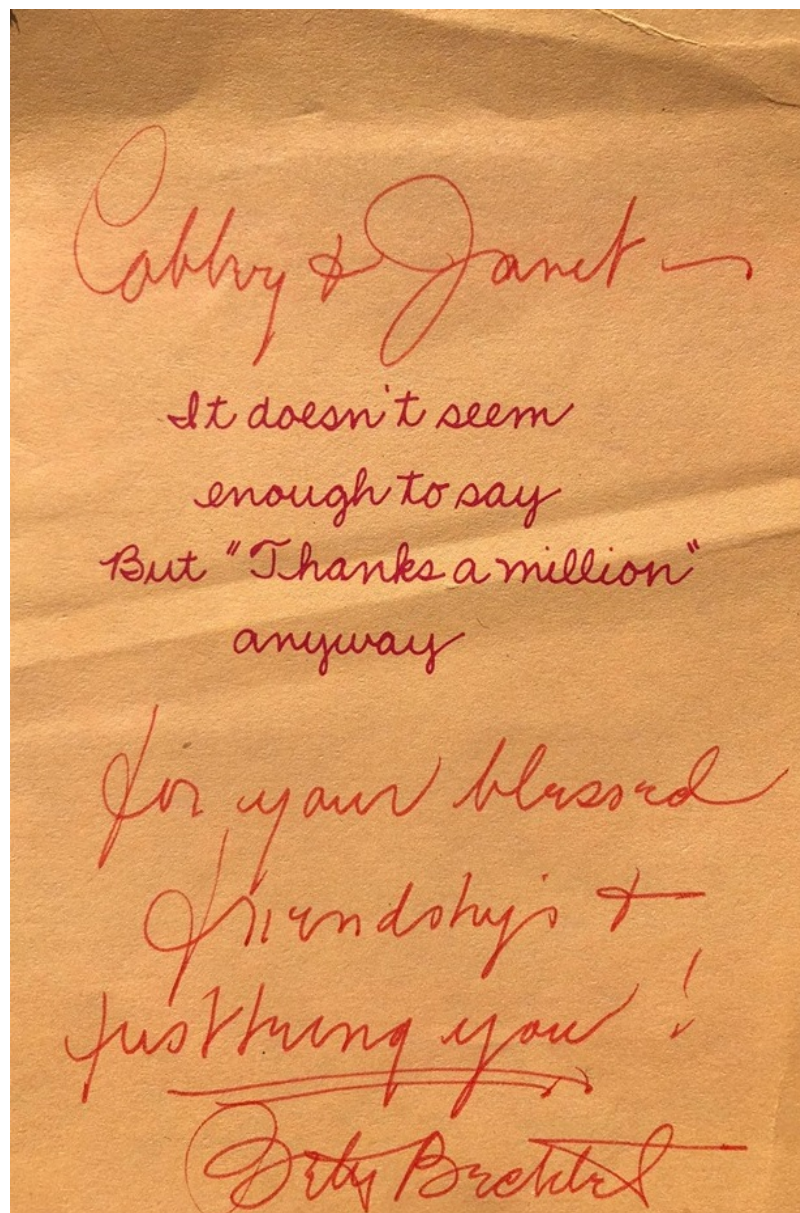
The trip would be funded by Mrs. Bechtel and he would be accompanied by John Guyer, who was a personal friend of the U.S. Ambassador to Israel and would serve as the Project Director. It is believed that Betty Bechtel and James Sanders may have gotten Bob Schloser's name from Eastman Kodak. The following quotations are from Robert Schlosser's own recollections of his trips to Jerusalem to make additional photographs from the images of the Scrolls now in the hands of the Israelis.

(With Mr. Schlosser's permission we have the following quotations from his diary.)

In August 1980, I set out with a complete darkroom and in a period of five weeks with the invaluable help of Ann Yurchin, who was also living at Albright, made 3200 negatives. Albright Institute was founded by and named for William Foxwell Albright, Dean of American Archaeology. It later became one of four schools (Baghdad, Amman, Nicosia and Jerusalem) of the American Schools of Oriental Research and continues to operate today. We would expose the film in the Rockefeller

Museum, (formerly Palestine Archaeology Museum before the 1967 war and occupation by the Israelis of East Jerusalem) darkroom in the morning and then return to the Albright in the afternoon for processing.

