

How Photoshop training empowers Biblical scholars

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Biblical scholars at the University of Southern California have been putting their Photoshop training to a surprising use- Photoshop is helping them analyze the Dead Sea Scrolls. The director of USC's West Semitic Research Project (WSRP), Dr. Bruce Zuckerman, has said that Adobe Photoshop CS2 "is pivotal to our ability to unlock the history of the ancient past."

This is not the first time that archaeologists have used their Photoshop training to combine fragments of ancient documents that are kept in museums and libraries in different parts of the world. Photoshop CS2 allows scholars and archaeologists to put these fragments together in the form of digital jigsaw puzzles, allowing researchers to study whole parchments or scrolls of papyrus for the first time.

Some of the original inscriptions are too small to be seen at all. Using Photoshop CS2, archaeologists are able to build larger composite images out of the smaller original images. And much original writing is impossible to see today because the ink has faded or the material on which it is written has become too dark. By using ultraviolet and infrared imaging techniques, researchers are able to recover the ink traces and read the original document.

As soon as Zuckerman's team has a good photo of an ancient document, they scan it and digitally enhance it with Photoshop CS2. Think of the unlimited possibilities; once the image is digitalized and enhanced, it can be freely distributed and shared online with researchers and scholars around the world. It's stunning to think what that means for the whole profession-there isn't an archaeologist or Biblical scholar in the world today who doesn't need advanced Photoshop training to reach their full potential.

The West Semitic Research Project at USC has published online tutorials for using Photoshop CS2 as a tool for scholarly research. This is a fascinating web page that introduces scholars to all the Photoshop fundamentals: how to use tools, how to reduce and enlarge images on screen, how to draw inscriptions with paths, how to paint paths, how to copy paths, and how to copy drawings.

Thanks to Adobe Photoshop CS2, archaeologists can now decipher documents that no one has been able to read for many hundreds of years. Even writings and inscriptions thought to have been deciphered and interpreted long ago are open for new investigation-scholars may start finding errors made in the original research by people working with hard-to-see inscriptions.

It is breathtaking to think about what this means-a single letter can change the way we view history. When I first started playing around with Photoshop in the early 1990s, I never would have thought that I had a tool in my hands that might one day change the way people understand themselves. What an exciting time to be alive-and Photoshop training makes it even more exciting. Sign up for Photoshop training today. No matter what field you're in, Photoshop training is one of the best investments you'll ever make.