

Scholars Behaving Badly: "Charles Gadda," Norman and Raphael Golb, and the Continued Curse of The Dead Sea Scrolls

An Exclusive to *Archaeology Magazine*
by Robert R. Cargill, Ph.D.

I awoke at 5:45 on a typical southern California morning. I sat up in bed and in keeping with my regular routine, reached for my nearby MacBook (which is always online), browsed Drudge, Facebook, and checked my overnight mail. And on that particular morning, my email was unexpectedly full of Google alerts for "archaeology" and "Qumran" notifying me of one of the coolest things I had ever seen: a 3D, virtual reconstruction of Qumran, the site associated with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. As a doctoral student at UCLA, I had seen my fair share of claims and theories concerning the archaeology of Qumran and the origin of the Dead Sea Scrolls. But this press release was different; these news stories were special: they were all highlighting *my* work. In picture after picture, there was my research, there was my theory, and there was my name. On that overcast morning, I experienced the proudest moment of my young academic career.

For about an hour.

Not long after the national press picked up the story, I began to notice the comments being made beneath the articles. After the welcomed oohs and aahs, I began to read lengthy, highly detailed critiques of my research, and specifically of my conclusion that Qumran had been established as a Hasmonean fortress, which was abandoned and later reoccupied by a small Jewish community responsible for the Dead Sea Scrolls. Curiously, whether the comments were posted under various names or simply by "anonymous," they were all eerily identical—almost as if someone had cut-and-pasted the same bunch of comments on every article he could find. Some of the comments accused me of plagiarism, called my research misleading or better yet, "mendacious," and every comment included links that pointed back to pdf articles written by none other than Dr. Norman Golb, the 81-year old Ludwig Rosenberger Professor of Jewish History and Civilization at the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute, who had written them without the "hindrance" of peer review, and had slapped them up on the Oriental Institute website. I remember thinking to myself, "Dr. Golb must still have one very zealous fan." Norman Golb's suggestion that the Dead Sea Scrolls had nothing to do with Qumran had been around for more than a decade, and had been debated and dismissed by scholars, as had the nearly identical theory of Karl Rengstorf decades earlier. Then again, fringe theories die hard, especially when the scholars proposing them are still alive to defend them. I figured Golb still had one obsessive disciple. I set my laptop aside and continued on with my morning.

I mentioned the critical comments to my UCLA advisor, Dr. William Schniedewind, who showed me several more examples of the same comments he had found that same morning. Apparently, as the story had been picked up and reposted around the Internet, our zealous disciple of Norman Golb had been busy cutting-and-pasting the

same comments again and again, tailoring them slightly to the various contexts of each story, always remembering to include links back to Golb's University of Chicago self-published pdf articles. Bill asked if I knew what was going on. I told him I wasn't sure, but that I'd find out more when I reached San Diego. The San Diego Natural History Museum had licensed movies generated by my research for their exhibition of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and I was off to help them install the virtual reality show and train the live docents that presented the material every half hour.

When I reached San Diego, Dr. Risa Levitt Kohn showed me to my office. After a brief orientation, I asked Risa what she thought of the critical remarks that seemed to accompany every Internet news story about the exhibition and their relation to Norman Golb. Dr. Levitt Kohn handed me a thick packet of exchanges she had found and printed out from the Internet. On each page was a series of discussions from a variety of aliases including "Charles Gadda," "Richard Moss," "Jessica Friedman," and others all arguing on behalf of Norman Golb. She noted that each alias argued in the same manner, using the same vocabulary, with the same vitriol, and possessed the same breadth and depth of the medieval Jewish historian's obscure views. Dr. Levitt Kohn and I feared that the various comments were actually the work of a single individual. This much was confirmed when the aliases made comments on a website that published the IP address of those posting the comments: 69.86.34.90. Using publicly available tracking tools, we traced the IP address through a MindSpring service provider to a location in New York City about a block from the NYU Bobst Library. We concluded that Norman Golb could *not* be the one posting the negative comments because he lived in Chicago. We then began to ask who lived in New York City near the Bobst Library, argued in a litigious manner, and had intimate knowledge of Norman Golb's theories and writings. Our attention quickly focused upon Norman Golb's son, Raphael, whom Norman had mentioned in the Forward of his book, *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls*.¹ However, without hard evidence to confirm our theory, we decided not to discuss it publically. In fact, we established a few ground rules for dealing with the negative campaign, including never responding to the comments, and never mentioning Golb's name publically. For fear of nuisance litigation coming from Norman Golb, we even agreed never to write his name down. Ironically, it was this practice of never writing it (Golb's name) down that ultimately infuriated Golb to such an extent that he responded to me in his own name—a response that would become a lynchpin in my two-year investigation into the identity of the individuals behind the campaign.

For those not familiar with the inner-workings of the Internet, let me explain briefly how IP addresses work. Each computer possesses a unique number assigned to it while on the Internet. While the identity of the *individual* using a computer "anonymously" is unknown, the computer's Internet protocol number (IP address)

¹ The Forward of Norman Golb's *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls* states: "Over more than a decade, my son Raphael uncovered precious information with an unerring eye for detail; in addition to his careful editorial reading, he played a vital role in furthering the publication of several of my studies on the scrolls."

connecting it to the Internet is known to the website or computer receiving comments or emails. Thus, it is possible to demonstrate that the same computer is being used to post multiple comments under different aliases.