I never did make a trip to Israel with Mrs. Bechtel. Her last one might have been in 1978. (It was in 1984 with the Crislers)



Cabby & Janet —
It doesn't seem
enough to say
But "Thanks a million"
anyway
for your blessed
friendship &
just being you!
Dorothy Bechtel

John Guyer and I met with Avi Eitan (then director of the Israeli Dept. of Antiquities, an ardent Zionist) when we first arrived in 1980 simply to introduce ourselves and discuss the mission, of which he had already been amply informed by John Strugnell and the ABMC (Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center).

Avi Eitan visited me a few times afterwards in the darkroom to chat about the project and he seemed disturbed by the fact that the Israelis didn't have editorial control Kando, the famous Palestinian antiquities dealer to whom the Bedouin first brought the scrolls when they discovered them, I never met. (photo here of the Bedouin from my huge photo)

Maybe Kando had passed away by then. I did however work with Magen Broshi at the Shrine of the Book for about a week in 1984 and was in and out of the vault quite often. He was a large gregarious man and I liked him very much. When I left, I gave him an infra-red viewer so he could read text not visible to the human eye. He ran around showing everyone like a child at Christmas.

David Noel Freedman, Editor of the Anchor Bible and former twice Director of Albright as well as probably the most brilliant Biblical scholar alive today, was with me on the 1984 trip and I made fresh negatives and transparencies for his publication on Leviticus. He was hard at work as editor of the Anchor Bible Series and so we didn't see much of each other.

It turned out that I made three trips to Jerusalem. August 1980 with John Guyer. August 1984 with David Noel Freedman and Bill Yurchin. Bill was husband of Ann, the woman that had been

critical to the success of our first trip. I went one last time in September of 1985 alone.

The man I worked the most closely with on all my trips was John Strugnall. In spite of his politics, he was invaluable and very well organized. There is much controversy and rumor involved in the preservation of the scrolls. I am so grateful that someone is finally giving Betty the credit that we know she deserves.

The following are quotations from Prof. James A. Sanders book, "The Dead Sea Scrolls Psalms Scroll."

The Elizabeth Hay Bechtel Psalms Scroll from Qumran Cave 11 is the handsomest and best preserved of all the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered since the large Scrolls of Cave 1 were unearthed nearly twenty years ago. Because of its radical departure from any recension of the biblical Psalter heretofore known, it is perhaps the most interesting and intriguing ancient biblical scroll ever discovered.

The following is a special tribute to Elizabeth Hay Bechtel by Dr. Sanders. *"The idea of this edition of the Psalms Scroll is a result of the vision, imagination, and interest of Elizabeth Hay Bechtel, for whom the scroll is named and to whom all students of the Psalter and of the Dead Sea Scroll literature owe an enduring debt of gratitude. Mrs. Bechtel, who provided the funds necessary for purchase and study of the scroll, has since the beginning of her interest in it urged that there be a "popular American edition" of the scroll, to be designed for all readers rather than for scholars only. Mrs. Bechtel's wish in this regard has been a command that it has been an inspiration to attempt to fulfill. J.A.S. New York 1965*

We continue with quotations from the first chapter of Professor Sander's book, *"The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls. The Story, Discovery and Unrolling"*.

The Psalms Scroll was discovered ten years ago in early February 1956 by Arab Bedouin of the same tribe that almost a decade earlier, in the spring of 1947, had discovered the first of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Cave 11 in which the Psalms Scroll was found, is located a short walk north of Cave 1, where the first discovery had been made. The eleven caves in the area are believed by most scholars to be related to the complex of buildings excavated near the Wadi in five archaeological campaigns between December 1951 and March 1956.

Although no manuscripts were found in the buildings uncovered, there can be little doubt that the scrolls in the nearby caves had once formed a part of the library of the sect that occupied the buildings. Ancient plaster material, which probably was part of scribal furniture, and ceramic and metallic inkwells found among the Hellenistic period ruins of the building, clearly speaks of the ancient scribal activity therein. That the scrolls in the nearby caves, or at least many of these scrolls, were actually copied by scribes at those desks in the buildings can be assumed with confidence.

The original building at Qumran was probably constructed by King Uzziah of Judah (781-740 B.C. II Chron. 26:10)

Our dear friend, Betty's negotiations with the Israeli Dept. of Antiquities was never easy, even with her agreement to donate her beloved Psalms Scroll. I had not realized the

emotional impact it had made because she always tried to be very positive.

