



The Orion Newsletter

The Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature

מרכז אוריון לחקר מגילות מדבר יהודה והספרות הקרובה להן

December 2020

Twenty-Sixth Issue

Letter from the Director

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I hope my letter finds you, your family, friends, and colleagues well in these difficult times.

Many of us planned to gather in Boston this month for our yearly intellectual and collegial boost at the Society for Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, with long-time Orion affiliates 2020 SBL President Adele Reinhartz and Vice President James VanderKam at the helm. This meeting has moved online as have other conferences during the last nine months, including the Orion Scholars' seminars—two last spring and two in the coming months, all four by Orion grant recipients. Although sorely missing in-person dialogue, the move to Zoom has enabled us to engage with colleagues all over the globe whom we would not ordinarily have the pleasure of seeing on a regular basis.

As I write this letter, a few rays of hope are appearing on the horizon—the approval of two effective vaccines against COVID, with more in clinical trials. I still cling to the hope that the Seventeenth International Orion Symposium will be able to take place on campus (May 31–June 3, 2021), but rest assured that we are now actively planning for both possibilities—in person and virtual. Should we be able to hold the conference on campus, some sessions will be broadcast online to facilitate the global conversation from which we all have benefitted at Zoom conferences and seminars during the pandemic.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome newly-appointed Hebrew University Bible Professor Noam Mizrahi to the Orion Academic Committee; he will also serve, with Prof. Devorah Dimant, as editor of the premier journal *Meghillot: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls*—jointly published by HU with the University of Haifa and the Bialik Institute. Many thanks to Prof. Dimant for returning to the editorship of *Meghillot*, which she founded and edited with Prof. Moshe Bar-Asher from 2003 to 2010. Warm congratulations to her on receiving the prestigious *Emet* prize as well as the SBL Status of Women in the Profession Mentor Award. I extend our gratitude to the outgoing co-editors of *Meghillot*, Profs. Menahem Kister and Jonathan Ben-Dov.

I am grateful to my colleagues on the Orion Academic Committee for their dedication and wise counsel—Prof. Steven Fassberg (Committee Head), Profs. Paula Fredriksen, Noah Hacham, Menahem Kister, Emanuel Tov, and Dean Michael Segal. Kudos to Dr. Ruth Clements, head of Orion publications, and to Orion administrator Ruchama Roth, who have kept our operations on track despite COVID restrictions. We are indebted to the Center's founder, Prof. Michael Stone, and to the Orion Foundation and the Hebrew University for their constant support, now reaching a quarter of a century.

More than ever, I wish each and every one of you a fruitful year in the best of health,

Esther Chazon

The Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature

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Coping With COVID— The Orion Center Goes Virtual

The worldwide outbreak of coronavirus has posed challenges on many fronts, including that of academia, and in particular that of the work of the Orion Center. In March, the Hebrew University, like academic institutions the world over, moved to online learning, with administrative staff working mainly from home. Although staff has returned to a schedule of working partly on site and partly at home, the present academic year has opened once again mostly online.

For last spring, this meant rethinking how to conduct both the Orion Interns program and the scheduled Greenfield Scholars Seminars. Although some of our interns had to leave the country, several continued (and continue) to contribute to the Orion Bibliography through “distance work” on the Online Bibliography database. The seminars were rescheduled on Zoom. Oren Ableman spoke in English, Avigail Aravna in Hebrew; and for the first time at Orion, young Israeli scholars presented their work to a truly international audience. With listeners from Europe and both coasts of North America, as well as Israel, the seminars gave last year's Orion scholarship recipients an opportunity for both broad exposure of their work and a chance to connect with senior scholars in their areas of interest, without needing to travel to international forums.

This semester, the Greenfield seminars are again scheduled via Zoom (see the **Calendar**, p. 4). In addition, we are planning the Seventeenth International Orion Symposium (see page 2) as either a live or a virtual event, depending on the global situation—with the assistance of the University's Department of Computing, which has developed the resources for sophisticated online programming. Check the Orion website for developments.

