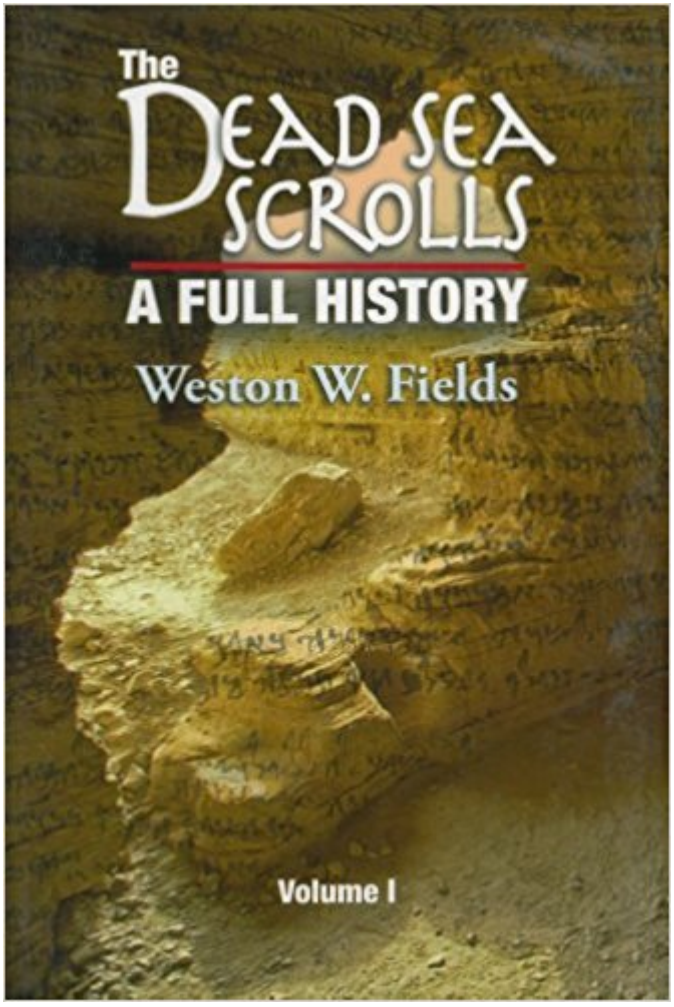
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The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Full History



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Synopsis

Who discovered the Dead Sea Scrolls? When and where were they discovered? How were they saved? Who bought them and who paid for them? Who has them now and who owns them? Will more be discovered? Have all the scrolls been published? Are some still hidden away? Were there conspiracies to suppress some scrolls? Preceded by The Dead Sea Scrolls, A Short History, The Dead Sea Scrolls, A Full History, vol. 1, is the first of a projected two volumes offering a more complete account of the discovery of the scrolls and their history over the past 60 years since the first scrolls were discovered in a cave near the Dead Sea.

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Customer Reviews

Fields has succeeded in writing a masterful survey that puts the events into their chronological order and reveals numerous startling details. He had provided the interested reader with a most useful reference work which, through its beautiful colour pictures, is also very pleasant to read. Hence, this book not only offers the general public with a reliable and accurate account of the scrolls' early history, but definitely deserves a place on the shelf of any scholar involved or interested in Dead Sea Scrolls research. H. Debel, Ephemerides Theologicae LovaniensesThe length of this review testifies to the intense interest inspired by Fields' book. ... He interrogated them with enviable thoroughness and scrupulous fairness. If there is an agenda it is to squash definitively the falsehoods that have swirled about the scrolls. This, however, is done irenically by letting the known facts speak for themselves. The life given to the personalities by his gifted pen is complemented by

magnificent photographs whose reproduction is superb.Jerome Murphy-O'Connor,Ãƒâ cole Biblique et archÃƒÂ©ologique FranÃƒÂ§aise de JÃƒÂ©rusalemVolume 1 of The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Full History is an inestimable contribution to scrolls historiography. It will appeal to scholars and students of biblical scholarship, but also to academia in general and a popular audience. Jaqueline Du Toit, University of the Free State (South Africa) H-Judaic (September, 2011)'This lavishly illustrated volume contains a virtual mini-archive of the momentous events relating to the discovery, acquisition and early publication history of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Fields interviewed all the living major, as well as some minor, players or their family members in different parts of the world. Among them are Arab nomads, local Arab antiquities dealers, scholars, wealthy collectors and librarians. Fields studied the archives of universities and institutions in various countries and reproduces much of what he has discovered word for word. Fields is extremely even-handed and very rarely passes judgment on the events he records. If anything, he is perhaps a little too reticent in offering his own take on things, especially given the huge amount of research he has undertaken. All in all this project to be completed with a second volume covering the remainder of the story is the result of many years of painstaking work, exhausting travel and devoted research. Fields has done scholars and the public a huge service. We look forward to the next installment. Charlotte Hempel is a senior lecturer in Biblical studies in the school of philosophy, theology and religion at the University of Birmingham, UK. She cochairs the Qumran section of the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, serves as reviews editor for the Journal of Jewish Studies and is a member of the editorial board of Dead Sea Discoveries'. 'Since 1998, W. W. Fields has investigated how the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, acquired, and edited. This first volume of his Full History covers the years 1947 1960.It is rich in detail and discloses the history of the Dead Sea Scrolls based on interviews with the first generation of Dead Sea Scrolls scholars and other people involved in their discovery and publication. In the course of his interviews, Fields has unearthed a wealth of archival material, including diaries and letters previously unknown to the public, which add significant source material to his account. The resulting history of the Dead Sea Scrolls will surprise the specialist and lay person alike in its detail. The book is thoroughly illustrated with historic photographs, many in color, illuminating the discovery and editing of the scrolls'. 'In conclusion, volume 1 of The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Full History is an inestimable contribution to scrolls historiography. It will appeal to scholars and students of biblical scholarship, but also to academia in general and a popular audience. Despite its price, which curtails its mass appeal, it is highly recommended. And, based on the riveting narrative still unfolding, volume 2 is awaited with great anticipation.' Jaqueline Du Toit, University of the Free State (South Africa) H-Judaic (September, 2011) 'Fields has succeeded in

