

but we didn't stop long enough to make an exhaustive search for surface sherds, which might prove or disprove the authenticity of the identification. Perhaps others have already done work there, establishing definitively the nature of the site. Whether it represents the original Tekoa or not, it certainly must be in the proper general location. From it, one commands a wonderful view over Herodium.

August 22, 1967

One of my favorite diversions since coming here this June has been to pursue the story of the missing Dead Sea Scroll of the Book of Genesis. I haven't seen it, but have begun to believe in its existence and to believe the story that it is the largest scroll in existence. Several of our American scholars flew to Beirut last spring to try to find out about it and perhaps purchase it. After a series of cloak and dagger meetings with the antiquity dealer, with his Lebanese banker representative, with some American lady, and with others, including the sight of a high official of Interpol lunching with the American lady, nothing came of the visit. An American lawyer in Washington, D.C. seems to have represented the owner or owners of the Genesis Scroll in question. It is not clear what connection, if any, he had with the American lady in Beirut. The American scholars flew home, with none of them having been permitted to see the original scroll, if indeed it were in Beirut at the time, and with none of them having been shown anything together. Some pieces of manuscript, not of the Dead Sea Scroll category, were shown to one of the American scholars, who is one of the greatest authorities in the world on the Scrolls, and he evaluated what he saw as worth perhaps three thousand dollars. The antiquity dealer was asking a million dollars for the Genesis Scroll, which however he did not produce for examination by any one. If his story is at all correct, he would have been better advised to have done so and struck a reasonable bargain then and there, because the latter end of the story, as I have been able to piece it together, is, at the present anyway, a very sad one for him. He no longer has the Scroll, and thus far has not received a solitary sou in return for it.

News of the fact that he may have been in possession of a Dead Sea Scroll of the Book of Genesis seems to have been known by the Israeli authorities. This dealer, who has a shop very near the ASOR, and whose full name is Khalil I. Shahin Kando, and who is known as Kando, is a Bethlehem Christian, who has been in the antiquity business for many years. He was the dealer who was in on the acquisition of the Original Dead Sea Scrolls by the late Professor Sukenik. The latter risked his life several times crossing lines between the besieged Israelis and the attacking Arab forces in 1947. It may well be that Kando has had this Genesis Scroll, if indeed it is that, during all these years, or he may have been holding it for an investment group. There are few stocks and bonds that have accrued in value over the years anywhere commensurate with the almost geometrically growing price for Dead Sea Scrolls. It is interesting to note that the original scrolls and this one appeared or came into public attention during or immediately following hostilities between the Arabs and the Israelis. Anyway, it was apparently known to the Israeli authorities that Kando possessed either a scroll or scrolls or something similar, and they moved fast to determine what was what at the first possible moment after the cessation of hostilities in Jerusalem.

Some Israeli officials and military appeared at Kando's shop in Jerusalem to seek him out. Failing to find him, they went either to his house or shop in Bethlehem, demanded to see the Scroll and have it turned over to them. There is an antiquity law in Israel even as in Jordan, to the effect that the government can confiscate any antiquity and then reimburse the owner through the equivalent of court procedures, if the price offered the owner is not satisfactory. For instance, during this summer, I have purchased some wonderful complete pieces of pottery from Bab edh-Dhra and elsewhere, including basalt bowls and dishes, that are all museum pieces. I am about to ship them home and place them in our Hebrew Union College Museums at our various schools for display and study purposes as soon as possible. Before being able to have them packed and exported, however, I notified the Israel Department of Antiquities to come and examine them and see if it were permissible to take them out of the country. The other day, the Department of Antiquities sent one

of its inspectors, Gershon Edelstein, who came and carefully examined every piece I had purchased, and declared, so he told me, that he saw no objection to exporting them. The various government museums in the country have as good or better pieces. He could, however, have said that such and such a piece or pieces was or were unique and that the Department of Antiquities would like to have them, which is a euphemism for confiscating them. I would then have asked to be reimbursed for what I had paid, but the government need not necessarily have agreed to the price and could have fixed an arbitrary sum. I could then have accepted it or appealed through regular legal procedures.

And that in brief is what has happened to Kando. When the Israeli authorities presented themselves at his house or shop - I am not sure which - in Bethlehem, they demanded to see and then seized the Scroll. It was obvious that they knew about its existence. I asked Kando how he could possibly explain that. He replied that some years ago, he had snipped off a tiny fragment of it and given it, if I remember correctly, to an interested American who wanted to submit it to a carbon-14 test, and on the basis of the results, make or not make an offer for the Genesis Scroll. I am calling it that for short, not really knowing whether it is that or not and not yet having clearly found out why Kando thinks it is the Genesis Scroll. That little snip apparently set the international ball rolling. If there is any truth to Kando's story, which was first told me by Mrs. Evan Wilson, the wife of the recently retired American Minister-Consul General of Jerusalem, he would have been well advised to show it to the American scholars he saw in Beirut in March 1967, or to have tried to smuggle it out of the country and deposit it in Switzerland. I have had dealings with international antiquity dealers, and they have ways of getting things in and out of countries, that put them on a par with dope smugglers. I don't know who the American was who got the little piece of the Scroll and I am not particularly interested in finding out, because the story has practically run its course and there is no gain except that of satisfying curiosity as to his identity. My curiosity doesn't stretch that far. I think I was brought into the picture originally by Mrs. Wilson, because word had spread through Jerusalem

that I had been helpful in getting restored to Mr. Ohan some of the things that had been looted from his shop early in June and it was thought I could be helpful to Kando. Incidentally, I must note again that there has been a minimum amount of looting. I do not wish to sound unpatriotic, but if an Australian or American army had occupied Jerusalem, there would have been perhaps much more. If a Russian army had occupied Jerusalem, the entire city would have been devastated.

Anyway, to get back to my story. Kando admitted he had the Scroll and turned it over to the Israeli authorities who had presented themselves to him and who specifically demanded it of him. They then questioned Kando for hours as to whether or not he had other scroll material. He replied that he didn't and after repeated conversations with him, I believe him. One of my favorite pastimes is to drop into his shop, go upstairs to a little room above the sales room, be given a cup of coffee or tea and be regaled with more details about this entire matter. Then, according to Kando and his brother, they were both taken to Tel Aviv for five days, kept in a nice apartment with a telephone, the number of which they say they have, were well treated and interrogated further. Finally, the authorities became convinced that Kando did not have any more Dead Sea Scrolls and brought him and his brother back to Jerusalem. It was approximately then that I came into the picture. My advice to Kando was to get himself a good lawyer, which he has done, a chap named, I believe, Tusia Cohen, to protect his interests and rights. I explained to Kando that insofar as I could judge and see, he had absolutely nothing to fear in pressing a court case against the government for confiscating his Scroll and not giving him immediately a receipt or making an offer to pay for it or saying anything about it to him for weeks on end. That isn't quite correct, because he tells me that intermediaries have approached him, offering him various amounts, which do not in the least approach the sum of a million dollars that he had been or had intended asking for it. He claims that he himself paid the Ta'amireh Bedouins a huge sum for it. I forget whether he said 350,000 or 150,000 dollars.

Kando said he preferred to settle the matter peacefully, out of court. He turned down what he claims were offers of intermediaries, and