As seen in Orion's own case, the pandemic has prompted academic colleagues throughout the globe to rethink how to create and foster academic connections and the sharing of scholarly work. As several scheduled onsite conferences had to be cancelled, an early response was the NYU virtual public conference, “The Dead Sea Scrolls in Recent Scholarship,” which took place already in May with over a thousand attendees; a number of Orion associates were among the presenters, including Oren Ableman, Esther Chazon, Michael Segal, and Emanuel Tov. The Enoch Seminar has run several online events, the first of which, June 29–July 2, featured the granting of Lifetime Achievement Awards to Orion founder Michael Stone and longtime colleague Devorah Dimant, among others. The Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting has just taken place entirely on Zoom, November 29–December 10.

In addition to making sure that scholars continue to have platforms for sharing their work, these new virtual formats have an added bonus, in that both presenters and listeners can participate without the necessity of travel and the expense and disruption that that entails. The result may well be easier access for younger and/or more distant scholars to top-level scholarly discussion, which will only benefit the field. The Center is making it our business to post the notices of such conferences as fast as we receive them—check our home page and the conferences page for frequent updates and registration information. Stay in touch—stay connected—and stay safe!

Center News

◆ **SAVE THE DATE** for the Seventeenth International Orion Symposium: “(Con)textual Perspectives on the Dead Sea Scrolls,” May 31–June 3, 2021. See box this page.

◆ *Greenfield Scholars’ Seminars*: This past year’s schedule featured cutting edge research by younger scholars. In November, Dr. Michael Brooks Johnson (McMaster University, Canada), Azrieli International and SSHRC Postdoctoral Research Fellow, who has been an Orion Visiting Scholar this past year, spoke on some of the results of his use of digital means to further the material reconstruction of the Qumran Hodayot Scroll. Dr. Adina Moshavi, of the Department of Hebrew and Semitic Languages at Bar Ilan University, joined us in January to explore the grammatical function of the word *davar* in the Qumran scrolls and Ben Sira. In the Spring Semester, the seminars went online. Dr. Oren Ableman, the 2019/2020 Matlow scholar, focused in his doctoral work on the historical question of responses to the Roman conquest of Judea in 63 BCE in the Dead Sea Scrolls; his presentation discussed the historical context of the War Scroll. Avigail Aravna, Orion Scholarship recipient, is a doctoral student through the PhD Honors Program in the Mandel School for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University; she examined the reception of Isaiah 24–27 in biblical and postbiblical literature. Thanks to all for a great year, under challenging circumstances! For this year’s lineup, see the **Calendar**, page 4.

◆ *Dead Sea Scrolls Colloquium*: “New Readings in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Lectures Celebrating Volume 14 of *Meghillot*.” In January of this year, the Center held an afternoon scholarly colloquium, cosponsored by the Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies, and cohosted by the Bialik Institute, the publishers of the *Meghillot* journal. The occasion was the publication of the most recent volume of *Meghillot*, the principal venue for scrolls scholarship in Hebrew. The presenters (speaking in both Hebrew and English) represented an international lineup of scholars who have contributed to *Meghillot*: Prof. Eibert Tigchelaar (KU Leuven, Belgium); Dr. Eshbal Ratzon (Ariel University, Israel); and Asaf Gayer (University of Haifa, Israel). The afternoon provided a stimulating program and highlighted the cooperative efforts of Orion, the Mandel Institute, the University of Haifa, and Bialik as the team that brings this important journal to the scholarly public. See below for more on *Meghillot*.

◆ *Orion Scholarship Recipients*: We are happy to welcome Dr. Hila Dayfani (Bar-Ilan University) as this year’s Matlow Scholar. Her research focuses on the material reconstruction and text-critical evaluation of the biblical scroll, 4QpaleoGenEx¹. Asaf Gayer, who is pursuing his doctorate at the University of Haifa, is this year’s other Orion Research Scholar. He is working on a new material reconstruction of one of the Cave 4 Isaiah scrolls, 4QIsaiah^c (4Q57). We welcome our new researchers; see page 3 for more about their Orion projects, and we hope you will join us on Zoom for their presentations (see the **Calendar**, p. 4).

