

Dead Sea Scrolls offer world fragments of past

Continued from page 1

After examination of the scrolls, for example, scholars corrected the height of Goliath — David's famed Philistine opponent — from 10 feet to 6 feet 6 inches, he said.

"It's unhappy because Goliath now couldn't make the Celtics," Cross joked.

Cross and other scholars noted that the scrolls have made more of an impact on "intertestamental" studies — research into the period between the conclusion of the writing of the Old Testament and the beginning of the composition of the New Testament.

In addition to the scriptural treasures offered by the Dead Sea Scrolls, many of the texts also contain information about various factions within Judaism — Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes — that formed during the two centuries before Christ's life.

In particular, most researchers and scholars have concluded that it was the Essenes, a rigorously ascetical Jewish sect, who once occupied a ruined city on a plateau overlooking the Dead Sea.

Calling themselves the "Sons of Zadok" — the name of a high priest who had anointed King Solomon — the Essenes reportedly recorded their lives in many of the scrolls that were found in caves surrounding the city.

Prior to the scrolls' discovery, the only record of the Essenes was the somewhat inexact histories sketched by of a few of their contemporaries. The Dead Sea Scrolls give a more detailed picture of why the Qumran sect adopted their disciplined practices.

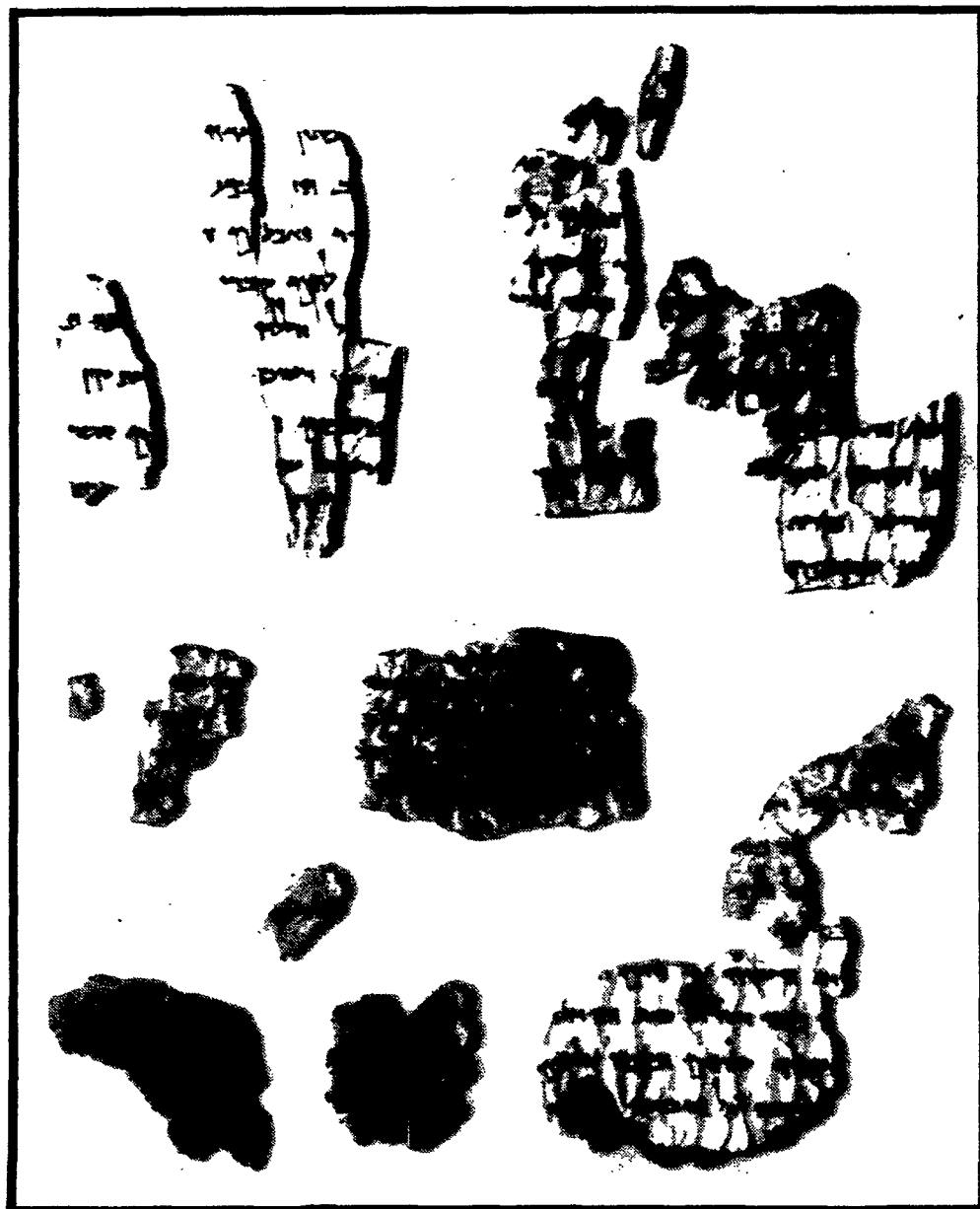
The Essenes apparently saw themselves as guarding traditional Judaism, in opposition to the Judaism practiced by the high priests of Jerusalem, the Sadducees, in the second century B.C. The Essenes held that the Sadducees had been corrupted by pagan Greek influences.

The scrolls also have enlivened scholars' perceptions of the world in which the early Christians lived, according to Stephen A. Reed, cataloger for the Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center in Claremont, Calif. The Claremont center possesses 3,000 photographs of the scrolls, one of the largest collections of such photographs in the world.

The study of the Dead Sea Scrolls "places Christianity within a broader framework," Reed said in a telephone interview with the *Catholic Courier*. "Qumran texts help us to understand the nature of that larger world."

