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Dead Sea Scrolls Reader Released

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Book of Breathings, part of the Joseph Smith Papyri. Ritner, associate professor of Egyptology at the prestigious Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, annotated his translation extensively and included notes on previous scholars' work, providing helpful information for students of the Joseph Smith Papyri. Interestingly, the same papyri fragments were translated by Michael D. Rhodes in a 2002 FARMS publication entitled *The Hor Book of Breathings: Translation and Commentary*. Rhodes is associate research professor in the Department of Ancient Scripture at BYU. Since Ritner and Rhodes worked independently yet refer to the same body of scholarship, their translations invite comparison. To help facilitate that effort, Morris's review includes a side-by-side comparison of the two translations of the hieroglyphic text accompanying the initial vignette in Joseph Smith Papyri I.

The tone of Ritner's commentary reveals hostility toward the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints despite the assertion of impartiality. Ritner also denigrates Joseph Smith and the contributions of Latter-day Saint scholars Hugh Nibley and John Gee. Morris notes that this kind of nonscholarly ax-

grinding detracts from the value of Ritner's translation, as does his refusal to deal with other scholars' claims that certain nonscriptural elements of the Book of Abraham also appear in ancient or medieval texts that were unavailable to Joseph Smith. As for the quality of Ritner's translation, Morris suggests this is a good topic for trained Egyptologists to take up in the future.

In "Exploring the Isaiah Code: Ascending the Seven Steps on the Stairway to Heaven," David Rolph Seely, professor of ancient scripture at BYU, assesses Avraham Gileadi's latest book and his impressive Isaiah corpus in its entirety. Seely adjudges *Isaiah Decoded: Ascending the Ladder to Heaven* distinctive because of its "holistic approach [that] attempts to read and understand passages in Isaiah in light of their relationship to the writings of Isaiah as a whole." Gileadi employs structural, typological, and rhetorical analyses to relate Isaiah's writings to people today—"a message so relevant to the times in which we live and to our divine destiny as children of God," Gileadi writes in his book. According to Gileadi, each of the seven

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FROM OTHER PUBLISHERS

Dead Sea Scrolls Reader Released

A new multivolume work promises to facilitate study of the Dead Sea Scrolls. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader*, published by the prestigious academic publisher E. J. Brill, offers transcriptions and English translations of all the nonbiblical Qumran texts.

An advantage of the *Reader* is that it classifies the texts by genre. This practice was not followed in the official *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* series, where the texts were originally published, and the resulting dispersion of related texts therein was an obstacle to comparative analysis. In the *Reader*, some 500 Hebrew and Aramaic texts are grouped into six volumes, each covering a genre such as religious law or exegetical, parabiblical, calendrical/sapiential, and poetic/liturgical works. Twenty-five texts are published therein for the first time.

The editors of the project are Donald W. Parry, a professor of Hebrew Bible at BYU, and Emanuel Tov, the J. L. Magnes Professor of Bible at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and editor in chief of the Dead Sea Scrolls publication project. Parry and Tov have worked on the project since the mid-1990s.

The 2,400-page text of the *Reader* is being used in the BYU Dead Sea Scrolls Database on CD-ROM, with planned publication this fall. This electronic database will include the scrolls in a searchable format, together with many additional research tools.

The Dead Sea Scrolls comprise a collection of approximately 900 texts, written in Hebrew and Aramaic, that form a significant body of secular and religious literature. The scrolls have been called the most important archaeological find of this century because of the way in which they have increased knowledge of the Hebrew Bible, the Second Temple era of Judaism (250 BC–AD 70), the Hebrew language, and various religious texts. 