◆ *Orion Visiting Scholar*: Prof. Matthias Henze (Rice University) will be associated with Orion this year as a Lady Davis Visiting Professor, cosponsored by Profs. Esther Chazon and Michael Stone. He plans to join us in person in June. See p. 3 for more on his current research project.

◆ *Interns*: This past year we were graced by a great group of interns from the Rothberg International School: Joyce Leung (Hong Kong), returning from last year; Glory Choi (South Korea); Iñaki Marro (Spain); Paula Rem (Croatia); Isaiah Rhodes (Arkansas); Charles Stover (Ohio). Daniele Minisini (Orion Research Scholar, from Rome) helped out for the second semester, trading places with Iñaki, who had to return to Spain. It was a challenging time for everyone, as the interns had to find their ways in the new situation here while balancing family situations in their home countries. We want to extend a special vote of appreciation for all you were able to do and wish you well. This year, with the entire student body on distance learning, we have not yet recruited a new group of interns, but Glory and Daniele are continuing their work (from Israel and Rome respectively). THANKS, everyone!

◆ *Congratulations*: To Prof. Vered Noam, of Tel-Aviv University, on receiving the 2020 Israel Prize for Talmud Studies—the first woman to receive the Israel Prize in Talmud. To Prof. Devorah Dimant, University of Haifa, on receiving the 2020 *Emet* Prize in the field of biblical studies. The *Emet* Prize is known as Israel’s Nobel Prize; it is awarded for excellence which makes significant contributions to Israeli society. Prof. Dimant was also recognized at this year’s Virtual SBL Annual Meeting for her mentorship of younger women scholars. In addition, both she and Prof. Michael Stone, Founder of the Orion Center, received Life Achievement awards at the opening of the 2020 Enoch Seminar, “in gratitude for their exceptional contributions to the field of Second Temple Jewish Studies.”

Broadening the Scope: “(Con)textual Perspectives on the Dead Sea Scrolls”

The Seventeenth International Orion Symposium, “(Con)textual Perspectives on the Dead Sea Scrolls,” will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Orion Center. The symposium will take place from May 31 to June 3, 2021, based at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Mount Scopus campus. Depending on circumstances, the symposium will be held either on campus or on Zoom—stay tuned for the final decision!

Scholars from Israel, North America, and Europe will share aspects of their current research, relating their topic to broader contexts (literary, cultural, social, and/or historical), and considering it from a synchronic and/or diachronic perspective. Papers will examine a diverse group of texts and writing practices from an equally diverse range of perspectives, including those of ancient Aramaic and Samaritan literary cultures, and Hellenistic and Greco-Roman literature and culture; and using a variety of traditional and innovative methodological frameworks.

From the first Orion Symposium in 1996 (“Biblical Perspectives”) to this seventeenth symposium, the Center has aimed to bring scholars together to foster innovative research on the scrolls, and to encourage integration of that research into the entire body of knowledge about Jewish literature, history, and religion from the Second Temple period through to the early Christian and rabbinic corpora. The upcoming symposium, personal or virtual, will be a fitting celebration and continuation of the Center’s work

Changing of the Guard at *Meghillot*

The *Meghillot* journal, the flagship Hebrew publication of scholarship on the Dead Sea Scrolls, has been a cooperative endeavor of the Hebrew University (via the Orion Center and the Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies), Haifa University, and Mosad Bialik since 2012. Under the joint editorship of Hebrew University Prof. Menahem Kister and the University of Haifa’s Prof. Jonathan Ben-Dov, five issues (10 to 14) have seen the light, with a sixth, volume 15, currently in press.

Journal articles typically focus on text-critical matters, such as new readings of known texts or identifications of previously unidentified fragments; semantic and linguistic issues; and interpretations of texts or terms within the wider literary and historical context of the Second Temple period. This past January, Orion, the Mandel Institute, and Mosad Bialik organized an afternoon colloquium to showcase some of the scholars and scholarship that make *Meghillot* a leader in scrolls research (see the summary in **Center News**). (Continued on p. 4.)

