

## THE QUMRAN CHRONICLE

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### THE EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY OF PROF. CLAUS-HUNNO HUNZINGER

A Symposium at the University of Hamburg, Dec. 11, 2009

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2009 the University of Hamburg invited the friends and colleagues of Professor Dr. Hunzinger (born in 1929 in Schwerin) to a special Symposium on the occasion of his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The symposium was sponsored by the Lutheran Church in Nordelbien (Germany) and the greeting was delivered by the bishop of Hamburg Mrs. Maria Jepsen. She honoured especially the Prof. Hunzinger's work for the constitution of the Lutheran Church.

The close friend of Prof. Hunzinger, former Bishop and head of the Protestant Church of Germany Prof. D.Dr. h.c. Eduard Lohse gave a special lecture on the Gospel of Mark. Prof. Lohse is well known for his edition of the Qumran scrolls with the Masoretic punctuation (E. Lohse, *Die Texte aus Qumran. Hebräisch und deutsch mit masoretischer Punctuation*, Kösel).

“125 Semesters – many reasons to be thankful” was the special lecture of Prof. Hunzinger, who spoke about the adventure of his academic life. He began his studies together with Lohse at the University of Heidelberg in 1947 and moved to Göttingen in 1949. The time after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War was a very difficult time for academic life. His first contact with the Dead Sea Scrolls came through very bad newspaper copies of the Community Scroll. In 1954 he finished his doctorate on the Manual of Discipline and was a member of the seminar in Göttingen under Professor Karl G. Kuhn. At that time he received an invitation to work in Jerusalem on the Dead Sea Scrolls from Cave 4. Professor Joachim Jeremias recommended Hunzinger for this work. Prof. Hunzinger told

the story in this way:

“One day in early 1954 when I was still working on the last part of my thesis (I was still an assistant without any further qualification), I received a letter from the German-Palestine Institute. This letter had not reached me the regular way because it was addressed to ‘Professor Doktor C. H. Hunzinger, Göttingen University.’ Of course there was no Professor Hunzinger in those days, so it was sent back to sender, recipient unknown, with the additional remark, referring to Professor Hunzinger, ‘not mentioned in Kurschner’s Lexicon.’ [he still has this nice envelope and showed it to the visitors during his lecture]. You know, Kurschner is the lexicon of all the scholars, like the Who’s Who. Of course they didn’t find my name there, but I think it’s marvelous that the post office refers to such a dictionary searching for somebody. The Institute then sent a letter to Professor Jeremias, saying, “You mentioned this fellow, so you will have to find a way to give him this letter.” But Professor Jeremias was, of course, very reluctant to give me a letter addressed this way. Then I got the invitation to join the normal annual excursion of the German-Palestine Institute, and a second letter asked me whether I would be willing and ready to join the work on the Dead Sea Scrolls for two additional months after the excursion. That was the beginning. Of course, Professor Jeremias said it would be good to finish my thesis before I went to Jerusalem. So I did it. In July 1954 I got my doctoral degree, and two weeks later I found myself on a boat crossing the Mediterranean Sea on the way to Beirut, and spent three months on this excursion, under the guidance of Professor Martin Noth. We had a small group of five people altogether. In the meantime, Professor Noth tried to arrange my joining the team in Jerusalem. He did not [get immediate] approval from de Vaux and Lankester Harding. They insisted on a longer period in Jerusalem, saying that two months would be of no use. They said I should stay there at least for one year. This was accepted in Germany a few days before we had to leave. It was rather exciting, not knowing whether I would stay there for another year. So I joined the team in late October 1954 for one year. The team now had its first and only German member and numbered five. When I came home I passed this additional qualification [Habilitation], passed my second theological examination, became ordained as a minister in the Lutheran Church, and got engaged, all in the same year! It was rather exciting!”

(Passage taken from W. Fields, *The Dead Sea Scrolls A Full History*, Volume One, 1947-1960, Leiden 2009, p. 222-223 – a wonderful book to read!)

Hunzinger's biggest gift from Qumran is his lovely wife. She was born in Jerusalem and met Hunzinger, when he was chosen to guide a German group the Qumran excavations. So they felled in love cause of Qumran ...

Hunzinger had to work on the fragments of the War Scroll which had been given to him by Millik and on the morning and evening prayers written on papyrus (they are now on view in the Shrine of the book exhibition "A Day at Qumran"). He discovered that Josephus writing about the Essenes that "they prayed to the sun" was wrong! The text says that they prayed to God at sunrise.

Hunzinger told about the eventful time when he was asked to come back to Jerusalem. He arrived on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1956 but was only able to work on the fragments for 3 weeks, and then the Suez Crisis broke out. The fragments had been taken to Amman and Hunzinger was the only member of the DSS Team who was in Jerusalem after the Suez Crisis. This was very important for de Vaux, so the Jordanians brought the fragments back to the PAM (today Rockefeller Museum). The fragments had been stored in a bank vault in Amman and were in a terrible condition. So Hunzinger's first job was to clean all the fragments which were covered in mold!