I began to research the attacks in my spare time, documenting every occurrence of "Charles Gadda's" activity. It turned out that the alias "Charles Gadda" had been established over a year prior to his attacks on me. It had been used in debates on message boards discussing the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibitions in Kansas City and Seattle. There, like San Diego, "Charles Gadda" promoted and defended Norman Golb's views and decried the fact that the Seattle exhibit's organizers had not invited Golb to speak as a part of their Distinguished Lecturer series. The alias consistently argued that the exhibitions were not objective or "scientific," but were rather dominated by scholars who had religious agendas.

"Charles Gadda" then began to target my advisor, William Schniedewind, and me personally, because of my involvement with the San Diego exhibition. My research had demonstrated that the Qumran fortress theory (which argues that Qumran was founded as a fortress and not as a sectarian settlement) was not incompatible with a theory that allowed for the presence of a Jewish sect responsible for the Dead Sea Scrolls. Golb had argued that since Qumran was established as a fortress, it could not have been the place where the Dead Sea Scrolls were composed. My research demonstrated that both theories were possible. My research meant that Norman Golb had won the battle (Qumran was established as a fortress), but lost the war (the Dead Sea Scrolls were the result of Jewish sectarians at Qumran). My theory was new, rooted in the most recent archaeological research, and produced color images that appealed to scholars and the public alike. Because my theory could be the final nail in the coffin that was Golb's long-vanquished fortress theory, I became a central target of their ever-expanding smear campaign.

The Beginnings of the Campaign: The Birth of the Sock Puppets

The campaign to promote Norman Golb's views and smear scholars who disagreed began with a single Internet alias used to post on discussion boards and Internet news items. The cowardly practice of using an alias to engage in online debates is common among those who lack professional standing and some professionals who wish to conceal their identity while making statements they would not normally make in their own name. The various Dead Sea Scrolls exhibitions were usually preceded by advertising campaigns by the museums hosting the exhibitions. Golb found that he could use the comments boxes that followed online news stories to criticize the exhibitions and link back to critiques by Norman Golb on the Oriental Institute website.

Golb expanded his attacks by engaging in debates on a number of message board sites.² Golb used aliases like "Paul Kessler" to engage in debates concerning the origin of the Dead Sea Scrolls, regularly articulating his father's theories and making ad hominem accusations against many who disagreed.

Because few scholars accept Norman Golb's views, debates on message boards and discussion groups often became rather one-sided, with Golb defending his father's views, while legitimate scholars argued for more widely accepted theories for the origin of the scrolls in their own names. Tired of being outnumbered, Golb began to create multiple aliases for use in discussions in order to create the illusion of widespread support for his Norman Golb's views. The aliases' posts often appeared consecutively after one another and would often argue with the same vocabulary, grammar, style, and knowledge of Golb's views. The similarity of the posts combined with the IP address information collected by site administrators confirmed that a single individual was logging in as multiple aliases in order to argue Norman Golb's ideas.

NowPublic.com

The campaign reached a new level when Golb created an account for alias "Charles Gadda" on the NowPublic website.³ NowPublic is a hybrid news site where individuals can contribute "news items" as one would contribute posts to a blog. NowPublic offered Golb the advantage of having his "articles" picked up by Google news alerts, which push the articles to the mailboxes of subscribers around the globe. I wrote to NowPublic on three separate occasions, beginning in September 2007, and informed them that "Charles Gadda" was an alias and that many statements being made by him were untrue or defamatory towards others and me. NowPublic responded, but did not remove Golb's posts. Having established a safe haven in NowPublic, Golb posted 18 "articles" attacking various Dead Sea Scrolls scholars, including Jodi Magness, William Schniedewind, Risa Levitt Kohn, Stephen Goranson, Emmanuel Tov, and disgustingly, David Noel Freedman only days after his death. He then used emails, comments on Internet news items, and blogs to link back to his NowPublic "articles," giving the illusion of referencing viable sources, when he was essentially citing himself. (The day after the arrest of Raphael Golb, NowPublic removed all 18 posts and suspended the accounts of aliases "Charles Gadda" and "Peter Kaufman.")

Blogs

² These include "Internet Infidels Discussion Board" (<http://www.iidb.org/vbb/showthread.php?p=4578265>), "Discarded Lies" (<http://discardedlies.com/entry/733674>), and the "ANE-2 Yahoo Group" (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ANE-2/message/7746>).

³ <http://www.nowpublic.com>

Golb also created a series of blogs in support of his NowPublic articles. The blogs offered another venue to attack scholars and push Norman Golb's theories without any standards of editorial responsibility. Golb could say whatever he wanted on his blogs without recourse, and used the blogs to drive Internet traffic towards his NowPublic articles. The blogs also allowed Golb to harvest the IP addresses of those responded in the "comments" section of his blogs. Ironically, it was the creation of an abandoned blog entitled "Honesty in Science" using the name "Raphael" early on in the campaign that tipped us off to Raphael Golb's participation in the smear campaign.

