

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

**The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
Oriental Institute, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, IL 60637 USA**

26 October 2007

Dr. Michael W. Hager
President and CEO
San Diego Natural History Museum
The Prado, San Diego, CA

Dear Dr. Hager,

The “virtual reality” show being presented at the current Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit contains several obviously misleading assertions. In addition, however, there is one passage that falsely attributes to other parties the view first explicated by me, that the Khirbet Qumran site was a Hasmonaean fortress. I enclose herein a xerox copy of the first chapter of my book, *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?* (Simon & Schuster, 1995/1996), wherein I developed this interpretation at length. (I had presented the skeletal form of this interpretation in an article published in the *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* in 1980.) While this interpretation was later on developed by Prof. Hirschfeld in several articles and in his 2004 book entitled *Qumran in Context*, and by other writers as well in recent years, all of the fundamental elements in the identification, as well as those elements leading up to it, can be found in my 1995 book.

I do believe that this book is available in San Diego libraries, the museum shop has also been carrying copies of it, and your staff in preparing the “virtual reality” show could surely without too much difficulty have determined whether there is any truth in the statement made by the script’s author (p. 5 of the text) that Prof. Hirschfeld “developed Golb’s suggestion into a theory.” This obviously distorts the actual course of events, in effect hiding the fact that the original identification was made by an historian (myself) long before archaeologists came to it.

Please note another statement of the author, at this particular point in his corrective notes, apparently reflecting some secrecy or confidential agreement in this matter. I obviously have to protect myself against the efforts of those individuals who have foisted a wholly one-sided exhibit on the museum and in the process suppressed and distorted the facts concerning my research, and that of others, on the Scrolls.

The other mendacious elements in this “virtual reality” show can be taken up later. Would you, in the meanwhile, be good enough to inform me of the Museum’s intention respecting these statements — not innocent mistakes but, as shown by the notes, demonstrably intended to misinform the public as to the nature of my research — which I’ve now regrettably been obliged to bring to your attention?

Cordially yours,



Norman Golb

Rosenberger Professor of
Jewish History and Civilization