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The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) existed from 1979 until 2006, when it was formally incorporated into the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship. Archived by permission.



industry in Utah Valley, Kirk's interest in scriptural scholarship enlivened his major in Latin American Studies at BYU where he received his degree in 1976. He was a part-time research assistant for Paul Cheesman in the Religious Studies Center. He and his wife, Shannon Savage, have three children.

If there's a "core" at FARMS, they're it, but of course they are aided by many other volunteers. At work with each other, it's obvious that they're old sparring partners, sharing the same standards of evidence and interest areas, appreciating the individual expertise each one brings and forming, just by being together, a small community of scholars.

## FARMS NEWS

### And The Computer Whirs Away

Projects described in the November 1980 newsletter continue, meanwhile here we spotlight another challenging research activity. John Hilton of Walnut Creek, California, has long had an interest in Book of Mormon studies. But his main talent is talking to computers -- and getting answers. He and his (non-Mormon) collaborator, Kenneth D. Jenkins, have access to a large computer complex during many hours per day. It's already ingested the modern and 1830 texts of the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the King James version of the Bible, thanks to the cooperation of Max Rogers, Director of the BYU Language Research Center, and the university's administration. With these texts on computer tape many kinds of statistical analyses can be carried out.

Two studies are already underway. The first is picking out rare expressions in the Book of Mormon -- how frequently they occur and where. For example, the phrase racked with eternal torment appears only in Alma. The all-searching eye of God is a phrase that occurs only in Jacob and Alma. Nephi and Nephi alone (with the exception of 2 Nephi 6:12 which comes from his record) describes a church as great and abominable. "Sorting out these phrases," says Jack Welch, will help us identify who wrote which things -- what Mormon really wrote as opposed to what he only abridged -- and will help us appreciate unsuspected qualities of Scripture."

A second project, gigantic in scope, is matching the Biblical text against Mormon Scriptures to find every phrase that recurs in both. "It will be interesting to see which phrases occur in the Book of Mormon from Old Testament prophets after Jeremiah, who dated to Lehi's day," observes Jack. "Or if a phrase from Obadiah shows up in Alma, did Obadiah originate it? Or was he quoting a still earlier text?" Of course some efforts have been made along these lines in the past, but more sophisticated analysis is necessary, and now possible, thanks to John Hilton's cooperation.

Proposals for additional studies using these computer facilities are welcomed. Each will be considered by the appropriate FARMS research committee for implementation.

### Toward a Translation of the Anthon Transcript

The excitement of discovery produced by Mark Hofmann's 1980 recovery of what looks to be the original Anthon Transcript has died down somewhat, but the real work remains to be done. That page of Book of Mormon characters that Martin Harris took to New York professors to be appraised for its authenticity remains an unanswered question as long as it is untranslated; in fact even when a good translation is in hand there seems to be no possibility of acquiring enough additional "reformed Egyptian" ever to pin down a definitive translation. However, FARMS has been helping interested scholars by providing study materials and

פְּרִיאֲשֵׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: הָאָרֶץ אֲהִיָּה תְהִי וְכֹהֵי הִ

serving as an information clearing-house with cooperation from the Church Historical Department and BYU's Religious Studies Center.

Recently one scholar produced what he calls a "possible translation" of the whole transcript. He discussed his translation method and results with representatives of the Foundation, who offered to arrange for a working conference at which competent scholars would analyze and critique the translation at length. The researcher has agreed and is currently preparing a full presentation of his materials which will be circulated in advance to the limited number of highly-qualified participants invited to attend the meeting, planned for August.

This conference will also consider two previous attempts to decipher the document, as well as comparisons of the transcript with Micmac Indian hieroglyphs. Foundation officers stress that this will be a working conference: the public cannot be invited, probably no definitive conclusions will be reached, and proceedings will not be published. Almost certainly, much more work will need to be done, even if the research so far proves to be on the right track. The FARMS Newsletter, however, will provide periodic reports if only of the hospital style: "doing as well as can be expected," or "the operation was a success but the patient did not survive."

Donors who wish to assist with this important study may earmark their contributions for the "Anthon Transcript Project."

#### Editor Joins FARMS

Lavina Fielding Anderson, with this issue, becomes the editor of the FARMS Newsletter. The officers plan to involve her also in preparing their reprint series and other projected publishing ventures in the planning stage.

