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The Foundation for
Ancient Research
& Mormon Studies

INSIGHTS

AN ANCIENT WINDOW

1992, No. 1

"...by study and also by faith." D&C 88:118

January

Touring Mesoamerica Is an Unforgettable Experience

One F.A.R.M.S. tour to Guatemala and Mexico returned in November. The next is set to go in February.

The Fall tour was led by John W. Welch, who lectured along the way about several Book of Mormon sites, texts, and recent research developments. The tour was managed by Joe Allen, his 150th tour exploring the heartlands of the Book of Mormon.

Since three geologists were among the participants, special note was taken of volcanic and geological features in several locations. For example, the narrow strip of wilderness (mentioned in Alma 22:27 as running from east to west between the lands

of Nephi and Zarahemla) fits the geology of northern Guatemala impressively, where a major east-west earthquake fault has resulted in an abrupt and formidable region of mountains between highland Guatemala and the Chiapas depression.

People who make this trip will never forget the vivid images and eventful settings. The tour was "incredible," says Carolee Scoville. "The trip was something out of the ordinary—in fact, a most unusual occasion," reflects Abbie Gardiner. For Paul DeBry, the trip was "unforgettable. A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

The tour departing in February, conducted by Noel Reynolds, will follow the same route, visiting Izapa, Guatemala City, Tikal, Lake Atitlan, Palenque, La Venta, Teotihuacan, Monte Alban, and several other sites.

We hope to have another ten people to fill the tour. Contact the F.A.R.M.S. office immediately if you want further information. If you know of anyone who might be interested in this opportunity, please let us know so that we can contact them.

Symposium Planned for March

On Saturday, December 14, 1991, a group of 18 scholars met to discuss the ancient history, horticulture, philology, and symbolism of the olive tree, in order to shed light on Zenos's allegory in Jacob 5. Progress reports were given on over twenty projects, notes were shared, and issues discussed.

The working group, chaired by Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch, will present its findings to the public in a symposium on March 21, as the 1992 annual F.A.R.M.S. Book of Mormon Lecture. Watch for more specific announcements on the program as that date approaches.



The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies is a nonprofit research and educational organization dedicated to the study of ancient scripture. Your tax-deductible contributions enable F.A.R.M.S. to sponsor and coordinate a wide range of research projects that enhance our understanding of these sacred writings.

P.O. Box 7113, University Station, Provo, Utah 84602

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F.A.R.M.S. UPDATE

The Foundation for Ancient Research & Mormon Studies

Number 80

January 1992

Fragments of Original Manuscript Discovered

For more than three years, Royal Skousen has been studying the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon. His most recent accomplishment, and undoubtedly one of the most significant, was the discovery, conservation, and photography of a collection of a large number of fragments from the original manuscript.

In 1882, when Lewis Bidamon opened the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House, he discovered that the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon, which Joseph Smith himself had placed in the cornerstone, was mostly destroyed by water seepage. Bidamon handed out the better preserved portions of the manuscript (about 25% of the text), but he apparently kept for himself some smaller fragments.

In 1937 Wilford Wood of Bountiful, Utah, purchased these fragments from Charles Bidamon of Wilmette, Illinois. At Wood's death these fragments were passed on to his family. Last summer, Skousen, following a trail of published references to the fragments, was able to view the fragments and then persuade the family to have them conserved and photographed.

The condition of the fragments posed serious problems. They were stuck together in a 3 x 6 x 1 inch lump. Skousen enlisted the help of conservators at the BYU Library (Robert Espinosa, Cathy Bell, and Pam Barrios) to unravel and press the fragments. David Hawkinson, photographer for BYU's Fine Arts Museum, experimented with different methods for photographing the fragments to bring out the very faint

handwriting, finally succeeding with ultraviolet reflected photography.