Focus on Scholarship

As noted in **Center News**, the Orion Center is as usual hosting both graduate/postgraduate researchers and a Visiting Scholar this year, doing what we can to facilitate their work notwithstanding the pandemic. We asked each of them for a brief description of their overall projects. They will be presenting their work via Zoom later in the year; see the **Calendar**, p. 4, and stay tuned to the Orion website for links.

Prof Matthias Henze

Department of Religion, Rice University
Lady Davis Visiting Professor

Prof. Henze teaches courses in Bible and early Judaism and directs the program in Jewish Studies at Rice University. He is currently working on a commentary on 2 Baruch, which is under contract with Walter de Gruyter for the Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature series.

2 Baruch is an early Jewish apocalypse, written in the late first or early second century CE, a generation or two after the fall of Jerusalem. The author of 2 Baruch develops an apocalyptic program for the post-70 community in and around Jerusalem for the time that remains between the destruction of the temple and the end of time, which the author thought to be imminent. That program combines apocalyptic expectations with a call to follow the Torah.

2 Baruch was written at, and thus reflects the *Zeitgeist* of, a crucially important moment in the intellectual history of early Judaism. Chronologically speaking, 2 Baruch falls just outside the boundaries of the Second Temple period. But in both form and content, it is very much part of the writings from that period and continues to develop ideas and literary forms familiar to us from earlier texts, such as the first Jewish apocalypses, as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls. The time of 2 Baruch is also the time of Jesus and of the early Jesus movements. Since both the author of 2 Baruch and Jesus and his followers emerged out of an apocalyptic wing of early Judaism, there are notable similarities between 2 Baruch and the writings of the New Testament. Moreover, even though 2 Baruch is not a rabbinic text, the Torah-based form of post-70 Judaism that the author favors, and the text's many statements about the centrality of the Torah, have much in common with rabbinic texts.

Dr. Hila Dayfani

Bar-Ilan University
Orion Matlow Scholar

Hila Dayfani completed her PhD in biblical studies at Bar-Ilan University, under the supervision of Prof. Emanuel Tov (Hebrew University) and Dr. Nili Samet (Bar-Ilan University). Her dissertation concerns the contribution to the textual criticism of the Pentateuch, of variants due to graphic similarity. It

incorporates palaeographic methodologies, seeking to identify the stage of writing at which there exist graphic similarities between the letters, and when it is reasonable to presume that changes occurred. She worked with the *Scripta Qumranica Electronica* project at Tel-Aviv University, led by Prof. Jonathan Ben-Dov, where she learned to use digital methods for the material reconstruction of fragmentary scrolls.

Hila plans to pursue additional postdoctoral research next year at the Centre for the Study of the Bible at Oxford University, where she will work closely with Prof. Hindy Najman. She will also be a visiting scholar at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies.

In her current project, Hila integrates her interests in textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible and the research of the DSS. She will explore the usefulness of the digital reconstruction of fragmentary biblical scrolls for determining their textual affiliation. Her research focuses on 4QpaleoGenEx¹ (4Q11).

These are challenging days, but Hila believes that “despite the cumbersome restrictions that this pandemic puts on our academic lives, it also allows us to explore new ways of joint learning and sharing our research.”

Asaf Gayer

Haifa University and Hebrew University
Orion Center Scholarship Recipient

Asaf Gayer's study, “A New Material Reconstruction of 4QIsaiah^c (4Q57): The Question of Functionality and Usage of the Scroll,” is part of a wide-ranging project focusing on the 4QIsaiah scrolls, led by Prof. Noam Mizrahi of the Hebrew University. The present study focuses on scroll 4QIsa^c, the most extensive copy of the book of Isaiah from Cave 4.

Asaf's main objective is the material reconstruction of the scroll, on the basis of which he will examine and re-evaluate several unresolved questions: 1) Scope of the manuscript: The material reconstruction may indicate answers to questions that cannot otherwise be resolved; such as, whether the scroll contained the entire book of Isaiah and whether the order of the chapters followed the order of the MT. 2) Affinity to sectarian literature: Was the Isaiah scroll used by the *yahad*? Did it serve as a source of study for some of the group's members? A material analysis of the scroll should provide new points for comparison between this scroll and other biblical scrolls that are considered to have been studied by the members of the *yahad*. 3) Function of the scroll: The scroll's material properties suggest that it is a deluxe edition. Reconstruction of the scroll, along with a close examination of the scribe's practices, will provide a better understanding of the purpose and functionality of the scroll.