"I've always been interested in scriptural research," says Lavina, "ever since I used to trail Hugh Nibley around at firesides when I was an undergraduate and make foolish attempts to cover his talks for the student paper, the Daily Universe. I'm very much in sympathy with the goals and purposes of FARMS, impressed by the quality of people involved and the soundness of the planning to this point -- but I might have just remained a sympathetic well-wisher if Jack hadn't mentioned that in addition to editing the Newsletter, there was a possibility of doing something with all of Hugh Nibley's uncollected papers, which Hugh has given to FARMS. That brought me in!"

Lavina graduated from BYU with a B.A. and M.A. in English, and received her Ph.D. from the University of Washington in Seattle. In addition to eight years of writing and editing for The Ensign in Salt Lake City, she has edited books published by Deseret Book, Bookcraft, and Cambridge University Press. She and her husband Paul are parents of a son.

#### PROJECT UPDATES

The uncollected papers of Hugh Nibley which he has given to FARMS include a mouthwatering assortment of his work for the past twenty years. No decision has yet been made whether to prepare a comprehensive book or to offer them in a separate series of FARMS reprints. They include his 1968-69 series from The Improvement Era on the Book of Abraham, his 1975-76 series for The Ensign on Enoch, multi-part articles on baptism for the dead, "The Stick of Judah and the Stick of Joseph," a study of Book of Mormon criticism, some of his classical studies on the ancient world, Isaiah, the apostasy, the forty-day ministry of Christ, the Lachish letters dating from Lehi's time in Israel, Zion, Adam, prayer circles in early Christianity, archaeology, and trenchant essays about the state of modern society. Check future issues of the Newsletter for information about how to obtain your copies of these materials.

ΕΝ ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς

Chiasmus in Antiquity, a volume of essays tracing this peculiarly Near Eastern-Mediterranean stylistic pattern in an impressive number of literary forms, is now in galley proofs and should be coming off the press in the Fall. It is being published by Gerstenberg Verlag of Hildenheim, West Germany.

Six scholars have contributed to present a surprisingly wide range of languages and literatures in which this form can be seen. Robert F. Smith, non-affiliated writer, researcher, and editor from Independence, Missouri, has explored "Chiasm in Sumero-Akkadian." Yehuda T. Radday, associate professor of Bible and Hebrew at the Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa, discusses "Chiasmus in Hebrew Biblical Narrative," while Wilfred G. E. Watson of the Hebrew Department in the University of Dublin's Trinity College analyzes "Chiastic Patterns in Biblical Hebrew Poetry." Bezelel Porten, senior lecturer of Hebrew and Aramaic Ancient Literature at Hebrew University in Jerusalem also goes beyond Biblical texts in his treatment of "Structure and Chiasm in Aramaic Contracts and Letters."

Jonah Fraenkel, senior lecturer for Halakhic and Aggadic Literature, also of Hebrew University, discusses "Chiasmus in Talmudic-Aggadic Narrative." Then Jack Welch has contributed four essays, distributed throughout the book, on "Chiasm in Ugaritic," "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," "Chiasmus in the New Testament," and "Chiasmus in Ancient Greek and Latin Literatures." As the project's entrepreneur, he has also written the volume's introduction.

David Noel Freedman, director of the program on studies in religion at the University of Michigan, wrote the preface. As general editor of the Anchor Bible and the periodical, Biblical Archaeologist, he is in a good position to evaluate the contribution such a work is likely to make. Several of the essays have been published before in locations as scattered as Linguistica Biblica, Ugarit-forschungen, Beth Mikra, BYU Studies, Tarbiz, and The New Era. Just collecting them under one cover alone is a valuable contribution.

John Sorenson reports that his "An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon" in a much scaled-down version, is still wending its way through channels in search of a place in The Ensign. As long as that possibility remains, he will defer from publishing his full-length study. The matter should be decided soon, he has been told. Meanwhile he has been working on expansion of several sections. This is a major piece of work, culminating decades of research. In limited circulation, the manuscript has already begun to have a significant impact on the direction of Book of Mormon-New World studies.

## RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORTS

FARMS is organized around research committees who largely determine the Foundation's program. The first fully-staffed committee is the twelve person panel on Book of Mormon-New World, chaired by John Sorenson. Its duties include evaluating research projects for technical adequacy, noting approaches or topics which might be fruitfully pursued, reporting on relevant research presented at professional meetings, responding to inquiries in their area of expertise, and otherwise serving as a panel of helpful scholarly resources. An evaluative and scholarly arm, not an administrative entity, the group's members vary in degree of involvement according to the time they feel they can spare from professional activities, ranging from "active bystander" to "enthusiast."