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Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, serves as reviews editor for the Journal of Jewish Studies and is a member of the editorial board of Dead Sea Discoveries'. http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/reviews/the-dead-sea-scrolls-a-full-history-vol-1-2/ 'Since 1998, W. W. Fields has investigated how the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, acquired, and edited. This first volume of his "Full History" covers the years 1947-1960.It is rich in detail and discloses the history of the Dead Sea Scrolls based on interviews with the first generation of Dead Sea Scrolls scholars and other people involved in their discovery and publication. In the course of his interviews, Fields has unearthed a wealth of archival material, including diaries and letters previously unknown to the public, which add significant source material to his account. The resulting history of the Dead Sea Scrolls will surprise the specialist and lay person alike in its detail. The book is thoroughly illustrated with historic photographs, many in color, illuminating the discovery and editing of the scrolls'. 'In conclusion, volume 1 of The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Full History is an inestimable contribution to scrolls historiography. It will appeal to scholars and students of biblical scholarship, but also to academia in general and a popular audience. Despite its price, which curtails its mass appeal, it is highly recommended. And, based on the riveting narrative still unfolding, volume 2 is awaited with great anticipation.' Jaqueline Du Toit, University of the Free State (South Africa) H-Judaic (September, 2011) 'Fields has succeeded in writing a masterful survey that puts the events into their chronological order and reveals numerous startling details. He had provided the interested reader with a most useful reference work which, through its beautiful colour pictures, is also very pleasant to read. Hence, this book not only offers the general public with a reliable and accurate account of the scrolls' early history, but definitely deserves a place on the shelf of any scholar involved or interested in Dead Sea Scrolls research. One eagerly awaits the second volume.' H. Debel, Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses

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What an extraordinary book. Although it is expensive, my main criticism would be that vol. 2 has still

not been published! Fields does indeed do an exemplary job of telling the whole "behind the scenes" story of the modern finding and publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS). Fields obviously spent years interviewing the principle personages involved and reviewing their voluminous correspondence on the subject. Though many of the persons involved in the DSS have died in the last decade Fields traveled all over the world to personally record interviews with many of the scholars and others involved with the acquisition, exhibition, publication, etc. of the DSS. Thus this book is based on his arrangement and interpretation of firsthand accounts as reflected in memories, contemporary correspondence, and official records. Having met some of the persons mentioned, I can attest to his having captured personalities and incidents involved in a long and detailed and very personal history. This is the strength and charm of the book viz. that Fields has carefully researched firsthand accounts.The book tells of the accidental finding and complicated publication process of the DSS. By now most people have heard of the DSS and there have been numerous inaccurate rumors and stories circulating for years which Filed's work helps to correct. For instance most people believe that the DSS took too long to publish. (Material was found starting in 1947 and some is STILL not published!) They also believe (incorrectly as Field's conclusively demonstrates) that there was some sort of a church or ego-driven conspiracy to withhold publication.The book helps to show history in the making --and what a complex sequence of events it is. Fields help us to appreciate the personalities, politics, economics, as well as the complex physical requirements of the task. Most people don't realize that the DSS consist of not scrolls at all but rather thousands of quarter to dollar bill sized fragments! I wish Fields had helped us to better appreciate the physical difficulties of publication as well as the human, political, and economic factors involved which make up the strength of the book. I would illustrate the DSS scrolls publication process by asking you to imagine taking a bible and two other books (one unknown), throwing them into a blender until there was no piece remaining that was larger then a dollar bill. Next aging the fragments 2,000 years until they ere largely unreadable with the naked eye. Then taking 2/3 of the fragments and griinding them to complete dust. Finally, taking the remaining pieces and arranging them like a jigsaw puzzle and using unfrared photography to make the letters visible. This might lead to a better understanding of the difficulties in making sense of the DSS! Cave number four yielded fragments of over 500 separate works in over 15,000 separate pieces!!!The book also contains interesting and charming little anecdotes such as the time when one scholar carefully arranged 10 years worth of photos, personal notes, articles, and other study materials on his office floor and the janitor thinking it was to make his job easier threw the whole lot into the trash. Or the time when the archbishop of the Syrian Orthodox church took out an ad in the Wall Street Journal in an attempt to sell some of the scrolls in

