

of the ravine, and here they found four caves, two of them one hundred and fifty feet in length. It was an unusually dry section of the desert and materials were preserved in it that would disintegrate almost anywhere else. Unfortunately, rats had been busy chewing some of the manuscripts to get material for their nests. Yet hundreds of fragments of manuscripts were found. This place, the Wadi Murabba'at, is so remote, that after traveling as far as possible on horseback, it takes three hours on foot to reach it, and in the rainy season, seven hours is required.

The Murabba'at manuscripts have a different type of writing from the Qumran texts, and show a later stage in the development of the scripts. Many of them are in Greek and can be exactly compared with Greek manuscripts produced elsewhere at the same time. Best of all, some of them are dated. Many of them are from the time of the Second Jewish Revolt, which occurred from ¹³²132 to 135 A. D. This revolt was led by a man who many of the Jews thought to be the Messiah. For this reason Akiba, a noted Rabbi, gave him the title, Bar Cochba, "Son of the Star," in reference to the prophecy in Numbers 24:17. Historically he has been known by this name, and his actual name was forgotten. Some of these manuscripts are actually letters from him to the leaders of the guerilla forces under his direction and are signed by him. Thus we learn that his real name was Simeon ben Kosibah. Several fragmentary copies of his original proclamation, declaring the outbreak of the revolt, were found in the caves. These manuscripts will throw a welcome light upon many aspects of a period of history of which our knowledge was previously quite limited.

Comparison of the Hebrew writing on manuscripts from the two areas shows that the Qumran texts represent a type of penmanship considerably