

ARCHAEOLOGY

Shrine For Bible Scrolls

► AN ANCIENT and unique manuscript dating back to shortly after the birth of Christ and telling the story of Noah's birth will be housed in a research shrine to be built in Jerusalem.

Although it changed ownership in Washington, the scroll is still in Jerusalem, tightly rolled as it has been for thousands of years. It is now being treated so that it can be unrolled without damage, but no one yet knows what is written in it.

The ancient scroll is one of four, found by a Bedouin shepherd boy in a cave near the northern end of the Dead Sea, presented to the State of Israel as a gift from an American industrialist, D. Samuel Gottesman, who purchased the scrolls when they were brought to New York for sale.

Perhaps most important of the four scrolls, said Prof. William F. Albright, Johns Hopkins University archaeologist, is the one still under treatment in Jerusalem, because it is the only surviving well preserved book in Jewish Aramaic that was composed during the 400-year period between 250 B.C. and the second century A.D. It is presumed to have been written by

Lemach, father of Noah, and describes Noah's "miraculous birth."

From the glimpses Prof. Albright was able to get of the manuscript in its tightly rolled state, it is in excellent condition and a creamy white in color. It was apparently written with a well seasoned reed pen cut slanted at the end and split to allow the ink to flow. The book was originally composed in the first or second century B.C. and this copy dates from the first century A.D.

Of equal importance to the Lemach scroll, Prof. Albright said, is another in the collection, the earliest known manuscript of the book of Isaiah.

A third scroll is called "The Manual of Discipline." It contains the rules of a religious order believed to be the Jewish sect known as the Essenes. Another of the scrolls contains a commentary on the Old Testament Book of Habakkuk.

The Israel government plans to build a "Shrine of the Book" to house these ancient scrolls and others relating to the Bible that may be acquired later. The shrine will be located on the campus of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Science News Letter, June 4, 1955

MEDICINE

Announce New Anesthetic

► ANNOUNCEMENT OF a new anesthetic drug related chemically to anti-arthritis cortisone was made simultaneously in New York and Geneva, Switzerland.

The new anesthetic is hydroxydione sodium, tradenamed Viadril by its manufacturers, Chas. Pfizer and Co., Inc., of Brooklyn, N. Y.

Good results with it in more than 130 operations involving 20 surgical procedures were reported by Drs. Frank J. Murphy, Neri P. Guadagni and Francis L. De Bon of the University of California School of Medicine, San Francisco, at the International College of Surgeons meeting in Geneva.

The California doctors consider it a good "basal" anesthetic, meaning that it is not a very potent anesthetic but gives good results when used with nitrous oxide, the so-called laughing gas, and oxygen. It is given by injection into the vein, but must be injected slowly in a mixture of sugar in water to avoid irritation of the vein. It takes about five minutes to make the injection and another five minutes to take effect enough to move the patient and start the operation. Patients go to sleep easily and awaken easily when it is used. If ether or other anesthetics are given with it, less of them are needed.

Viadril is a steroid chemical, as are cholesterol and cortisone and other hormones. Viadril, however, does not have any hormone effect. It was developed and tested on laboratory animals by Pfizer scientists Drs. Ger-

ald D. Laubach, S. Y. P'an and H. W. Rudel. First suggestion that a steroid chemical could have anesthetic effects came from the Canadian scientist, Dr. Hans Selye.

First use of it on a human was by Dr. Gilbert S. Gordan Jr. of the University of California who used it for a brain operation.

The steroid anesthetic is a true anesthetic, not a hypnotic, Dr. Murphy stressed. He thinks it should therefore not be compared with pentothal sodium, the barbiturate sleeping medicine widely used to put patients to sleep for surgical operations.

Because it is an entirely new kind of anesthetic chemical, scientists at the Pfizer firm and the California doctors think other steroid anesthetics may be made.

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MEDICINE

"Tombstones" in Lungs May Start New Disease

► SERIOUS LUNG disease, sometimes appearing like cancer, may start from the "tombstones" of former conquered disease in the lungs, Drs. Laurence K. Groves and Donald B. Effler of the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, Cleveland, Ohio, at the meeting of the National Tuberculosis Association in Milwaukee.

The tombstones are lymph nodes that have calcified, or become stony. They ap-

parently are the residue of healed tuberculosis, histoplasmosis or other disease. Whatever the cause, they form a mechanical basis for a new disease process, known as broncholithiasis.

Symptoms of broncholithiasis include a harassing cough, sometimes accompanied by the spitting up of blood and, in more serious cases, by wheezing respirations when eroding nodes cause bronchial obstruction. A mild case may be treated by relieving the cough, but surgery may be necessary to remove obstruction in severe cases. Dr. Groves emphasized, however, that the surgical procedure is "extremely difficult and hazardous."

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