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## Dead Sea Scrolls Is Topic of New Volume

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inspection, the Prophet pronounced that one of the rolls contained a lost record of the patriarch Abraham. After purchasing these artifacts for \$2,400, he translated the papyri and published five chapters entitled “The Book of Abraham” in March 1842 in the *Times and Seasons*. These chapters are now canonized scripture found in the Pearl of Great Price.



This volume includes a brief introduction to the Book of Abraham and a detailed record of textual variants from the time it first appeared in the *Times*

and *Seasons* until its latest edition (1981). In addition, it produces for the first time typographic transcriptions with facing grayscale images of the surviving handwritten manuscripts of the Book of Abraham. Several appendixes offer additional helpful resources such as contemporary accounts related to the translation of the Book of Abraham and a full set of high-resolution color images of the surviving Abraham manuscripts.

Brian M. Hauglid is editor of this volume. He is associate professor of ancient scripture at BYU and coeditor for the Studies in the Book of Abraham series.

Both volumes are available for purchase at [www.byubookstore.com](http://www.byubookstore.com). ♦



## Dead Sea Scrolls Is Topic of New Volume

Volume 2 (2010) of *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* promises to be a significant contribution to the ongoing Latter-day Saint scholarly conversation on the Dead Sea Scrolls. This volume features essays from Donald W. Parry, Dana M. Pike, and Andrew C. Skinner, all of whom have served on the international team of editors of the Dead Sea Scrolls and have helped produce several of the 40 volumes in the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert series.

In “The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: Overview and Significance,” Donald W. Parry introduces readers to the scrolls as they relate to the Hebrew Bible, nonbiblical texts, and the sectarian documents. He explores particularly the significance of the scrolls for our understanding of scribal transmission, variant readings between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible, and how the Dead Sea Scrolls sectarians understood scripture. Parry’s article provides an important discussion of these topics from an LDS scholarly perspective.

One of the challenges for Latter-day Saints curious about the Dead Sea Scrolls is finding accurate information. In “The Dead Sea Scrolls and Latter-day Saints: Where Do We Go from Here?” Dana M. Pike argues that too many Latter-day Saints rely on outdated information and flawed

methodologies. Pike gives several suggestions for countering misinformation and keeping up to date. He also proposes a framework for approaching the Dead Sea Scrolls within their proper historical, textual, and religious contexts.

Andrew C. Skinner sheds light on the connection between the Dead Sea Scrolls and first-century Christianity in “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the World of Jesus.” Skinner takes a measured and cautious approach in exploring certain parallels between the scrolls and the earliest Christian texts, such as similar terminology and phrasing, temple ideology, and messianic expectations.

Also included is a reprint of Hugh Nibley’s “From the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS),” which first appeared in 1975 as appendix 1 to *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*. Nibley’s article provides a good example of how Latter-day Saints have found the scrolls compelling for their resonances with our own religious tradition. Stephen D. Ricks supplies a new introduction to this reprint.

Finally, this volume of *Studies* contains an updated select bibliography of publications by Latter-day Saint scholars on the Dead Sea Scrolls.

In conjunction with the publication of this volume, a Dead Sea Scrolls conference was held on January 12, 2011, at BYU, at which Parry, Pike, and Skinner presented their papers.

*Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* is available for purchase at [www.byubookstore.com](http://www.byubookstore.com). ♦

## Dead Sea Scrolls: What's the Competition?

William Foxwell Albright (1891-1971), perhaps the greatest biblical scholar of the 20th century, stated quite matter-of-factly that the Dead Sea Scrolls are “the greatest manuscript discovery of modern times.” Such oft-quoted statements as this may well both explain and help create the enormous and sustained interest in the scrolls. Certainly the current issue of *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* shows in numerous large and small ways why the scrolls are important, particularly for the study of the Bible, and gives a better appreciation of the varieties of Judaism in the world of Jesus Christ, thus confirming Albright’s claim for another generation of scholars, students, and general readers.

There is, however, another possible response to Albright’s statement, and that is to ask, “What’s the competition?” It is only natural to want to know who the other finalists in the beauty pageant of modern manuscript discoveries might possibly be. It’s a question worth thinking about, because on reflection there are quite a few candidates. Hugh Nibley, for example, gave us a list of 20 finalists. Space permits us to consider only two other finds that might deserve a place on the podium on either side of the Dead Sea Scrolls. As a scholar of early Christianity, I would select as my finalists the library of the Monastery of the Syrians in Egypt (one that didn’t make Nibley’s list) and the ancient Christian library found at Nag Hammadi.

The most recent text from the Monastery of the Syrians to hit the headlines is the so-called *Revelation of the Magi*. The manuscript of this text was preserved in the kind climate (for books) of the Egyptian desert for nearly a thousand years before being purchased by the Vatican Library in the early 18th century. In fact, almost all of the manuscripts from this monastery were purchased by great libraries in Europe—principally the Vatican Library and the British Library—during the period of European “discovery” of Middle Eastern manuscripts (Christian, Jewish, and Islamic). The library of the Monastery of the

Syrians is unique, though, mostly thanks to an enterprising abbot called Moses of Nisibis, who was a bibliophile and collector of ancient books—in the 10th century AD this abbot was purchasing books that were already 500 years old! The library possessed many unique works, including such treasures as the world’s oldest dated manuscript (AD 411), Syriac translations of otherwise lost Greek works, and even a lost ancient translation of the New Testament into the Syriac language. Though the original owners of the monastery could read the manuscripts in the library, the monastery later came into the hands of the local Coptic church, and the library fell into neglect and disuse. Recent exciting discoveries continue to draw the attention of the scholarly world. (See the article by Carl Griffin in this issue for more on this collection.)

In December 1945, just before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, 13 ancient codices (fourth-fifth century AD) were discovered near the town of Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt. The exciting story of this accidental discovery is only eclipsed by the remarkable texts contained within these codices, texts that scholars date back to the earliest centuries of the New Testament. Where the Dead Sea Scrolls expose the varieties of Jewish practice in the age of Jesus, these Nag Hammadi texts expose the competing Christianities that vied for adherents in the first centuries after Jesus. New gospels promise the “secret words” of the “living Jesus,” other books claim to contain the teachings of the first disciples of Jesus, such as the *Secret Book of James*. Hugh Nibley has mined these texts and the fruits are found scattered in his collected works. However, there is further interesting work to be done on this important collection.

The Dead Sea Scrolls certainly deserve our attention and interest, as this issue of *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* shows so well. However, it is only the tip of a very exciting iceberg of ancient texts. ♦

By Kristian S. Heal

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