Wikipedia

Golb then attempted to infiltrate several articles on Wikipedia to promote his father. Because anyone can contribute to Wikipedia, Golb began to edit several articles pertaining to the Dead Sea Scrolls. These edits included adding lengthy arguments from Norman Golb's theories on the "Dead Sea Scrolls" and "Qumran" articles, deleting critical information from the "Norman Golb" article, and adding critical diatribes on the "William Schniedewind" and "San Diego Natural History Museum" articles.

Fortunately, Wikipedia has very strict regulations against sock puppetry (using multiple aliases to appear as multiple people). Several administrators began to check the IP addresses of Golb's suspected sock puppets. Once Wikipedia administrators confirmed that Golb's posts all came from IP addresses in the 24-hour computer lab at NYU's Bobst Library, they banned all of Golb's aliases from participation on Wikipedia. Because the Bobst library was about a block from where Raphael Golb lives, and because the IP addresses matched those used to send emails to my UCLA faculty encouraging them to not advance me to candidacy and later to reject my dissertation outright, it became increasingly evident Golb was behind the attacks.

Letters and Items Posted by Norman Golb

As a part of the coordinated effort, Norman Golb posted several items on the University of Chicago Oriental Institute website. The posts are harshly critical of the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibitions.⁴ One post specifically addresses my research. The division of labor allowed the endowed Rosenberger Professor to appear dignified and above the fray, while his son Raphael would use aliases to do the anonymous dirty work of discrediting, defaming, attacking, and personally chastising those whom his father perceived as his rivals. Because Golb would tout the postings of his father often minutes after they were posted on the Oriental Institute website, it was apparent that father and son were working in an organized effort to promote Norman Golb's theories. This much was confirmed when one of Golb's aliases accidentally quoted material from a private letter sent by Norman Golb to a museum

⁴ <http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/projects/scr/>

official, thinking that it had been posted publicly. When a blogger asked how the alias knew about material in a private letter sent by Norman Golb, Golb quickly deleted the post.

From Oct. 19-21, 2007, Norman Golb led a group of tourists on a tour of the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit in San Diego,⁵ but did not view my movie playing in the theater. After returning to Chicago, a representative from the Oriental Institute wrote the San Diego Natural History Museum on behalf of Norman Golb asking for a copy of movie script. Even though he was a well-known critic of the exhibit, we obliged, and sent Norman Golb a courtesy copy of my working, unpublished script. However, we did so with two caveats:

1) The script had a copyright warning on the first page clearly stating that "this script is the confidential property of the author, Robert R. Cargill," and "any use of the script or portions of the text contained therein, without the express written consent of Robert R. Cargill and the San Diego Natural History Museum is prohibited." (Fig. 1)

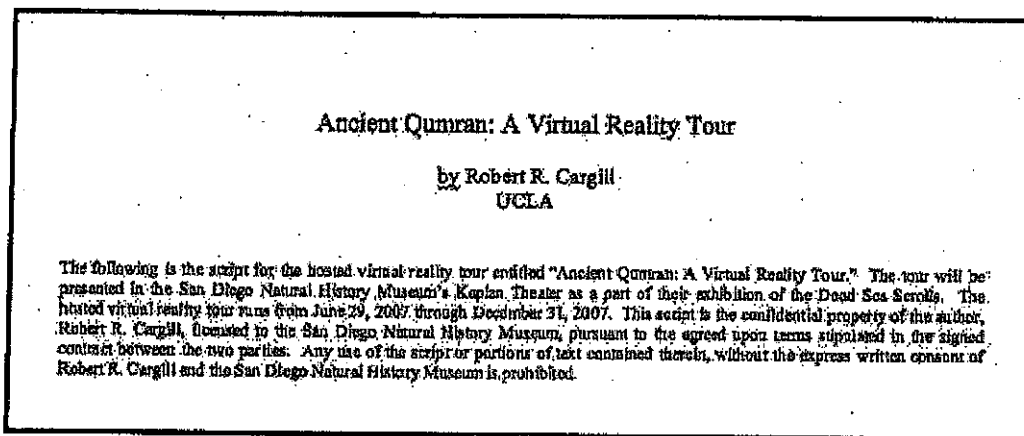


Fig. 1. The front page of the *Ancient Qumran* script, with the copyright warning at the top.

