

University of Chicago, which reported in January, 1951, that investigation of its Carbon 14 content indicated that its origin could be dated at 33 A.D. plus or minus two hundred years. This certainly fits with an early date rather than with a medieval date for the scrolls.

The contents of ~~these~~ the non-Biblical scrolls found in the cave have been much discussed, and it was suggested that they were related to the so-called Zadokite Fragments, found in Egypt fifty years ago, which told of a sect of Jews living in the desert, which had fled from persecution to Damascus.

Near the cave where the tablets were found, there was an old ruin, known as Khirbet Qumran. This was excavated in 1951 and 1953. It proved to be the headquarters of a group of Jews which began to use it in the second century B.C.. Remains of a scriptorium were found, which was evidently the place where the scrolls had been copied. Near it other caves were discovered. One of these, situated in the opposite direction from cave One, contained pieces of over one hundred scrolls. Many of these pieces have been fitted together, and portions of almost every book of the Old Testament have been identified. Some of the manuscripts contain parts of the Zadokite Fragments, verifying the theory that the group which produced these scrolls is the very one described in the Zadokite writings which were found in Egypt fifty years ago. The non-Biblical writing have many allusions to contemporary events, expressed, however, in veiled language. Some of them are thought to refer to incidents in connection with the Maccabean revolt of around 168 B.C..

All this naturally stimulated the seven hundred Bedouin who live in the area to hunt through these wild and desolate desert regions for more caves. Soon other manuscripts began to appear for sale in Jerusalem. Many of these came from two caves which had been discovered in a distant wadi two hundred feet up the side of a six hundred foot cliff. These caves were so large that about fifty men could work in them at one time. They have provided us another great collection of manuscript