

New Dead Sea Scrolls Discoveries Revealed

Researchers are gleaning new insights into ancient biblical texts with the help of artificial intelligence (AI).

The Dead Sea Scrolls contain some of the earliest known versions of texts from the Bible, including the books of Genesis, Exodus, Isaiah, Kings, and Deuteronomy. For decades, researchers relied on handwriting style and radiocarbon dating to determine that the manuscripts originated between the third century B.C. and the first century A.D.

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However, AI is giving researchers more accurate insight into when the scrolls originated.

Findings published in the journal PLOS One contend that the biblical manuscripts date to about 2,300 years ago, which would be up to 150 years earlier than researchers originally thought.

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In fact, the new dating discovery places Dead Sea Scrolls for the book of Daniel directly in the same time period as the life of its presumed author.

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“The Dead Sea Scrolls were extremely important when they were discovered because they completely changed the way we think about ancient Judaism and early Christianity,” said Mladen Popović, who is also dean of the Faculty of Religion, Culture,

and Society at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands.

“Out of around 1,000 manuscripts, a bit more than 200 are what we call biblical Old Testament, and they are the oldest copies we have of the Hebrew Bible. They gave us a lot of information about what the text looked like back then,” he continued.

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Popović and his team used an AI program called Enoch to analyze handwriting on 27 pieces of thumbnail size scraps of parchment through an algorithmic approach and then compared that with radiocarbon dating. They then compared the handwriting style of other manuscripts from the region to objectively determine an approximate age range.

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