2) The San Diego Natural History Museum also sent an email on Oct. 20, 2007 informing Norman Golb that the script was being "sent as a courtesy and is NOT meant to be used for any publication or other use." (Fig. 2)

⁵ <http://www.chicagojewishnews.com/story.htm?sid=1&id=250911>.

with SMTP id: C8832674
Sat, 20 Oct 2007 11:46:48 -0500 (CDT)
X-Microsoft-Exchange-Organization: Produced By Microsoft Exchange V6.5
Content-class: urn:content-classes:message
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: multipart/mixed;
boundary="-----NextPart_001_01C81364-03856A96"
Subject: FW: Ancient Qumran - A VR Tour Bob.doc
Date: Sat, 20 Oct 2007 11:49:56 -0700
Message-ID: <12398075AD9F6346926281D8847185D201C6A305@mail.sdnhm2000.org>
X-MS-Has-Attach: yes
Thread-Topic: Ancient Qumran - A VR Tour Bob.doc
Thread-Index: AcF1EwqSMIRVAVRiCCOmJ7amrRqzkyAA984zAAlYfcm==
From: "Della Willett" <dwillett@sdnhm.org>
To: <01-membership@uchicago.edu>, <01-membership@uchicago.edu>
X-Junkmail-Status: score=10/50, host=mx01.uchicago.edu
X-Junkmail-EO-Raw: score=unknown,
rfid=st=001.0A010206.47L4C05.0006:SC156V948572,ss=1,vtr=stc,ul=0,lg=0,
ip=209.242.146.105,
sp=2007-07-31 18:51:00,
dn=5.4.3/2007-09-06

As a followup to our sending you this script, I noticed that I sent you working copy, apologize for edits.

PLEASE make it clear to Dr. Golb that we are giving this as a courtesy and it is NOT meant to be used for any publication or other use. This is the property of Robert Cargill and the Natural History Museum.

Thank you I hope your visit to the Museum was rewarding.

Della Willett
Director of Marketing
San Diego Natural History Museum

Printed for Norman Golb <n-golb@uchicago.edu>

Fig. 2. This email accompanied the script that was emailed to Norman Golb. The email reiterated that the script was a courtesy copy and that no portion of the script may be reproduced or republished without permission from the script's author, Robert R. Cargill.

On Oct. 26, 2007, after seeing that he was not mentioned in the text of my script's narration, Norman Golb wrote to Dr. Mick Hager, President and CEO of the San Diego Natural History Museum, to complain about the script. Golb complained that he, and not archaeologist Yizhar Hirschfeld, should have been credited with the identification of Qumran as a fortress. (Fig. 3)

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 espoused by me, that the Khabbat Qumran site was a Hasmonaean fortress. I enclose herewith 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, in 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 raised a wholly one-sided case 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 dates, 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,

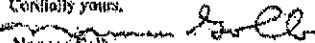

Norman Golb
Reisberg Professor of
Jewish History and Civilization

Fig. 3. This signed letter from Norman Golb of the University of Chicago was sent to the San Diego Natural History Museum. In the letter, Golb complains that he was not credited in the *Ancient Qumran* movie. The script only mentioned archaeologists by name in the script.

Häger responded on Oct. 29, 2007 by stating that the museum did not produce the movie. Dr. Hager also stated that changes would not be made to the movie unless I decided to make them. (Fig. 4)

