

It soon became apparent, however, that there were many scholars who refused to believe in the genuineness and age of the Isaiah manuscript. Recalling the statement of the original messenger of the Archbishop that these scrolls had been found in the monastery library, they insisted that ~~it~~ ^{it} was not ancient at all, but that it came from the middle ages. For a time it looked as if scholarly opinion would veer in this direction. Experts in Hebrew paleography declared that the style of writing showed that the manuscripts had been ~~made~~ ^{written} before the beginning of the Christian era. Their opponents refused to accept their arguments and constantly raised new objections, sometimes even saying that the Isaiah scroll was not worth the paper it was written on. The genuineness of the scrolls and their dating has been discussed by numerous scholars from many lands. Much of this discussion is now antiquated, as new facts have come to light which seem definitely to settle the matter.

It was very hard to do much investigating in Palestine immediately after the scrolls became known, since the land was then in the throes of war between the Jews and the Arabs. After the situation had quieted down, and a definite borderline had been established, it was possible to examine the cave from which the Bedouins said that the scrolls had been taken. Here many jars were found, together with hundreds of small fragments of manuscripts. Some of these fragments fit into broken places in the very scrolls which the Bedouins had sold, and were clearly written by the same hand. There seemed little doubt that this was the correct cave. Archeologists who examined the jars found in the cave declared that many of them were of a type which was not produced after 100 B. C.