In addition to the gift, she had organized the finest American translation team in the world; superior and better trained than the “Israeli team” and still the Israelis continued to make demands. I had no idea about this particular struggle. It broke my heart.

Later that year my husband and I visited Betty at her home and were saddened to see she was unwell. Son Jon, called us the following weekend to tell us his beloved mother had passed away. We were in shock and felt the pressures of the scroll negotiations had been very detrimental to her health. A few days later Jon called to ask my husband to write the obituary for his mother; that as a cattleman all his life he never quite understood all those years involved in the scrolls. Of course, Cobbey Crisler accepted with great humility.

It seems appropriate to add the following note of gratitude from Professor David Noel Freedman now.

We salute you Elizabeth Hay Bechtel for your courage, your generosity and your love in protecting and preserving a vital part of mankind’s heritage during the twentieth century. We are grateful you ignited the torch for manuscript preservation. We promise your light will continue to burn brightly. With gratitude.....(Noel Freedman)

Returning to Robert Schlosser’s comments: *After several years, as happens with Boards of Trustees and organizations, the trustees (The Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center at Claremont)*

decided to head in a direction that was not acceptable to Elizabeth Hay Bechtel, though she had first built the DSS Manuscript Vault at Claremont). Along with son Jon, the Preservation Council was created and Betty built another vault at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California in 1987 which became the home of the Dead Sea Scroll collection in the United States.

The Governing Board of the Huntington has provided to scholars; world-wide access to this valuable material as long as diligent scholarship regarding the Dead Sea Scrolls continues.

Our dear friend's legacy lives on now at this great institution in her beloved California environs; The Huntington Library where serious scholars throughout the world have easy access to the digitized scrolls for their research. So, the legacy lives, dear Betty! The world of scholarship is indebted to you for saving and preserving mankind's greatest historic writings.

She fervently devoted the rest of her life to scroll preservation and translation which all demanded challenging agreements between the Israeli and American Scroll committees. Time was of the essence because the translation team would have serious difficulty in correcting translations if the leather was allowed to disintegrate any further. The plan evolved.....Betty rented the NASA camera, the same one used in space, powerful enough to photograph even those ancient Hebrew letters seriously disappearing to the human eye.

Another reminder recognizing Elizabeth Hay Bechtel's foresight towards manuscript preservation and to Kenneth Bechtel's inestimable generosity to King Hussein towards

supporting Palestinian refugees fleeing for their lives into Jordan from the terrible Israeli onslaught including land and home confiscation. This enormous amount of money became the lynchpin towards the purchase of the Psalms Scroll coupled with Betty's vision for manuscript preservation.

Might not one great first step forward by Israel, towards honest restitution of stolen property, be the return of the Dead Sea Scrolls, seized at gun point by the Israeli military from the Palestine Museum in East Jerusalem in 1948; a museum owned and operated by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Palestine. What a great example for the world, the United Nations to see, that Israel is sincere in taking a significant step towards restitution of stolen property.

I miss you dear Betty. Cobbey followed you just one year later in 1988. Your legacy lives on. Your "star manuscript preservation powers" continue to shine brightly. In connection with that, I must tell you about a talk given by a guest speaker from Israel about the Dead Sea Scrolls at the University of California, Santa Barbara. A mutual friend from Birnam Wood invited me to go with her but I declined because I knew the audience would be hearing a diatribe of lies. But she insisted and we went. At the end of his talk, he said he would take questions from the audience. So, I waited and listened and then raised my hand to ask, "What has become of the Elizabeth Hay Bechtel Psalms Scroll which recently, on a trip to Jerusalem to the Shrine of the Book, I did not see? He was visibly agitated and perplexed but responded, "Oh yes, we do have a Psalms Scroll." But I argued, "What then has become of the

“Elizabeth Hay Bechtel Psalm Scroll?” His response, “Madame, may we discuss this later?” The audience grew very quiet awaiting his reply. Well, there was no later. He took a few more questions and then fled as soon as the applause ended.

You see, after Cobbey died, I returned to Jerusalem and visited the Shrine of the Book; walked over to your Psalms Scroll and saw that the plaque with your name on it had been replaced that simply read, “Psalms Scroll”. So, I asked a guard standing nearby what had become of the Elizabeth Hay Bechtel Psalms Scroll? He did not respond. I asked again. No response. Again, and he impatiently led me to your Psalms Scroll, saying “We have a Psalms Scroll. This is OUR Psalms Scroll” and quickly vanished.

