

THE ISAIAH SCROLLS FROM THE JUDEAN DESERT*

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This article serves to introduce readers to the Isaiah Scrolls that were discovered in four caves near the Dead Sea between 1947 and 1952. Some of these—notably the Great Isaiah Scroll from Cave 1 (1QIsa^a)—are familiar to many scholars, while others are less known because they have only recently been published. The Qumran caves have yielded twenty-one Isaiah manuscripts (two from Cave 1, eighteen from Cave 4, and one from Cave 5), and an additional scroll was discovered at Murabba‘at further down the western coast of the Dead Sea.

Since a full description of this material would be very extensive and is available in the various critical editions, discussion is limited here to features that will interest the general biblical scholar, not just the Qumran specialist. In general, for each manuscript the following data are offered: designation by book (e.g. 4QIsa^a), designation by cave (e.g. 4Q55), details of the final and/or preliminary edition(s), date of copying, orthographic assessment, and indication of contents. In some cases, where a scroll exhibits special additional features—such as the use of Palaeo-Hebrew letters for the divine name in 4QIsa^c—I have drawn attention to these. However, this procedure is by no means systematic; the absence of such comment for a particular manuscript does not necessarily mean that it lacks interesting or distinctive features. The final section of the article sketches the planning and details for the critical edition of 1QIsa^a and 1QIsa^b, the two manuscripts that have still to appear in the DJD series (“Discoveries in the Judaean Desert,” published by Oxford University Press).

Two final comments may prove helpful for many readers. First, in the descriptions that follow, orthography is variously described as “sparing” (with relatively few *matres lectiones* [letters such as *waw* or *yod* used for vowels]), “full” (with extensive use of *matres*), or “mixed” (with some use of *matres*). Second, the Bibliography is

* What follows is dedicated to Eugene Ulrich for the many years that he devoted to editing the eighteen Isaiah scrolls from Cave 4, and celebrates his recent publication of this material in DJD 15.

selective in that it mainly presents for the Isaiah manuscripts details of the preliminary and final editions. A longer listing of the numerous studies that have been conducted on the Isaiah scrolls (especially 1QIsa^a) is not required in the present context.

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