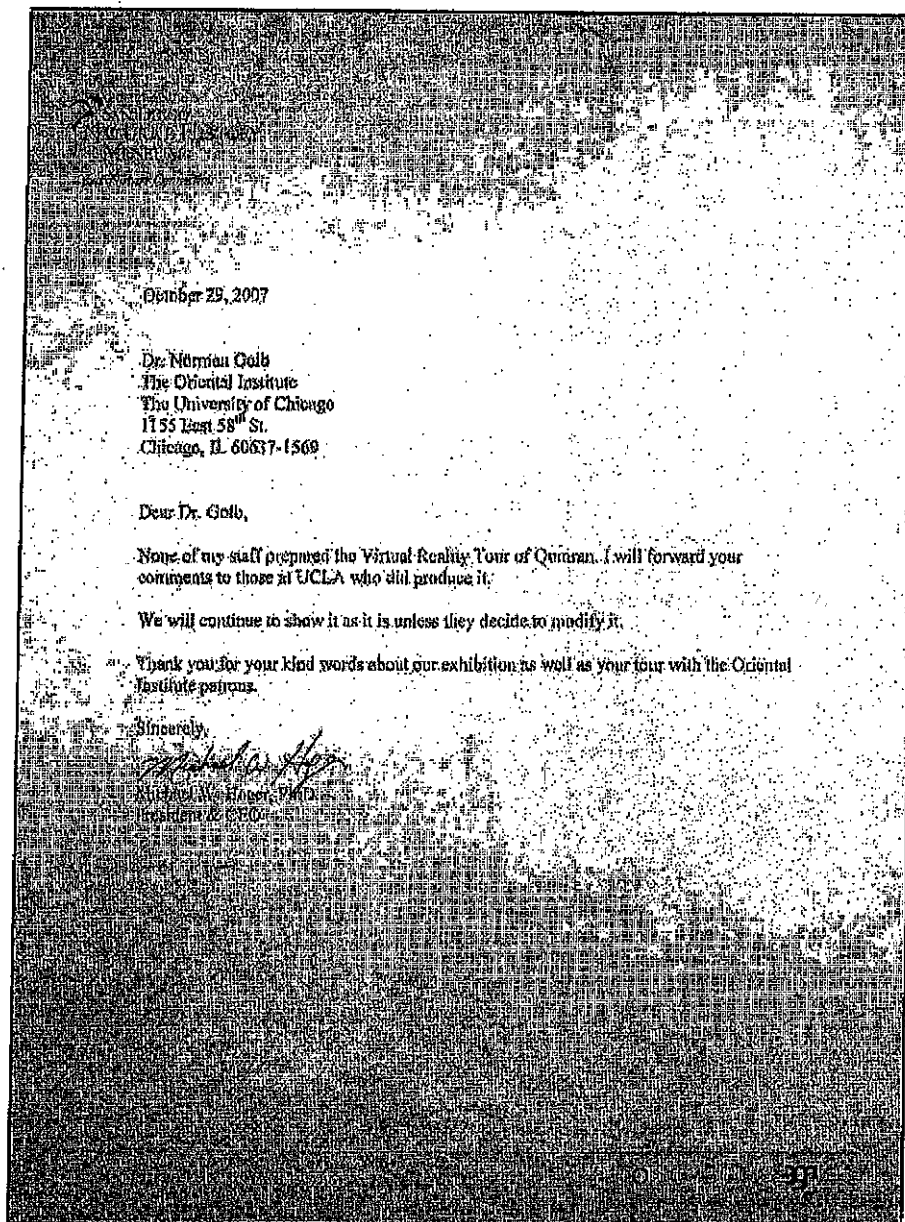


Fig. 4. This signed letter from Michael Hager to Norman Golb was sent in response to Golb's letter sent on Oct. 26, 2007.

After this exchange, Golb decided to retaliate against me by publically posting a critical review of my script, including the reproduction of several sections of text from the narration, and even a critique of marginal editorial notes that were never read to the public as a part of the virtual reality presentation. Thus, despite the warning on the cover of the manuscript not to reproduce any portion of the text, and despite the email reminding Norman Golb that the script was provided as a professional courtesy and not intended for reproduction, Norman Golb reproduced

multiple portions of the script in a critical review on the Oriental Institute website.⁶ Within twenty minutes of its posting, numerous aliases managed by Golb's son posted multiple attacks on message boards and blogs calling on me to publically respond to Norman Golb's critique—something I never did.

These events clearly shows that Norman Golb not only violated the professional courtesy that I and the SDNHM extended to a known critic, but also demonstrates how Norman Golb acted in deliberate defiance of multiple copyright warnings apparently to exact retribution upon a graduate student that he felt did not appropriately credit him with an academic idea he felt was his. While I may be perceived as naïve for attempting to show kindness to a scholar with a ruthless reputation for controversy, a combative style, and a penchant for litigious defenses of his views, I felt that my first interaction with Norman Golb should be a gesture of respect and humility towards an established scholar, albeit a known critic. I had hoped that Dr. Golb would respect my instructions against reproducing any portion of the script and would appreciate my gesture. I had hoped Norman Golb would show the professional courtesy and respect that other scholars had shown me. I was wrong.

In addition to items posted on the Oriental Institute website, Norman Golb sent many signed letters to institutions, including to Dr. Scott Waugh, Provost of UCLA, complaining about my research on the Dead Sea Scrolls. The closing paragraphs of some of the letters from Golb end with an unpunctuated words, "...I am," followed by a closing and his signature. This unique style of signing letters matches letters signed by aliases "Charles Gadda" and "Robert Dworkin," suggesting not only a similarity between the letters from the aliases and Golb, but perhaps that Norman Golb may have written many of the emails himself. (Fig. 5-7)

⁶ http://oi.uchicago.edu/pdf/san_diego_virtual_reality_2007.pdf

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

The Oriental Institute
1155 East 58th Street
Chicago, IL 60637 USA

16 Nov. 2007

~~n.golb@uchicago.edu~~

Prof. Scott L. Waugh
Acting Vice-Chancellor and Provost
UCLA Office of the Chancellor
2147 Murphy Hall, Box 251405
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1405

Dear Prof. Waugh,

According to the President and CEO of the San Diego Natural History Museum, a "Virtual Reality Tour," which is appended to the exhibition of the Dead Sea Scrolls now being presented there, was prepared not at the museum but entirely by unnamed parties at UCLA. (See attached copies of (a) my letter to the president and (b) his reply of 28 October.)

I would be most grateful if, with the assistance of your staff, you or the appropriate staff member designated by you would indicate to me who were the university parties engaged in preparing this presentation, and if it was indeed totally created at UCLA without active cooperation between the two institutions.

Insofar as my name appears in the working copy of the text now in my possession, and in a way which demonstrably distorts my role in the history of Dead Sea Scrolls scholarship, I have no choice but to deal with the obvious implications of the initiative in question. I am dismayed to learn that efforts of the kind necessarily implied in the working text of the presentation at hand (copy enclosed) may have been carried out at such a distinguished graduate research university as UCLA.

With cordial good wishes, and in the hope of receiving further information on this matter through your collegial aid, I am

Very cordially yours,


Norman Golb

Professor Emeritus of Jewish History and Civilization

RECEIVED
NOV 20 2007

Fig. 5. This signed letter from Norman Golb to UCLA Provost Scott Waugh ends with the peculiar ending, "I am," followed by Golb's signature. This same salutation is used in letters from aliases "Robert Dworkin" and "Charles Gadda."