From the resulting photos, Skousen has been able to read enough to identify the six different places (covering parts of 58 pages) in the original manuscript from which the fragments come: 2 Nephi 5-9, 2 Nephi 23-25, 2 Nephi 33-Jacob 4, Jacob 5-Enos 1, Helaman 13-3 Nephi 4, and Ether 3-15. Currently Skousen continues to work from the photographs to identify and locate the placement of the smaller fragments.

The main purpose of this project is to produce the critical text of the Book of Mormon—a re-creation of the original English text (as far as it can be determined) and a complete description of the substantive changes that have occurred in the text. To accomplish this, Skousen has carefully and extensively examined the original manuscript (O) and the printer's manuscript (P); created electronic versions of O, P, and 17 significant editions of the Book of Mormon; compared these by computer to discover changes; and checked all variants found by computer analysis against the actual text copies. He estimates it will require three more years to finish his work.

Ultimately, F.A.R.M.S. hopes to publish four volumes: (1) a facsimile transcript of the existing portions of O; (2) a facsimile transcript of P; (3) the critical text; and (4) a history of the text, discussing the major text changes described in the critical text.

The result will be an invaluable tool for students of the Book of Mormon. Not only will it provide the best information on the original and printer's manuscripts, but it will also

shed light on the process of translation and publication.

One of the most important findings of the project has been the identification of over 200 previously unknown changes in the text of the Book of Mormon, most of them made when P was copied from O. Some of the other important discoveries are: (1) for 72 pages of P, the 1830 edition was typeset directly from O instead of P; (2) two sheets from the University of Chicago (covering Alma 3-5) are probably a forgery; (3) there is direct evidence that Joseph spelled out Book of Mormon names for his scribes on the first occurrence and apparently again later when requested; (4) a small part of O is in Joseph's own handwriting (28 words in Alma 45); and (5) the word "chapter" and the added chapter numbers were not part of the original text of the Book of Mormon, but instead correspond to what Joseph Smith saw as breaks in the text.

In 1984-87, F.A.R.M.S. published the first-ever critical text of the Book of Mormon (3 vols.), which includes information on the ancient form of the text. Skousen's project focuses on recovering the English translation that Joseph Smith dictated.

Financial and other support for this project has come from BYU, F.A.R.M.S., the Keter Foundation, the LDS and RLDS churches (which have made possible work on O and P), the Wilford Wood Foundation, the Zarahemla Research Foundation, and the Book of Mormon New Edition Committee of the Church of Jesus Christ (the Bickertonites), as well as from a host of individuals.

Based on research by Royal Skousen

from the chairman of the board

F.A.R.M.S. Publishing Plans for 1992

F.A.R.M.S. has a full and varied schedule of publishing in 1992. *Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present*, the twelfth volume in the *Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, will appear in early 1992. This volume contains essays, some not previously published, dealing with the temple and other related topics. In the late summer a revised edition of *Abraham in Egypt* will appear, which will also contain material published in the *Improvement Era* in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

In the early spring, *Reexploring the Book of Mormon* will be published. This collection of F.A.R.M.S. Updates has been made more useful with the addition of illustrations, background notes, and information on the progress on research since the original publication of each Update.

A book on the "Allegory of the Olive-Tree" in Jacob 5 will also appear in 1992. This volume, containing contributions from several scholars, will include a variety of essays on topics that will enhance the reader's understanding of Jacob 5: a horticulturalist's observations on the facts of the allegory; considerations on the importance of the olive in the

ancient world, especially in the ancient Near East; essays on the olive's religious and economic significance; reflections on the symbol of the olive in scriptural tradition; a comparison and contrast of Romans 11 and Jacob 5; discussions of the importance of Jacob 5 in the interpretive tradition of the Latter-day Saints; and insights into the practical implications of Jacob 5.

The first contributions to the *Ancient Texts and Mormon Studies* series should also be completed by late 1992. This new series will provide a new edition and translation, as well as fresh insights from an LDS perspective, of many of the ancient texts that form the basis of our understanding of the religion of ancient Israel and Early Christianity.