John E. Clark, who received his M.A. from BYU, will enter the Ph.D program in anthropology at the University of Michigan this Fall. He has served as archaeologist and laboratory supervisor for the BYU-New World Archaeological Foundation in San Cristobal, Chiapas, Mexico for several years.

Rex E. Cooper is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Chicago in social anthropology.



Brant Gardner is a Ph.D. candidate at SUNY Albany, emphasizing Mesoamerican ethnohistory in the anthropology department.

Boma Johnson received an M.A. from BYU and is an archaeologist with the Bureau of Land Management in Yuma, Arizona.

Thomas A. Lee, Jr., with an M.A. from Arizona and work toward the Ph.D. at the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, is field director of the BYU-NWAF in Chiapas.

Andrew J. McDonald received his M.A. from the University of the Americas in Mexico and worked in the graduate program at the University of Texas. He is now employed as a computer specialist.

Fred W. Nelson, also a BYU M.A. graduate in archaeology as well as having a degree in chemistry, is Radiation Safety Officer at BYU and an internationally-rekowned expert on advanced scientific techniques applied to archaeology.

Steven Olsen, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Chicago in social anthropology is employed in the Arts and Sites Division of the LDS Church Historical Department.

Calvin D. Tolman holds an M.A. from the University of Utah in linguistics and is a printer.

Raymond C. Treat, a Ph.D. candidate at Arizona State University in anthropology, is director of the Zarahemla Research Foundation, Independence, Missouri.

Donald W. Forsyth has his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania and is assistant professor of anthropology at BYU.

Bruce W. Warren is also an assistant professor in the department; his Ph.D. is from the University of Arizona.

From time to time additions and retirements will change the composition of the committee, but a high level of expertise will be maintained in order to ensure the work of FARMS on New World aspects of the Book of Mormon is conducted at a high level of responsible scholarship. A Book of Mormon-Old World committee is partially staffed. Other committees will be created as FARMS continues to develop.

Deadline for contributions, submissions, and inquiries for the next newsletter will be September 20, 1981. Please send items to FARMS, Box 7113 University Station, Provo, UT 84602.

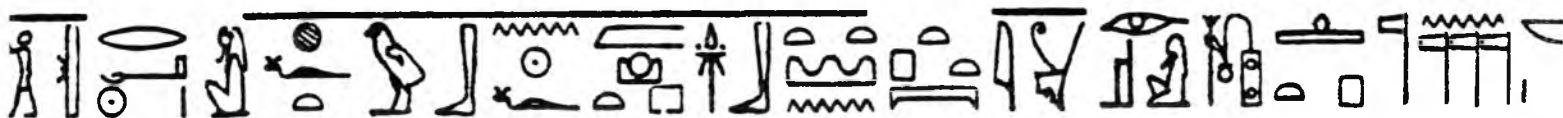
## REPRINTS

How much do you really know about the Book of Mormon? Would you like to build your own library of key materials connecting scholarly studies with the Scriptures? Many of our correspondents say they want serious, reliable studies but don't know how to identify or obtain them. FARMS is starting two publication series to help meet that need.

"FARMS Reprints" are proven pieces already published or circulated which represent substantial contributions to knowledge. Some may even be classics. Some are "oldies but goodies" while others may be too new to be widely saluted. While few research contributions are so ultimately true that they can never be modified or reinterpreted in the light of new evidence, the articles chosen as Reprints we consider worthy contributions of continuing value deserving of close attention by scriptural scholars. This issue of the Newsletter offers the first ten such papers which have been made available. Copies can be obtained for a nominal fee by sending in the order blank at the back of the Newsletter.

If you are aware of a paper you think could qualify as a FARMS reprint, let us know. Our research committees will evaluate all suggestions for possible inclusion in the series.

Preliminary Studies are more tentative papers which treat interesting questions, evidence or solutions to problems which could be of significant value



to many of our participants, particularly in showing the "state of the art" in a given area of research. Some of these studies will emerge from the crucible of scholarly appraisal to become published articles or papers for conferences. Others will be replaced by different suggested answers or refuted by further investigation. Again our research committees will be pleased to review any papers submitted for possible inclusion in this series.

### The First Ten Reprints

1. Keith H. Meservy, "Discoveries at Nimrud and the 'Sticks' of Ezekiel 37," Newsletter and Proceedings, SEHA, No. 142 (Nov. 1978):1-10. (A less detailed version appeared in the Sept. 1977 Ensign, pp. 22-27.) Ezek. 37:16-17 describing the joining of "the stick" of Joseph to "the stick" of Judah has long been interpreted by Latter-day Saints as referring to the Book of Mormon and the Bible; but the context seems to refer to a scepter, rather than a scroll. A 1953 discovery in Iraq demonstrated that wooden tablets covered with beeswax were used anciently as writing materials. Tablets were "joined" with hinges along their sides, providing a clear explanation of the "sticks" as scriptures according to Ezekiel.