That larger world was wrought with conflict and disagreement, not only between the followers of Jesus and his opponents, but between other Jewish groups as well, explained Lawrence H. Schiffman, professor of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University in Manhattan.

Schiffman noted that some of the de-



Editors working for the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem have spent more than 40 years assembling fragments like these to publish texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls. AP/Wide World Photos

bates Jesus had with the Pharisees — a lay sect — are echoed in the scroll texts.

Jesus argued, for example, that it was not a violation of the Sabbath for a person to rescue an animal that had fallen into a well. The Pharisees disagreed. But the Qumran sect took a third view — that the animal's owner could possibly provide a means for the animal's escape without actually rescuing it, he said.

Schiffman observed that Christians sometimes equate the Pharisees' view on various religious issues as representative of all Jewish thought at the time. In actuality, he said, the scrolls show Jewish thought of the era embraced a variety of opinions differing from both the positions espoused by Jesus and by the Pharisees.

The chronicles give a "much wider perspective on the extent to which the early Christians were part of the religious ferment of the times," Schiffman said.

He noted that early Christians also shared apocalyptic beliefs paralleling the belief among the Essene community at Qumran in preparing for a final showdown between the forces of good

and evil. Schiffman noted, however, that he disagrees with the dominant academic view that the Essenes were a unique community, separate and distinct from other currents in Jewish thought.

Instead, he sees the Qumran community as a Sadducean sect. Scholars too often have labeled the Essenes as "proto-Christians," he said, arguing that the Christian sect grew out of "various apocalyptic Jewish trends."

Yet the light shed on ancient Judaism and Christianity by the scrolls has for years been clouded in scholarly controversy. Only in the last few weeks has that cloud seemed to dissipate.

Access to the scroll fragments has been a source of contention among scholars almost since their discovery. Most of the original fragments are currently stored at the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem under the control of Israel's Antiquities Authority.

Several scholars have criticized the Rockefeller Museum's editorial panel for publishing the scroll texts at a relatively slow pace. Experts estimate that only 45-55 percent of all the available material on the scrolls has been pub-

lished since the scrolls' discovery in the late 1940s and '50s.

Some editors have also been attacked for sharing their findings with colleagues and students, while depriving outside researchers of access to material needed to complete their articles and books.

The material found in caves 1-3 and 5-10 has been published, according to Father Joseph Fitzmyer, SJ, professor emeritus of Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. But in a phone interview from his Georgetown office, the priest told the *Courier* that much of the material from Caves 4 and 11 is still being prepared for publication.

Father Fitzmyer lamented the editorial team's slow pace of publication, and attributed some of the delay to the fact that a few of the editors had been assigned large amounts of scroll fragments to assemble. Additionally, putting the fragments together in a coherent fashion is a long and rather complex task, he said.

But even allowing for such circumstances, the editors should have completed their work more than a decade ago, the priest said.

Cross said he had always attempted to share his work as rapidly as possible with qualified scholars. But in defense of the editors, he said that traditionally those who are assigned such work should be given a lifetime to finish it.

One actor in the drama dismisses arguments in favor of allowing the editors first rights to publish the remaining material on the scrolls.

Using sets of 3,000 photographic negatives made in 1980 as backup in case the scrolls were accidentally destroyed, the Huntington Library in San Marino, Calif., announced in September that it would make public copies of the negatives without restrictions.

At first, Israeli authorities considered legal action against the library.

But then Emanuel Tov, head of the official team overseeing publication of the scrolls, announced during a Nov. 26 Jerusalem press conference that Israel had decided to change the rules for access to the material.

The only substantial restriction on scholars retained by the Israeli authority is that exclusive rights to publishing the full texts will remain in the hands of the officially assigned editors. But Tov said all the texts should be published by 1997.

At its late-November convention in Kansas City, Mo., meanwhile, the 6,000-member Society for Biblical Literature approved a set of guidelines stating that those preparing scholarly editions based on ancient texts should complete their work within five years or give up any special access to the material.

This article contains information from *Catholic News Service*.

Influx of Polish immigrants, conflicts characterized the late 1800s

Continued from page 9

Poles ultimately led to the formation of the schismatic Polish National Church in 1895. The local group remained allied with the Catholic Church until 1907, when approximately one fourth of St. Stanislaus' parishioners broke away to form St. Casimir's Polish National Church.

Other ethnic tensions

The Polish dispute was not the only ethnic ones to strike the Catholic Church in the United States. Irish immigrants, for example were form-

ing nationalistic societies such as the Irish National League (1882).

Bishop McQuaid opposed most of these Irish groups because they engaged in ritual secrecy, and in some cases, advocated violence. He did, however, grant approval to the Ancient Order of Hibernians in 1894, deciding they were not connected with condemned groups like the Molly Maguires and the Board of Erin.

Likewise, the German Catholic Union of St. Mauritius — which formed at St. Joseph's Parish in Rochester in 1873, spread across the nation,

and in 1879 changed its name to the Knights of St. John — met the bishop's approval.

Father McNamara pointed out in his book that Bishop McQuaid's moderate policies toward ethnic groups also helped the diocese avoid problems with the German movement known as "Cahenyism."

That movement sought the preservation of Germanism in churches — something that McQuaid with his acceptance of ethnic parishes in effect permitted. Thus, Father McNamara wrote, "His relations with the Ger-

mans of the diocese remained substantially unimpaired throughout his regime."

On the whole, Father McNamara wrote, Bishop McQuaid's "moderate, rational and practical stand" while dealing with ethnic groups in the last quarter of the 19th century helped Rochester's first bishop "to retain the loyal and Catholic allegiance of his polyglot people."

NEXT WEEK: 1900-1925.