The Bible in Our Hands
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Scrolls from the shore of the Dead Sea
c. 200 B.C.E. – c. 300 C.E.

Qumran caves
11 caves yielded the c. 830 Dead Sea Scrolls, dated to 3rd cent. B.C.E. to 1st cent. C.E., found during the years 1947 – 1954 (seen here, Cave 4).

First Isaiah Scroll (1QIsaa) – http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/isaiah

Two of the first seven Dead Sea Scrolls found were copies of the book of Isaiah

1QIsaa – Isaiah 6:3
1QIsa — Isaiah 6:3 ‘holy, holy’

First Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa) — [Link]

Scrolls from the shore of the Dead Sea

Qumran
Ein Gedi
Masada

Masada (view from the north)

Masada Synagogue

Deuteronomy 33
Psalms 80-85

27 April 2022
Scrolls from the shore of the Dead Sea
c. 200 B.C.E. – c. 300 C.E.

Ein Gedi
Masada

Burnt scroll from the Ark in the Ein Gedi synagogue, c. 600 C.E., discovered during excavations in 1970.

Composite Scan of the Ein Gedi Leviticus Scroll
Leviticus, chapters 1-2
[Link]

Carbon-14 analysis of the scroll at the Weizmann Institute Radiocarbon Laboratory
88.9% probability = 210-390 C.E. ≈ 300 C.E.
Ein-Gedi Scroll, c. 300 C.E.

Burnt scroll from the Ark in the Ein Gedi synagogue, c. 600 C.E., discovered during excavations in 1970.

Ben Ezra Synagogue – Cairo, Egypt

Interior of the Ben Ezra Synagogue, Cairo

Ben Ezra Synagogue, Cairo, balcony of the women’s gallery

Ashkar-Gilson, no. 2
Duke University fragment
1700 C.E.
Exodus 15

David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Ashkar-Gilson, no. 2
Duke University
fragment
c. 700 C.E.
Exodus 15

David M. Rubenstein
Rare Book and Manuscript Library

London Scroll,
c. 700 C.E.,
formerly held by
Jews College, London,
now owned by
Stephan Loewentheil
(New York)

Askhar-Gilson Scroll and London Scroll are from the same original Torah scroll, with one column missing between these two sections of Exodus.

An Ancient Scroll of the Book of Exodus: The Reunion of Two Separate Fragments
Edna Engel, Hebrew Philology Project, Brandeis University of Sciences and Humanities
Mordechai Veintrob, Academy of the Hebrew Language
Israel Museum Studies in Archaeology 7 (2015), pp. 24-61

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Ashkar-Gilson Scroll | Duke University | c. 700 C.E. | Exodus 15
legible through photo enhancement

Askhar-Gilson Scroll | Duke University | c. 700 C.E. | Exodus 15
legible through photo enhancement

Genizah Fragments
C.U.L.
T.5 AG 37.1

Mordechai Veintrob
(Hebrew University graduate student)
Ashkar-Gilson, no. 14
Duke University (David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library)
c. 900 C.E.
especially illegible

Cambridge University Library (C.U.L.)

Cairo Geniza
T-S Ns 3.21
Torah scroll
c. 800 C.E.
Genesis 13-17

Cambridge University Library
July 2019
Library of Congress
Torah Scroll Sheet
(c. 1000 C.E.)
(acquired 2017)
Exodus 10:10 – 16:15
The Oldest Complete Torah Scroll Sheet Legible by the Naked Eye
https://www.loc.gov/item/webcast-8367

9th century C.E.
Two major shifts:
• The use of the codex
  (forerunner of the modern book)
• The creation of the Masorah,
  to graphically record the oral reading tradition

Codex Sinaiticus – 4th century C.E., parchment
Oldest Complete Manuscript of the Septuagint
St Catherine’s Monastery > British Library
www.codexsinaiticus.org

Topkapi Qur’an Manuscript
C. 725 C.E.
408 folios
(2 folios missing),
contains 99%
of the Qur’an
Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul
The Bishop's School (La Jolla)

The Aleppo Codex – c. 930 C.E.

Masoretes
9th century C.E. Tiberias

Masoretic Text =
text of the Bible
with vowels, accent marks,
punctuation marks,
marginal notes, etc.

Aleppo Codex
Written in Tiberias, Israel, c. 930
• Cairo, c. 1100 – c. 1400
• Aleppo, c. 1400 – 1958
• Jerusalem, 1958 – present
Today housed in the
Israel Museum, Jerusalem

Scribe: Shelomo ben Buya’a (consonants only)
Masoretica: Aharon ben Moshe ben Asher

Aleppo Codex
Sample page
Deuteronomy 28:17–45

Sample verse:
Joshua 1:1
עֶ֣בֶ
מֹשֶׁ֖ה
מ֥וֹת
אַחֲרֵ֛י
doֹyִ֗י
אֶל־yְhוֹשֻׁ֣ךְ
yְhוָ֙ה֙
וַyָּמֶֽר
יְhוָ֑ה
עַl
לֵaםֹר
mֹשֶׁ֖ה
mְשָׁרֵ֥ת
׃bִּn־n֕וּן

Aleppo Codex / c. 930 / Tiberias
Sample verse: Joshua 1:1
נַוִּי אָבֶרִי מִן מַשָּׁה יִבְדֶּל yְhוָ֙ה אֵלֵי לֵאְבָרִי
יִנְתֶּנֶ֥י הָנֵֽאָרָה לָאֲבָרִי
פָּרֹנַת מִשֶּׁה מֵשָּׁה לֵאָבָרִי.
Biblioteca universitaria di Bologna, Italia

Mauro Perani
Biblioteca universitaria di Bologna, Italia

Biella, Italy
c. 1250 C.E. (via 14C dating)

Kennicott Bible
Written in La Coruña, Spain, 1476
Now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford
opening page of the biblical text (fol. 9v)
Genesis 1

Kennicott Bible, fol. 16v – וירא

Kennicott Bible, fol. 18r – שרה חייו

Kennicott Bible, fol. 18r – שרה חייו

Kennicott Bible, fol. 18r – שרה חייו
Image of King David based on the king in medieval Spanish playing cards.
I, Moshe ben Ya’aqov ibn Zabara, the scribe . . . I wrote, and I punctuated, and I added the Masora, and I checked these twenty-four books, in one collection; and I concluded it on Wednesday, the 3rd day of the month of Av, in the year [5235] [=1476 C.E.], here in the place La Coruña, and I strengthened it with 37 booklets . . . for the delightful young-man Yitzḥaq, dear firstborn-son of Don Shelomo de Braga, may God merit him to read it, he and all his offspring, and the offspring of his offspring, until the end of all generations, as it is written, . . . of the making of many books there is no end, amen, thus may the Lord [written YYY] do.
Second colophon, with the name of the artist, Yosef ben Hayyim, using zoomorphic figures (folio 447r).

Close-up of two lines of the artist’s colophon: "ציירתי ה׳ ספר יאפריך" - "this book I illustrated".

Benjamin Kennicott (1718 – 1783), librarian of the Radcliffe Camera, University of Oxford, purchased Kennicott Bible, no. 1, in Italy, in 1771.
At the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Summer 2018
Inspecting the Kennicott Bible, with César Merchán-Hamann, Hebraica librarian

Kennicott Bible, La Coruna, Spain, 1476

first printing of the Torah / Pentateuch (Bologna, 1482)