2. Hugh Nibley, "The Arrow, the Hunter, and the State," Western Political Quarterly, 2 (1949):328-44. This paper "undertakes to show how by using marked arrows in a peculiar way (to establish ownership) prehistoric hunters solved the problem of exercising dominion over vast and scattered areas, and then applied the same solution to the more difficult problem of welding peasant and nomad cultures into some sort of union, resulting in the great centralized state of historic times."

3. Hugh Nibley, "Tenting, Toll, and Taxing," Western Political Quarterly, 19 (1966):599-630. "It is the purpose of this paper to show how the state spent the most impressionable years of its childhood living as an orphan of the storm in tents of vagabonds where it acquired many of the habits and attitudes that still condition its activities." It interprets tolls and taxes as "alternatives to fighting" when nomads appeared in the territory of city-dwellers.

4. John L. Sorenson, "The Book of Mormon as a Mesoamerican Codex," Newsletter and Proceedings, SEHA, No. 139 (Dec. 1976):1-9. The author shows that the description of the format of the Book of Mormon source (compare the Anthon transcript), aspects of its style, and its content are "not contrary to what we would expect if the source had been a Mesoamerican codex" or native document. The bulk of the paper consists of an extensive listing of concepts and symbols, with documentation in the literature, which are shared in the Book of Mormon, ancient Near Eastern thought, and Mesoamerican beliefs.

5. John L. Sorenson, "Some Mesoamerican Traditions of Immigration by Sea," El Mexico Antiguo, 8 (1955):425-38. Statements by Ixtlilxochitl, Sahagun, Torquemada, Moctezuma, Landa, etc. are quoted demonstrating widespread belief among Mesoamerican peoples that their ancestors had come from across the sea.

6. John A. Tvedtnes, "A Phonemic Analysis of Nephite and Jaredite Proper Names," Newsletter and Proceedings, SEHA, No. 141 (Dec. 1977):1-7. The author provides a linguistic analysis of the names, showing that the Jaredite names follow a somewhat different pattern. A basic source for any further study of the names or the languages involved, which are clearly Semitic.

7. John W. Welch, "The Narrative of Zosimus and the Book of Mormon," manuscript, 1979. This narrative is a tale which may predate the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Texts of it have been preserved in Slavonic, Syriac, Ethiopic, Karshuni, Arabic and Greek. In the story righteous Zosimus dwells in a desert cave, prays to the Lord, and is brought to a promised land after exhausting wanderings in the wilderness. Elements of the passage involve a river, a cloud of darkness, the fruit of a tree, and instructions from an angel. In addition to a

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detailed account of the Zosimus narrative, comparisons are made to the Book of Mormon, and some possible explanations are offered for resemblances.

8. John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," BYU Studies, (Autumn 1969):69-84. This landmark study defines and describes the chiasmic form in the Old Testament, then analyzes and interprets passages using the form which are found in 2 Nephi, Mosiah, and Alma.

9. John W. Welch, "The Theological Treatment of Melchizedek in Alma 13:13-19," manuscript, 1980. Alma's treatment of Melchizedek "is unparalleled in other religious thought which has treated Melchizedek for theological purposes in a variety of ways." This paper concludes that Alma's interpretation "may well reflect the oldest traditions known," compares Alma's understanding with his later roles and functions, and attempts to determine Melchizedek's place in Book of Mormon religious practice.

10. H. Curtis Wright, "Ancient Burials of Metal Documents in Stone Boxes -- Their Implications for Library History," Journal of Library History, 16 (Winter 1981):48-70. The inscriptions of Darius on gold and silver tablets found in a carefully prepared foundation in 1926 in Persepolis "constitute the high point in a long tradition of concealing metallic documents, which persists from Sumerian to Alexandrian times." This paper reviews the history of such plates in stone boxes before and after the plates of Darius and suggests some implications for the history of libraries. (A much more extensive treatment of metal plates by the author is in press elsewhere and will be available as a Reprint later.)