I was furious....what right did they have? So, when I returned to the US, I called Jon telling him, “They have removed your mother’s name from the Psalms Scroll.” He quietly replied, “Janet, what do you want me to do? Go over there and argue with them?” He was right. What good would it have done?

(Returning now to Robert Schlosser’s diary.)

John Guyer and I met with Avi Eitan when we first arrived in 1980 simply to introduce ourselves and discuss the mission, which he had already been amply informed of by John Strugnall and the ABMC. He visited me a few times afterwards in the darkroom to chat about the project and he seemed disturbed by the fact that the Israelis didn’t have editorial control.
(Author: The Dead Sea Scrolls legally belong to Palestine!)

Robert Schlosser gives high praise to Dr. David Noel Freedman as in his view “the finest biblical scholar alive”. Noel, as his friends all called him had the most remarkable and wonderful sense of humor along with his great scholarship. Noel Freedman and Cobbey Crisler both extremely bright, had tremendous respect for each other’s scholarship; yet always had time for an exchange of good humor.

After several years, as happens with Boards of Trustees and organizations, the trustees at the Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center at Claremont, decided to head in a direction that was not acceptable to Elizabeth Hay Bechtel. Along with son Jon, the Preservation Council was created and the vault at the Huntington Library was built in (San Marino, Ca.) 1984. The governing board of the Huntington has provided access for scholars world-wide to have access to this valuable material and scholarship regarding the DSS continues. I do believe the Crisler’s dear friend “Betty” would approve!

A reminder here with great gratitude to Elizabeth Hay Bechtel for her foresight towards manuscript preservation and to Kenneth Bechtel for his enormous monetary generosity to King Hussein of Jordan for the Elizabeth Hay Bechtel Psalm Scroll recognizing Mrs. Bechtel’s vision for manuscript preservation plus witnessing Jordan’s financial needs towards protecting Palestinian refugees fleeing into Jordan from the terrible Israeli onslaught; land and home confiscation.

It may be helpful for the reader to recognize words of advice regarding truth and justice from Marcus Aurelius (Roman

Emperor 161-185 A.D.) who was most likely the most profoundly intelligent emperor/philosopher the Roman Empire ever produced. The following is from his *Meditations, Book 6:21* ***“I seek the truth, which never harmed any+one. In this world there is only one thing of value, so live out your life in truth and justice. The salvation of one’s life lies in applying one’s whole soul to doing right and speaking he truth.*** He ruled according to ethics, principle, the rule of law, integrity and respect for his fellow man, including his subjects.

Dearest Betty, I wish with all my heart that I could pop this entire message into a “snail mail” envelope and send it to you but this is the electronic age we inhabit today!

Words can never say, what Cobbey and I felt about your incredible contribution to all I’ve just related in this little tribute to you. It is hard to imagine over these many decades that scholarly books continue to be written about the Scrolls and the massive drama connected with them.

But the world NEEDS to be aware that without your vision in those few seconds when dear John Trever called to say, “Betty, we’re losing the scrolls”. Your instantaneous response, “Not to worry, we will get the NASA camera”. That instant response changed the world regarding ancient manuscript preservation! Plus Kenneth’s perception, in wanting to help his friend King Hussein during the frantic Palestinian refugee catastrophe as well as his concern for the dear Palestinian people losing their lands and homes.

In the end that concern helped not only the Palestinians but protected the Dead Sea Scrolls for humanity forever via your

selfless donation of your precious Psalms Scroll to the Israeli Dept. of Antiquities' Director Avi Eitan, rather like an Abraham/Issac sacrifice to preserve an important segment of humanity's development. Few then and probably now, could even comprehend; not to mention all the challenges you experienced, dealing with ungrateful Israelis.

Conclusion

So my dear friend, your vision to preserve the most valuable segment of mankind's heritage has been achieved. You did it all through what most of us would call insurmountable odds, but your example for womanhood, your light of truth and justice will continue to burn brightly, for generations to come. Let the truth be told that it was and continues to be the vision of an American woman who did indeed save and preserve the Dead Sea Scrolls!

Always with love and great admiration from both Cobbey and Janet Crisler.

Professional acknowledgements with enormous gratitude!

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