From: Carlo Gadda [mailto:carlo@gadda@yaho.com]
Sent: Tuesday, June 19, 2007, 10:58 AM
To: Meg Sullivan
Subject: Your article on the "Virtual Quran" film
reproduction: HBT

Dear Ms. Sullivan,

I have read your article on the "Virtual Quran" film, and I regret to inform you that it gives a seriously misleading impression to anyone who might not be familiar with the content of scholarship on Quran.

(1) To begin with, Norman Golb did not publish an "article" in 1998; he published a 400-page book entitled "Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?"

(2) Your sources (so-called Carol L. and Schwaband in essence) failed to inform you that the thesis they are defending has been rejected not only Golb, but by an entire series of major archaeologists since 1990. These include (and I quote) the Director, then (and now) supported by the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem and later de Vaux's work; Yehohanan (the Dead Sea Scrolls); and the official (Approved) Israel Antiquities Authority (headed by Yohanan Aharoni and Avram Finkelstein). Other by mistake of my e-mail, have published that conclusion that the age was never mentioned by my text and that the Dead Sea Scrolls are fragments of scrolls from the Hellenistic region.

These facts are well known to Quran scholars, and your article gives a false impression to the reader by mentioning that Dr. Schwaband is known to be a radical defender of the disputed "Quranic Essene theory," and the effort to defend his thesis (Dr. Schwaband) is inappropriate for him to use \$100,000 in grants to mislead the public in this film by failing to mention the conclusions of the Major and Peter team, and I was disappointed for you to advertise the film without informing people of the actual facts.

(3) Your article also fails to mention that the film has already been subjected to being criticized by Norman Golb (see his article "Fact and Fiction in Current Excavations of the Dead Sea Scrolls - A Commentary" available on the University of Chicago website at <http://www.uchicago.edu/~nrgolb/notes/quran.htm>). In the wake of UN's criticism, one commentator has suggested that the goal of the film is simply to introduce visitors, before they see the rest of the 1998 Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit, into believing in the old Quranic Essene theory, despite the fact that it has now been rejected by most of the major archaeologists in the field.

I have read the other description of evidence in the film itself, e.g., the way it argues that Quran was formulated by a group of "Quranic Essenes," despite the fact that the remains of women were found in the tomb at -3100. It also states that the Essenes of the Dead Sea were celibate, the makers of the film were obliged to show, quote or cite any way to make evidence to support their view, and so forth, with the other claims they make.

In the hope these observations will have given you food for thought, I am

Yours sincerely,

Charles Gadda

Fig. 6. This email from alias "Charles Gadda" to UCLA Sr. Media Relations Officer Meg Sullivan ends with the peculiar ending, "I am," followed by the name of alias "Charles Gadda." This same salutation is used in letters signed by Norman Golb.

Dear Mr. [REDACTED]

I was dismayed to learn, from comments made on two popular biblical studies websites, that the San Diego Natural History Museum has chosen, in its upcoming Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit, to give short shrift to the prominent Jerusalem theory of Scroll origins—one of the two salient theories defended today in scholarly publications.

Turning to the Museum's website in the hope of seeing those statements refuted, I was stunned to see that not a single known supporter of the Jerusalem theory has been invited to participate in the lecture series accompanying the exhibit. Adding insult to a decision that can only have been motivated by the personal animus of the exhibit's curators, one of the scheduled lectures is entitled "Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?" This, of course, is the title of historian Norman Golb's well-known book; yet, as stated, neither professor Golb nor any other supporter of the Jerusalem theory has been invited to speak. The description of the scheduled lecture makes it clear that the speaker will, in part, be describing Golb's views and no doubt commenting on them, yet neither Golb nor any other supporters of those views will have the opportunity to tell their side of the story.

I believe it is the Board of Trustees's duty to judge whether this course of conduct is appropriate, and to act accordingly. I am sending you the enclosed documents in case you wish to try and understand the anger that I and other informed people are now feeling towards your Museum. They are divided into three categories:

- (1) Two articles by Golb posted on the University of Chicago website concerning the manner in which the Dead Sea Scrolls are being presented in current exhibits (in one of which articles he specifically questions the Natural History Museum's scientific conduct); for background, the preface by the editor of the *Aspen Institute Quarterly*, to an earlier article by Golb (on the "Ethics of Museology") also posted there; and some other material concerning this remarkable scholar.
- (2) A review of Golb's book by Professor Gregory Armstrong, including his statement that "what is most distressing here is the reluctance [described by Golb] of so many parties to the scrolls controversy... to engage in a full and free discussion of the many questions [involved]." This statement was meant to apply to the situation described in Golb's book, but it is equally applicable to what appears to be happening today in San Diego, in an institution ostensibly devoted to "educating" the public.
- (3) A sampling of comments published on several news and biblical studies websites concerning the Museum's conduct.

Finally, I have added a few other items that are largely self-explanatory. Throughout, I have added some marginal markings to point your attention to the most significant details. In the hope you will find fruit for thought in this material, I am

Sincerely yours,
 Robert Dworkin
 robertdworkin@gmail.com

Fig. 7. This email from alias "Robert Dworkin" to a museum board member ends in the same fashion (the words, "I am," followed by the alias' name, "Robert Dworkin") as letters from Norman Golb and alias "Charles Gadda."