Scrolls Publications in the Digital Age

The digitizing of the Dead Sea Scrolls has opened a new era in scrolls scholarship. The variety of sophisticated imaging techniques has facilitated the rereading of tiny fragments and previously indecipherable texts, which itself has spurred in a wealth of new text editions now in the works. This article briefly chronicles some of the new developments.

The [Scripta Qumranica Electronica](#) project (SQE) continues the mammoth job of coordinating the Israel Antiquities Authority's digital database and the Göttingen-based [Qumran-Wörterbuch](#). Scholars at University of Göttingen, Tel-Aviv University, Hebrew University, and the IAA are involved in the project, the aim of which is to create an open-access platform for the production of digital editions of the Scrolls. Meanwhile, important work using digital tools is being done on the myriad of unidentified (or misidentified) scroll fragments long in the collection of the Israel Antiquities Authority. Initiatives in digital paleography in Groningen and Leuven have led to new publications on 1QIsa^a and continuing work on the Cave 4 jigsaw puzzle. Prof. Elisha Qimron and his colleagues continue to propose

new readings and reconstructions. The recently published *Khirbet Qumran and Ain Feshkha IVA*, on Qumran Cave 11, includes the continuing work on previously unidentified Cave 11 fragments by Orion colleague, Dr. Oren Ableman. The ongoing material reconstruction of already published manuscripts, using digital tools, has proven a fruitful arena of research for incoming scholars to the field (witness the efforts of this year's Orion Research Scholars; see **Calendar**, p. 4).

Several new commentary series are taking advantage of the new technologies, as well. The Oxford Commentary on the Dead Sea Scrolls is intended for the scholarly study of the most important nonbiblical Dead Sea Scrolls, utilizing digitized images to verify and correct textual readings, and written for accessibility to non-specialists. The general editor is Timothy Lim, whose commentary on Peshet Habakkuk has just appeared as the first volume in the series. The new Brill series, Dead Sea Scrolls Editions, is geared toward providing first critical editions of hitherto unpublished or incompletely published Dead Sea Scrolls texts and fragments, and new, up-to-date critical editions

Orion Center Calendar 2020/2021*

January 13, 2021. Jonas C. Greenfield Scholars' Seminar
17:30–19:00 Israel time; 10:30–12:00 pm EST.

Dr. Hila Dayfani, Department of Bible, Bar-Ilan University, Orion Matlow Scholar: “Rethinking the Text-Critical Value of 4QpaleoGenEx!” (In English)

March 16. Jonas C. Greenfield Scholars' Seminar
18:00–19:30 Israel time; 11:00–12:30 pm EST.

Asaf Gayer, PhD candidate, Department of Bible, University of Haifa, Orion Research Scholar: “A New Material Reconstruction of 4QIsaiah^c (4Q57): The Question of Functionality and Usage of the Scroll.” (In English)

May 31–June 3. 17th International Orion Symposium:
“(Con)textual Perspectives on the Dead Sea Scrolls.”
Schedule and venue to be posted.

Stay tuned to the Orion website for additions and updates.

*Please note: Orion programs will be hosted on Zoom until at least May 1. Links will be posted on the website and sent out to the Orion mailing list in advance of each event. Stay tuned!

Haifa Scrolls Workshop

May 3, 2020

University of Haifa—check their website for updates on the venue—

<http://megillot.haifa.ac.il/index.php/en/events>

Meghillot (cont. from p. 2)

This winter, with the publication of volume 15, Profs. Ben-Dov and Kister will step down from their joint leadership of the journal. We want to extend hearty thanks to them for their editorial vision and care over the past eight years, maintaining the excellence and integrity of the journal as an Israeli/Hebrew forum while keeping it in the purview of the international scholarly community.