## PRELIMINARY REPORTS

### The First Three Preliminary Reports

1. Robert F. Smith, "It Came to Pass' in the Bible and Book of Mormon." Manuscript, 1980. Pointing out that computer analysis will be necessary to make his observations conclusive, the author shows that the Book of Mormon, though less than a third the length of the King James Bible, contains more than twice as many recurrences of "came/come to pass." Furthermore, extensive cataloguing shows that all but three of the twenty books containing that phrase in the Bible are in the Old Testament. Another interesting characteristic: the phrase usually occurs in prose narrative, in both volumes of scripture. He explains that the phrase derives from Hebrew wayehi, which the King James Version translated variously as "and it happened," "came," "had come," "became," "arose," "was," "now," etc. He speculates that Joseph Smith's "too literal" reproduction of the language of the plates could account for the same phrase being translated in only one way in the English version. Tables of occurrences are included. This study will be further refined as our computerized textual analysis projects are more fully developed. (Robert Smith is a "sixteen-hour-a-day" scholar who has the remarkable distinction of never having been encumbered by a professional position; he is referred to admiringly by colleagues as a "freelancer's freelance" and a great example to those who dream of a life of scholarship without a professorial title. He has studied at Hebrew University, Claremont College and BYU and is fluent in Hebrew, Akkadian, Egyptian, Greek and Latin among other languages.)

2. John W. Welch and Joann Carlton, "Preliminary Report: Possible Linguistic Roots of Book of Mormon Proper Names." Manuscript, 1981. A FARMS research grant to Professor Carlton of Occidental College in Los Angeles got this study started. The first ten names she has worked over are included in this paper. Possible derivations in Hebrew and related languages are offered and each is rated on a scale of five as to its likelihood. To her analysis, Jack has added biographical and historical information about the individuals and has also

EN ἀρχῆ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς



provided commentary on the possible meaning of each name in light of that context. Paul Hoskisson has reviewed and supplemented these analyses. The names treated here begin with Abinadi and go alphabetically through Aminadi. The name Abinadi, for example, seems to be formed from the roots abi and nadi and means "My (divine) father is present." That meaning would relate remarkably to "the most significant and controversial aspect of his message, namely that God himself, whom Abinadi calls Father, shall come down and be present among men (Mos. 15:1-4; 17:8)." Proper names in the ancient Near East often tied together a person and his dominant role or characteristic.

Joann Carlton received her Ph.D. from Harvard where she studied with Frank Moore Cross. She spent part of 1981 on a dig in Jordan, is involved in a current project at Harvard on women in the Bible, and has a solid reputation as a specialist on early Semitic inscriptions. She is not LDS but is intrigued by what she has learned about the Hebrew elements in the Book of Mormon.

3. John L. Sorenson, "The Wheel in Precolumbian Mesoamerica." The intent of this study is to draw together the scattered strands of research which now show that wheels were widely known in the area between western Mexico and El Salvador and as early as the time of Christ. At one time scholars could say that wheels were unknown in America before the arrival of the Europeans. Over the years, though, "wheeled toys" have shown up in increasing numbers. Moreover it is now clear that the mechanical principles of wheel use were well known enough that practical vehicles could have been present, although their physical remains have not yet been found. The "toys" turn out to be cult objects connected, probably, with death, burial and the sun, as shown by references in the paper to Mesoamerican beliefs and practices. At the same time similar cult objects are shown to occur in the Near East from the third millennium B.C. to classical times and carry generally similar meanings. The relationship of this material to the Book of Mormon is discussed also. A number of subtopics deserving further research are suggested.

## MANAGER'S REPORT

The first Newsletter announced the ambitious goal of raising \$20,000 by June 30, 1981. For practical purposes that goal has been reached, culminated by recent donations of an IBM typewriter and a small computer system. The computer, a TRS-80 system with 48K capacity, includes CPU, expansion interface, monitor, two disc drives, printer and custom desk. It was the gift of Terry Jeffers, a director in the Howard Ruff organization. FARMS will use it to keep the mailing list straight -- now grown to over a thousand names -- and for indexing papers, notes, bibliographies and research projects.

Dozens of people sent small contributions, and these gifts of \$5 to \$25 are always very welcome. Not only does FARMS need the money to finance research, but public support on a wide-scale is necessary to maintain our tax-exempt status.

Individuals and businesses who make substantial contributions will get preferential treatment. Jack is an attorney with considerable experience in tax-exempt contributions and he has offered to help large contributors maximize their tax advantage from gifts to FARMS.

The Foundation is looking for fund-raisers who will contact foundations, government agencies, business, and private donors. Anyone interested please contact Jack Welch or Kirk Magleby at FARMS, P O Box 7113 University Station, Provo, UT 84602. We also need local public relations representatives throughout the country. If you would like to assist FARMS in your locality, you would receive, in addition to grateful thanks, free copies of FARMS publications. Let us know of your interest, if you haven't already done so.