The Letter Writing Campaigns

Golb then used his aliases to propagate a series of anonymous email and letter writing campaigns designed to discredit and disparage scholars involved in the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibitions. These letters were sent to scholars, university faculties, museum boards of directors, news organizations, and various journalists, and were timed to precede the opening of the exhibits. The goal was to stir up enough controversy and draw enough attention to Norman Golb's theories to pressure the museums into inviting Golb to speak as a part of their lecture series.

Golb also sent emails to museums drawing attention to items written by alias "Charles Gadda" and Norman Golb. These emails were intended to focus attention on the (manufactured) "controversy" that Dr. Golb's theories had not been adequately included by the exhibitions.

The email campaign included emails to scholars that took one of two forms. The first criticized scholars for their involvement in these "biased" exhibitions ("biased" because they did not agree with Dr. Golb's views). These letters were often spammed to entire faculties for which a particular scholar worked. The second type of email attempted to bait particular scholars into responding to items that alias "Charles Gadda" or Norman Golb had written. If the scholar responded, Golb would continue the private exchange, until the scholar ceased to respond, at which time the entire exchange would be published on another alias' blog. Dr. Bart Ehrman was the unfortunate victim of such an exchange.

These email campaigns were accompanied by a campaign of typed letters from aliases and from Norman Golb himself sent to the boards of directors of museums that hosted the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibitions. Like the emails, the letters were similar to Golb's NowPublic "articles" and items posted by Norman Golb on the Oriental Institute website. The letters criticized the exhibition for not inviting Norman Golb to speak as a part of their lecture series and for their "one-sided approach" in their portrayal of the scrolls.

The campaign reached full force when Golb began to send numerous letters to various journalists and media outlets in cities where the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibitions were to appear. Building on previous NowPublic posts, blogs, stories from journalists who had fallen prey to earlier campaigns, and the timely web posts of Norman Golb, these emails asked journalists to investigate the "conspiracy" (drummed up by the Golbs) surrounding the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibitions. Some of these journalists ran stories that were largely informed by the writings of Norman Golb and alias "Charles Gadda." Once published, these new local stories were touted by alias "Charles Gadda" in subsequent posts to other media outlets. This process continued until I and others pointed out privately to media organizations that they had quoted the works of anonymous writers and aliases, and had become the latest victim of a media manipulation scheme perpetuated by the Golbs. Many media outlets responded by pulling their online stories, redacting portions of them, and sometimes issuing apologies.

The Impersonation of Lawrence Schiffman

While the campaign experienced a certain level of success, it ultimately began to fail because many of us had worked diligently behind the scenes to inform scholars and media outlets about the Golbs' campaign. Many scholars with an online presence like Jim West, Jeffrey B. Gibson, Chris Welmer, Stephen Goranson, Joe Zias, the ANE-2 list, and a host of Wikipedia administrators all contributed to scanning the Internet and collecting suspected instances of the Golbs' online activities. As we

quietly passed this information on to web administrators, media outlets, and scholars victimized by the Golbs, stories began to be pulled from the Internet, Golb's aliases began to be banished, and the campaign became markedly less effective. Wikipedia even permanently banned Golb's alias, "Critical Reader," and other aliases posting from the Bobst Library. Despite the Golbs' efforts, the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibitions were experiencing tremendous success and Norman Golb was still not being invited to speak at museum lectures. The number of bloggers and students assisting in silently tracking Golb's aliases was growing, and the Golbs experienced increased difficulty in getting out their message. Our patient vigilance was beginning to pay off, and the Golbs became increasingly frustrated.

different formulation

Golb became desperate and crossed the line. He began to adopt the identities of known scholars and university alumni as aliases. Golb adopted several versions of the name of NYU Professor of Lawrence H. Schiffman, including, "larryschiffman," "Larry Schiffman," and "plagiarist-schiffman" to post messages critical of the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibitions. Golb then used alias "Peter Kaufman" to create a NowPublic post entitled "Plagiarism and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Did NYU department chairman pilfer from Chicago historian's work?" on Aug 4, 2008. The site oddly accused Professor Schiffman of plagiarizing Norman Golb's work, despite the fact that the two completely disagree on the origin of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Creating the NowPublic site apparently did not gain the desired attention, so Golb emailed Larry Schiffman personally from email "steven.fishbane@gmail.com" to draw Schiffman's attention to alias "Peter Kaufman's" NowPublic story. When Dr. Schiffman did not respond, Golb tried another tactic; he created the email account "larry.schiffman@gmail.com" and emailed Dr. Schiffman's graduate students, pretending to be Dr. Schiffman. The email linked to alias "Peter Kaufman's" NowPublic story, and begged his four graduate assistants with the following:

"Apparently, someone is intent on exposing a minor failing of mine that dates back almost fifteen years ago. You are not to mention the name of the scholar in question to any of our students, and every effort must be made to prevent this article from coming to their attention. This is my career at stake. I hope you will all understand."