America. Fields also details a number of times when some of the DSS were stolen by visitors --inluding one theft apparently by visiting diplomats! Fields hints at a fairlly large amount of material that has made its way into private collections or is otherwise unaccounted for. This leads to the hope that "Dead Sea Scrolls" will continue to be found long into the future!For a publisher as prestigious as E.J. Brill, this book suffers from extremely poor editing as evidenced by numerous small typos. It is also extremely hard to follow in it's extensive use of letters quoted verbatim. The letters are in the same typeface and double spaced exactly as the rest of the text (except for being doubly indented). This makes it hard to follow where the quotations end, The book contains many photographs including those from personal collections which are not very high quality, but overall this adds to the gritty authenticity of the book.Volume 1 takes the story through 1960 and includes the finding of the "scrolls," the political events that made publishing them difficult (e.g. the Suez Canal crisis of 1956-7). and the Israeli Arab conflicts which shaped the background of the story. The book does a good job of introducing the main characters involved, but there are so many that it is a little difficult to follow sometimes, but this is the nature of the story and not the fault of the author.Overall, this is a great addition to scrolls scholarship and should be read by every professional DSS scholar and seriously interested layman. The detail and cost of the book will prevent all but the most avid amateurs from reading it. Volume 1 is 592 pages long. If you have read everything available in english about the DSS this is a book you will enjoy, but only the most serious amateurs will find it enjoyable to wade through this hefty tome.

Even though the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered only 62 years ago, much of their early history has been shrouded in obscurity. Details of persons and places were compromised by focus on the scrolls themselves, and on occasion deliberate deception facilitated the continuation of illegal, but highly profitable, excavation. In 1998 Marcel Sigrist, OP, suggested to Weston Fields, Director of the Dead Sea Scrolls Foundation in Jerusalem, that the only way to acquire clarity would be to record critically the testimony of the original eye-witnesses. Some had already died, others were getting old, and this would be the last opportunity. Fields took up the challenge, and the thoroughness of his oral history is illustrated by the fact that he even gives the number of sheep (about 55) in the care of Muhammed ed-Dib the day he threw the stone into what became Cave 1. The surviving actors were all happy to cooperate, and a number revealed that they had extensive private archives that had never been exploited. These amounted to tens of thousands of pages of precise written and photographic documentation, which was contemporary with the events. This greatly widened the extent of the project, and gave it a much more solid base. No longer did Fields have to rely on aging

memories, and the unsupported word of one witness against another. He had documentary evidence that could be compared, contrasted, and critically evaluated. In the case of the ten actors who have died since the project began he just got there in time. So much material became available that it quickly became clear that one volume would not be enough. The change in de facto ownership of the scrolls in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion of June 1967 might seem an obvious place to break. Fields, however, opts for 1960, both for pratical reasons, and because that year caused an even greater upheaval in the publication of the scrolls. The Rockefeller funds supporting the full-time scholars working at the Palestine Archaeological Museum (PAM) dried up, and the team had to disperse to find jobs that ate into the time they could devote to the scrolls. Publication inevitably slowed. From 1947 to 1960 Fields follows a strictly chronological order, often with subheadings of great precision, e.g. "19 July 1947, Saturday

This significant new contribution to learning is fascinating. I recommend it to all who are interested in history of Qumran text scholarship.For now, here's the document about which Weston Fields wrote (page 339):"No written record of Albright's accusation seems to have survived, but Harding mentions it in a letter to the BBC on 8 June 1956:...." And compare p. 552 n. 78 "...I have been unable to trace down what this statement of Albright's might be." Albright later said the report--about the new Qumran Cave Eleven finds--was rather inaccurate, but Associated Press ran a story that appeared in several papers. Here's the version in the Ottawa Citizen, May 24, 1956, page 1 col.2:"Arab Stole Old ScrollsBaltimore (AP)--At least two newly discovered Dead sea scrolls have been stolen by Arabs and are being held for ransom, a Johns Hopkins University professor said Wednesday.Dr. William F. Albright, professor of semitic languages, said in a lecture that discovery of these scrolls had not been previously announced...."So far I've found one significant error and various minor ones (e.g. p. 105 Dhormes for Dhorme; p. 103 the dates Strugnell taught at Duke [correct elsewhere], etc.)On page 175 it's reported that on 14 January 1953:"He [Milik] also congratulated Brownlee on his identification of the Righteous Teacher with Judas Maccabaeus, an identification that he accepted." This should read "Judah the Essene." Apparently later Milik changed his mind. But Field's book strengthens (in my view) reasons for considering Jannaeus the "Wicked Priest," as many of the early scholars did. For more on the Teacher and "Wicked Priest" identifications see "Jannaeus, His Brother Absalom, and Judah the Essene, available online.
Stephen Goranson

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