In September 1957 Strugnell, Millik, Allegro, Fitzmeyer and Hunzinger had the chance to see the new material from cave 11 for one hour only, under the supervision of de Vaux. Allegro and Hunzinger identified the now famous Psalms scroll (11QPsA). But they were not able to unroll enough of the scroll to see that it also contained some "non-canonical" psalms.

In autumn 1957 Hunzinger left Jerusalem because he needed to go back to lecturing at the University. His lot was later taken by Father Maurice Baillet.

Qumran was the most exciting time in his life and for the rest of his academic career he never forgot this adventurous time.

After a special buffet dinner I had the privilege of making a special presentation for Prof. Hunzinger. We have known for many years and we have often presented Prof. Hunzinger's lectures about the meaning of the texts of Qumran in my Qumran & Bible exhibition ([www.bibelausstellung.de](http://www.bibelausstellung.de)). I was honoured to read out to him greetings from Dr. Adolfo Roitman (Curator of the Shrine of the Book), Prof. Emmanuel Tov (Hebrew University / Editor in chief of the DSS), Prof. James Charlesworth (Princeton's Dead Sea Scrolls Project) and Dr. Weston W. Fields (Dead Sea Scrolls Foundation). All remembered his part

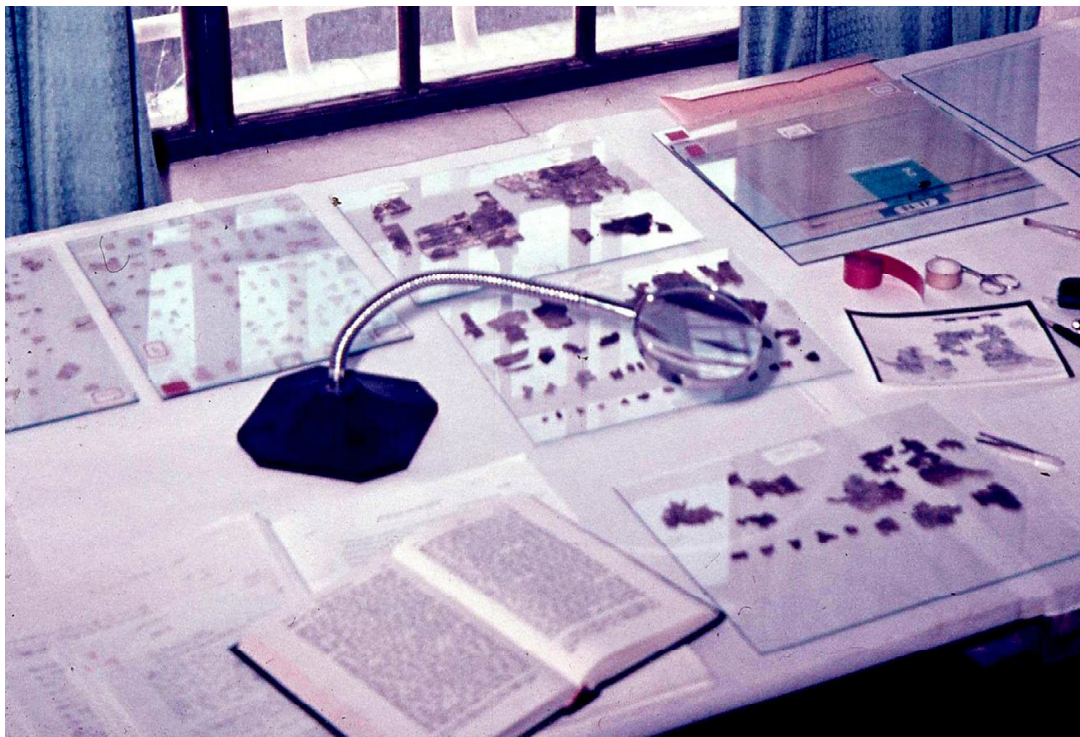
in the Dead Sea Scrolls research in the early years. As a special gift, one of the first copies of the new book of Dr. Fields “Full History of the Dead Sea Scrolls” was offered to Prof. Hunzinger.

After long negotiations with the BBC, they sent a copy of the film made with John Allegro in 1957. This film had never been shown in Germany. The film was a big surprise for Prof. Hunzinger, his family and all the visitors. The BBC had filmed scenes at the Qumran excavations and in the scrollery of the PAM. There were also some other short films with Father Roland de Vaux and Prof. John C. Trever and some unknown old slides I was able to show at the symposium. It was a pleasure to see Prof. Hunzinger in his days as a young scholar.

The symposium closed after more than five hours! All the visitors were visibly impressed by the story of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The discoveries of Qumran have held a special place in the life of Prof. Hunzinger and with all of my heart I wish him good health so that we can spend many more evenings together discussing these important finds and studying these tremendous texts which take us back to ancient times.

Qumran & Bible Exhibition, Sylt  
[www.bibelausstellung.de](http://www.bibelausstellung.de)



Dr. Hunzinger's desk in Scrollery, 1956 © Bibelausstellung Sylt