

# Deciphering References to the Dead Sea Scrolls

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## Identifying a Manuscript

### Numbering system

The most certain (and simplest) system for identifying documents found at Qumran or neighbouring sites uses the unique numbers assigned to each manuscript:

Site found		Manuscript number
Qumran documents are labeled with the letter "Q" preceded by a number corresponding to the Qumran cave where the document was found.	1Q 2Q 3Q (etc.)	A unique number (up to 3 digits) assigned to each manuscript.
There are several other nearby sites which employ different prefixes.	Ḥev = Naḥal Ḥever Mas = Masada Mird = Khirbet Mird Mur = Wadi Murabba'at	<i>Note</i> , different copies of the same document are each assigned different numbers.
e.g.	1Q20 = Manuscript number 20 found in Cave 1 at Qumran Mur5 = Manuscript number 5 found at Wadi Murabba'at	

### Descriptive naming system

There are several elements which may or may not be present in the descriptive label for a document found at Qumran or the neighboring sites:

Site	Short form for title	Place among other documents on scroll	Language	Place among similarly titled documents	Copy
1Q, 2Q, 3Q, etc.	These vary widely. In general: <i>ap</i> = <i>apocryphon</i> <i>apocr</i> = <i>apocryphon</i> <i>apoc</i> = <i>apocalypse</i> <i>p</i> = <i>peshet</i> <i>paleo</i> = <i>Paleo-Hebrew</i> <i>pap</i> = <i>papyrus</i> <i>tg</i> = <i>targum</i>	a, b, c, etc. ( <i>always regular script</i> )	ar = Aramaic gk = Greek hebr = Hebrew If no language is indicated, assume Heb. ( <i>may be superscript or regular script</i> )	A, B, C, etc. ( <i>always regular script</i> )	<sup>a, b, c</sup> , etc. ( <i>always superscript</i> )
examples	1QapGen <sup>ar</sup> OR 1QapGen <sup>ar</sup> The Aramaic document (ar/ <sup>ar</sup> ) found in Cave 1 (1Q) entitled <i>Genesis Apocryphon</i> (apGen)				
	4QBarkī Nafshī <sup>a</sup> The first copy ( <sup>a</sup> ) of the document found in Cave 4 at Qumran (4Q) entitled <i>Barkī Nafshī</i> .				
	1QSa The second (a) document contained on the <i>Serek</i> scroll (S) found in Cave 1 at Qumran (1Q).				
	4QTohorot A The first (A) document entitled <i>Tohorot</i> (i.e., Purities) found in Cave 4 at Qumran (4Q).				

## Identifying a Passage Within a Manuscript

There are also several pieces of information which may or may not be present in the actual reference to a passage within a scroll:

Fragment number	Column number	Line number		
1, 2, 3, etc.	i, ii, iii, iv, etc. I, II, III, IV, etc.	1, 2, 3, etc.		
<b><i>A note on punctuation:</i></b> The punctuation between these numbers varies from work to work. The official <i>DJD</i> system uses no punctuation at all (spaces between numbers), while the <i>SBL Handbook</i> suggests a space between the fragment # and column #, but a comma separating the column # from the line #. The <i>Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls</i> differs again, placing periods between each of the numbers.				
examples	DJD	SBL	EDSS	Meaning
	4 vi 23	4 VI, 23	4.vi.23	fragment four, column six, line 23
	xii 5	XII, 5	xii.23	column twelve, line five (It is assumed here that only one fragment exists for the manuscript, or that the reference is to the main continuous portion of the manuscript.)

\*\* Remember that in references to the Dead Sea Scrolls we are not dealing with *chapters* and *verses* (artificial divisions which correspond roughly to sense units in the text), but rather to *columns* and *lines* in an actual manuscript.

## Putting It All Together

1QH <sup>a</sup> x 35	Line 35 on column 10 (x) of the first ( <sup>a</sup> ) copy of the <i>Hodayot</i> (H) found in Cave 1 at Qumran (1Q)
11Q19 Iviii.6	Line 6 on column 58 (Iviii) of manuscript 19 found in Cave 11 at Qumran (11Q)
4QNoah ar II,13	Line 13 on column 2 (II) of the <i>Book of Noah</i> (Noah) written in Aramaic (ar) found in Cave 4 at Qumran (4Q)