Introduction

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A Momentous Discovery

Early in 1947 a Bedouin shepherd boy of the Ta'amireh tribe left his flock of sheep and goats to search for a stray amid the crumbling limestone cliffs that line the northwestern rim of the Dead Sea, in the area of Qumran. Spying a cave in the cleft of a steep rocky hillside, he cast a stone into the dark interior and heard something shatter. Intrigued, he later returned with a companion and found a cache of large clay jars, some of which were intact with lids in place, holding promise of hidden treasure from some bygone age.

But most of the jars were empty, and the remaining few concealed nothing but old scrolls wrapped in linen and blackened with age. So unapparent was the great value of this find that, as the story goes, the Bedouins first considered using the scrolls as fuel for fire. Yet when it came to light that the seven scrolls contained biblical texts and other ancient religious writings, this initial discovery was momentous enough to arouse immediate universal interest that continues to this day.

Golden Anniversary

1997 is the fiftieth anniversary of this signal discovery, hailed by one scholar as "the greatest manuscript find of modern times." It is fitting that in this banner year the precious legacy of sacred scrolls and other artifacts from remote precincts along the Dead Sea are brought together for public view—some of them displayed outside their patron countries of Israel or Jordan for the first time.

This unique, two-part exhibition appeared at Brigham Young University's Museum of Art in Provo, Utah, from 13 March through 18 September 1997. Titled Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls and The Story of Masada: Discoveries from the Excavation, these companion exhibits were made possible by the vision and efforts of many individuals and institutions working together across international borders.

For the nearly 150,000 visitors to the exhibits, this golden anniversary was indeed a golden opportunity. Viewing the artifacts can evoke a sense of reverential awe and poignant feelings of spiritual kinship for those ancient Near Eastern peoples who went to such extraordinary lengths to preserve their religious beliefs and identity as well as their community ideals. Indeed, the exhibits were a time passage into this ancient world, a journey from which visitors emerged with vivid images and sobering insights and questions that can be savored and reflected upon for years to come.

The Qumran Exhibit

The 1947 discovery of ancient biblical and nonbiblical scrolls and scroll fragments opened the way for a series of similar finds in ten other nearby caves during the next nine years. Known as the Qumran collection, this vast manuscript treasury includes a number of largely complete scrolls and tens of thousands of scroll fragments, representing more than eight hundred different works written in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic.

Additional scroll fragments were later discovered at several other sites extending south along the western shore of the Dead Sea, from the caves of Murabba'at and Nahal Hever to the monolithic fortress of Masada. These Judean desert documents are collectively known today as the Dead Sea Scrolls.
The Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit, sponsored by the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS), featured five original scrolls and scroll fragments discovered at various locations near the Dead Sea. In addition, full-size replicas of three other scrolls, plus photographs of several additional scroll fragments, were part of this exhibit.

Four of the original scroll fragments on display were discovered at Qumran and are owned by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. These items were on loan to BYU through the good graces of the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

The Qumran exhibit also featured one of the famous Bar Kokhba documents, part of a collection that the State of Israel considers to be a national treasure. Named after the Jewish revolutionary who led the so-called Second Jewish Revolt against Rome in A.D. 132–35, these manuscripts were discovered in 1960 and 1961 in a Judean desert cave now known as the Cave of the Letters. The original document that was on display is owned by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) and was on loan to BYU from the Shrine of the Book (part of the Israel Museum) in Jerusalem, Israel.

Another of the Bar Kokhba documents, similar to the one that was on display, is a deed partitioning a leasehold estate. It gives the name of one of the tenants as “Alma son of Judah,” the oldest known reference to the name Alma in a Hebrew document. This deed is of interest to Latter-day Saints because the name Alma figures prominently in the Book of Mormon, a scriptural record featuring an account of a New World people of Hebrew origin who migrated from Jerusalem in 600 B.C. A high-quality color photograph of this deed was also on display.

The Qumran exhibit included the items listed below. The scrolls’ technical nomenclature is briefly explained later in the section titled “About This Booklet.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Originals</th>
<th>Replicas</th>
<th>Photographs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4Q22 Paleo Exodus</td>
<td>1Q28a Rule of the Congregation</td>
<td>4Q2 Genesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>4Q175 Testimonia</td>
<td>1QS Rule of the Community</td>
<td>11Q10 Targum of Job</td>
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<td>1Q22 Words of Moses</td>
<td>1QpHab Habakkuk Pesher</td>
<td>4Q27 Numbers</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/6Hev 46 Bar Kokhba</td>
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<td>11Q19 Temple Scroll</td>
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<td>1QIsa</td>
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<td>3Q15 Copper Scroll</td>
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<td>More than thirty years ago, a number of scroll fragments were discovered at Masada, the famous mountaintop fortress near the Dead Sea. At this tragic site shouldering up twelve hundred feet above the plain, 960 Jewish men, women, and children withstood the onslaught of Rome’s formidable Tenth Legion for several months before choosing suicide over enslavement as their foes closed in to breach the walls. Some of these documents have been identified with the community at Qumran and thus establish a link between the inhabitants of these two ancient sites. The items that were on display belong to the permanent Masada Exhibition assembled by the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Four of the original Masada scroll fragments, along with other artifacts from the Masada Exhibition, were on loan to BYU and were featured in an exhibit called The Story of Masada: Discoveries from the Excavation. This exhibit,</td>
<td>5/6Hev 44 Bar Kokhba</td>
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brought to BYU under the auspices of Hebrew University and in collaboration with the IAA, was sponsored locally by BYU Studies (publisher of a quarterly journal of the same name) and BYU’s Museum of Peoples and Cultures, with assistance from FARMS. Other sponsors were the Israel Ministry of Tourism, the Schussheim Foundation, and the Israel Exploration Society.

This exhibit included four original scroll fragments:

- Mas1d Ezekiel
- Mas1e Psalms
- Mas1j Work Similar to Jubilees (“Prince of Hatred”)
- Mas1o Papyrus Paleo Fragment (“Mount Gerizim”)

About This Booklet

This booklet contains helpful information about each scroll represented in the two exhibits. This material consists of background data and, in some instances, translations and brief commentaries. Information is also provided for the scroll replicas and the several photographs of scrolls that were on display.

More specifically, this publication (1) recounts the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and reviews the matter of access to and study of the Qumran scrolls; (2) relates how these priceless documents came to be assembled in Provo, Utah; (3) provides details about the scrolls in the exhibits; (4) includes digitized images, some in color, of each of the documents that were on display; and (5) discusses scribal methods and the manner in which these important documents were preserved.

Because of the sheer number of scrolls and scroll fragments discovered at Qumran and elsewhere in the Judean desert, those who have worked on this material over the years have devised an elaborate system for identifying these rare documents. It will suffice to mention here that 1Q = Qumran Cave 1, 4Q = Qumran Cave 4, Mas = Masada, and 5/6Hev = Caves 5/6 (the Cave of the Letters, which has two entrances) in the canyon Nahal Hever. In this booklet, standard document numbers are followed by an accepted descriptive title.

—M. Gerald Bradford