They will hand over the editorial reins to the team of Profs. Devorah Dimant (University of Haifa), Noam Mizrahi (Hebrew University), and associate editor Dr. Liora Goldman (also University of Haifa). Prof. Dimant is one of the original founding editors of the journal (with Prof. Moshe Bar-Asher of Hebrew University); Prof. Mizrahi returns to the Hebrew University this fall from Tel-Aviv University. We look forward to working with the new editorial team.

Orion Research Scholarships

The Orion Center awards research scholarships to young scholars once a year. Priority is given to research that can be done uniquely in Jerusalem or at the Hebrew University, and that integrates the new information gleaned from the Dead Sea Scrolls into the broader picture of Second Temple Judaism. Please see

<http://orion.mscc.huji.ac.il/educate/fellowships.shtml>

for application information, deadlines, and forms.

Become an Orion Associate—

and help the Center foster innovative research on the scrolls! Visit <http://orion.mscc.huji.ac.il/orion/associates.shtml> for a printable associates form. A special thanks to our current Associates—your interest and support are vital to the work of the Center!

Orion Center Academic Committee

Prof. Steven Fassberg, Chair; Prof. Esther Chazon;
Prof. Paula Fredriksen; Prof. Noah Hacham;
Prof. Menahem Kister; Prof. Noam Mizrahi;
Prof. Michael Segal; Prof. Emanuel Tov.

Orion Publications

In Press

Meghillot 15. Edited by Jonathan Ben-Dov and Menahem Kister. Bialik Institute, 2020.

In preparation:

The Texts of the Bible from the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Biblical Manuscripts of the Vienna Papyrus Collection: Proceedings of the Fifteenth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 10–13 April, 2016. Edited by Armin Lange, Russell Fuller, Paul Mandel, Ruth A. Clements. Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah. Leiden: Brill.

The Dead Sea Scrolls at Seventy: “Clear a Path in the Wilderness”: Proceedings of the Sixteenth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Cosponsored by the University of Vienna, New York University, the Israel Antiquities Authority, and the Israel Museum, 29 April–2 May, 2018. Edited by Esther G. Chazon, Ruth A. Clements, Armin Lange, Adolfo Roitman, Lawrence H. Schiffman, and Pnina Shor. Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah. Leiden: Brill.

Orion books online:

All Orion volumes published by [Brill Academic Publishers](http://brill.com) are now available as E-books (as well as through the inexpensive MyBook softcovers program). Volumes published in 2007 and later are available as full-access downloads, with institutional or individual subscription; individual chapters from these volumes may now be accessed online through the Brill site. Check it out!

Scrolls Publications (cont. from p. 3)

of those Dead Sea Scrolls and related texts that need to be re-edited. The Temple Scroll, edited by Lawrence Schiffman and Andrew Gross, is currently in press as the debut publication. The general editors of DSSE are Martin Abegg, Daniel Falk, and Alison Schofield. The Hermeneia commentary series (Fortress) is also adding Scrolls editions to its lineup; the Temple Scroll, Hodayot, and Damascus Document will be joining the classic editions of 4 Ezra, 1 Enoch, and Jubilees, among their Second Temple offerings. Another important recent publication is the synoptic commentary of Charlotte Hempel on all the Community Rule manuscripts, part of Mohr Siebeck's Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism series.

SO—the situation is very bright for innovative scrolls scholarship these days. Keep up the good work, everyone!

Dead Sea Scrolls Online

In light of the pandemic, we remind you that the scrolls can be “visited” online, at the Israel Museum and Israel Antiquity Authority (Leon Levy Library) websites:

Israel Museum Scrolls Online

<http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/>

The Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library

<http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/home>

The Orion Bibliography Wants YOU!

The [Orion Online Bibliography](http://orioncenter.org) began in 1995 and now stands at almost 25,000 items. [Oz Tamir](http://orioncenter.org), Bibliography Manager, and the Orion Interns are hard at work both on the Current Bibliography and on adding pre-1995 items to the database. We appeal to you, our scholarly colleagues, to check for your own publications, especially the earlier ones, and send us a list of what is missing. Abstracts and keywords are welcome, as are online links. Thanks in advance for your help in keeping the Orion Bibliography a preeminent tool for Scrolls research.

The Orion Center Newsletter, ed. Ruth A. Clements

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