

News and Current Events :: Irish "Dead Sea Scrolls" Found in Bog

Irish "Dead Sea Scrolls" Found in Bog - posted by Eli_Barnabas (), on: 2006/7/26 12:48

BBC NEWS

'Irish Dead Sea Scrolls' in bog

Fragments of an ancient manuscript found in an Irish bog are being hailed as comparable to the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The discovery of the Psalter, or Book of Psalms, in the south Midlands is said to be one of the most significant discoveries in archaeology for decades.

National Museum of Ireland specialists believe the manuscript may have been lost in transit or dumped after a raid - possibly up to 1,200 years ago.

Museum director Dr Pat Wallace said it was "remarkably well preserved".

"Nobody has found anything like this for centuries - we are going to find it very hard to find people who know about it," he said.

The manuscript was found by a eagle-eyed digger-driver, who acted quickly to ensure its preservation.

Dr Wallace said it was not in pristine condition but some of the writing was still legible.

"When we saw it in the bog, we were able to read one of the psalms in Latin," he said.

He said it was "not so much the fragments themselves, but what they represent, that is of such staggering importance".

"In my wildest hopes, I could only have dreamed of a discovery as fragile and rare as this.

"It testifies to the incredible richness of the Early Christian civilisation of this island and to the greatness of ancient Ireland."

It is believed the extensive fragments are of an Irish Early Christian Psalter, written on vellum.

They were recovered from the bog by a bulldozer last week, and transported to the National Museum's conservation laboratory for painstaking analysis.

Trinity College Dublin head of manuscripts Dr Bernard Meehan said it was the first discovery of an Irish Early Medieval manuscript in two centuries.

"Initial impressions place the composition date of the manuscript at about 800AD - but how soon after this date it was lost we may never know," he said.

Once the manuscript has been conserved, it will be displayed in the Early Christian gallery of the museum, alongside the Ardagh chalice and the Derrynaflan paten.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/5216320.stm>

Re: Irish "Dead Sea Scrolls" Found in Bog - posted by Eli_Barnabas (), on: 2006/7/26 12:50

Even more amazing is I heard that the book is stuck open on Psalm 83, an incredibly timely piece of Scripture.

Re: Irish "Dead Sea Scrolls" Found in Bog, on: 2006/7/26 13:16

Well, it immediately comes to mind that this was the era in which the Synod of Whitby reluctantly agreed to accept Roman Catholic domination for England. Until then, Christianity was (as far as I have heard) of what has become understood as Celtic (scriptural) 'theology', in independent gatherings who were not affiliated to one another except by the bonds of Christian brotherhood. These were scattered in Ireland, Scotland and England, and probably arrived in those countries in that order.

If the 'scroll' is dated to an earlier millenium, then it is of even more interest. Peat bog is well known for its ability to preserve organic history.