Thus, Raphael Golb not only impersonated Lawrence Schiffman, but admitted to plagiarism on his behalf. When a graduate student received the suspicious email and showed him, Dr. Schiffman reported the matter to NYU and law enforcement officials.

Where We Now Stand

On Mar 5, 2009, the Manhattan District Attorney's office executed a search warrant for the home of Raphael Haim Golb, University of Chicago Professor Norman Golb's son. According to a news release, Golb was "arrested on charges of identity theft, criminal impersonation and aggravated harassment." On June 12, 2009, a New York

Grand Jury handed down an indictment against Golb sending the case to trial. Since the evidence clearly links the individual impersonating Schiffman to the rest of the smear campaign,⁷ the civil implications for the Golbs and Norman Golb's employer, the University of Chicago, are precarious.

Remarkably, far from denying the allegations, Norman Golb has essentially confirmed his son's participation in the campaign with statements to the media such as, "I don't think he's guilty of anything besides telling the truth about the Dead Sea Scrolls,"⁸ "Raphael was responding to the attacks on me,"⁹ "It was honest, straightforward debate,"¹⁰ and "Raphael, my son, is very devoted to my research. He realized years ago that there was an effort to close the door on my opinions. And so he started debating bloggers who were against me, using aliases."¹¹ According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Norman Golb stated, "He used a pseudonym because that's what he preferred to do." When a *Chronicle* reporter asked if that pseudonym was "Charles Gadda," the older Mr. Golb replied, "Yeah, that's right."¹²

According to multiple published press reports, Norman Golb has admitted that he was fully aware of his son Raphael's smear campaign. In my opinion, Norman Golb has acted unprofessionally, unethically, and possibly illegally by knowingly cooperating with, informing, and perhaps directing his son's smear campaign for years. I feel he has abused his position at the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute by posting articles on university websites in a coordinated and premeditated campaign with his son to smear scholars that did not accept his academic views, and to exact retribution upon a graduate student (myself), whom he felt did not properly acknowledge him. Additionally, I am highly disappointed with the University of Chicago, which has allowed Golb to continue with his efforts despite several pleas and warnings from me to cease and desist. I feel the actions of the Golbs and the negligence of the University of Chicago are ethically irresponsible, professionally unacceptable, and as we are now seeing in New York, apparently legally actionable.

The information presented here describes a well-conceived, well-timed, and well-executed campaign of harassment, intimidation, defamation, and impersonation. Signed letters from Norman Golb, which echo and, at times, predict and precede the comments made by Raphael Golb's aliases, along with the coordinated appearance of critiques on the Oriental Institute website by Norman Golb speak to a coordinated and premeditated effort between father and son to publically defame, harass, libel,

⁷ Much of this information is available online at <http://www.who-is-charles-gadda.com>.

⁸ Grace, Melissa, "Dead Sea Scrolls stir cyberhoax: West Village attorney in forgery rap," *New York Daily News*, Mar. 5, 2009.

⁹ "Scholar's son charged with identity theft, harassment," *TMCNet.com*, Mar. 6, 2009

¹⁰ Gregorian, Dareh and Kevin Fasick, "Dead Sea Scroll Son in Hot Water," *New York Post*, Mar. 6, 2009.

¹¹ Ilani, Ofri, "Dead Sea Scrolls scholar defends son in identity theft megillah," *Ha'aretz*, Mar. 13, 2009.

¹² Kolowich, Steve, "Academic 'Cyberbully' Is Accused of Harassing Judaic Researchers," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Mar. 13, 2009.

and inhibit the professional development of me and other victims who disagree with Golb.

My purpose for writing this article is twofold: First, after two years of being publically criticized and silently turning the other cheek, I want to set the record straight and tell the side of the story that Golb and his aliases were not telling. Second, I want to speak out on behalf of all young scholars who are doing our best to work within the established system of professional scholarship. Young scholars should not abandon the academy in exchange for the ease of publication and lack of peer review that blogs and websites provide (as Norman Golb has done). Likewise, established scholars should learn from the tragedy that is Norman and Raphael Golb's Internet smear campaign that there is no such thing as anonymity on the Internet! Likewise, scholars should be reminded that they cannot force their legacies upon history; rather, our legacies are the product of a lifetime of research, instruction, publication, and collegiality. Scholars must collaborate and work with one another—within the parameters of peer review and professional conferences—and must not attempt to substitute these established practices with self-published pdfs and campaigns of intimidation and terror on the Internet.

Unfortunately, if history holds true, this is not the end, but the only the latest act in a series of odd scandals that have plagued the study of archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Given Norman Golb's defiant statement that he and his son are "together and united,"¹³ and Raphael Golb's recent plea of "not guilty" on grounds of "free speech," it appears that Norman Golb is going to do what he has always done: fight his litigious, losing battle until the bitter end. Unfortunately, the words of Shrine of the Book curator Magen Broshi still appear to echo true today: "When will we be free of [Golb]? When he dies."¹⁴

¹³ <http://www.chicagomaroon.com/2009/6/1/dead-sea-scrolls-scandal>

¹⁴ Broshi, Magen, *Ha'aretz*, October 4, 1991. See also Norman Golb's book, *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 230.