In addition to publishing these books, F.A.R.M.S. will continue to issue other publications, such as papers, reprints, and newsletters. Most notably, the fourth volume of the *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* will appear in the late spring, and the first volume of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* is planned for the fall.

Stephen D. Ricks

Call for Papers

Interested individuals are invited to submit papers for consideration for publication in the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*. Papers may range from 1/2 page (for a "Notes and Communications" department) to 20 pages (typed, double spaced). Papers should be clearly marked as submissions to the Journal.

Articles Available Separately

The Summer 1990 issue of *BYU Studies*, a special issue on the Book of Mormon, is now out of print. The new 1992 F.A.R.M.S. catalog, however, lists several of its articles individually.

The articles include John Sorenson's construction of theories about the Mulekites; Robert Matthews's listing of Book of Mormon passages on resurrection; David Clark's brief treatment of winds in the Pacific; Kent Jackson's suggestion of another way to gloss Ether 3:15; and John Hilton's latest report on Book of Mormon word studies.

Selected Sperry Symposium Papers Now Available

The annual Sperry Symposium was held at BYU on October 26, 1991. Many of the papers presented will be published next spring. In the meantime, four papers are now available separately on the enclosed order form.

Roger Keller's scholarly report, available only from F.A.R.M.S., is a significant study of the distribution of the words *law* and *commandments* throughout the Book of Mormon. He finds not only that there are differences in vocabulary frequency among the various authors, but also differences in meaning. Ethical, secular, and theological usages are

observed in ways that offer religious lessons as well as insights into the traits of individual Book of Mormon authors.

Kelly Ogden's paper is a report on his project examining the clear and powerful use of language in the Book of Mormon. The texts of the Book of Mormon are shown to convey beautiful figures of speech and thought, as plain and effective as words can be.

David Seely presents valuable research into the role and meanings of the Ten Commandments in the Book of Mormon. He shows how the narrative portions of the book unmistakably teach lessons about each of

the Ten Commandments.

John Welch's topic was "Ten Testimonies of Jesus Christ." His paper examines the phrases used by ten Book of Mormon prophets in testifying of Jesus and finds that each one uses different (and often unique) words. In addition, the testimony of each prophet reflects his personal experiences. Thus, Benjamin, a king, was the only one to speak of Christ's *omnipotence*; and Jacob was the only writer to call him "the Holy One of Jacob."

Each paper may be ordered directly from F.A.R.M.S. on the order form with this issue of *INSIGHTS*.

More on Abraham in Egyptian Papyri

F.A.R.M.S. has been pleased to receive several comments from interested readers about the article that appeared in our September Newsletter exploring the possible significance of the name Abraham in certain late Egyptian magical papyri. As that article indicated, full publication of this ongoing work is yet to come. As work progresses, up-to-date reports will be given.

While it remains unclear what role the name Abraham plays in these somewhat unlikely texts, it is becoming more definite that the name is there. Abraham's name has now been found over 70 times, in five different languages, and in many kinds of texts from Egypt. These occurrences are *in addition to* those in biblical or ecclesiastical materials or those used as personal names. Such experts as T. Hopfner, H. D. Betz, F. L. Griffith, K. Preisendanz, M. Smith, R. Kotansky, M. Meyer, L. Blau, C. Bonner, and others have declared that the documents indeed contain the name Abraham. Anyone aware of any such references is invited to communicate with John Gee c/o F.A.R.M.S. on the subject.

Regarding the September report, here are a couple of additional points to note: The lion couch scene is located on the last column of the back of Papyrus Leiden I 384. In the text that begins "Quickly, quickly, I adjure you," read "by the dead" instead of "against the dead." And Edward N. O'Neil has published a more recent translation of the Greek section of Papyrus Leiden I 384.

Obviously much work remains to be done before all of these references can be fully evaluated; but, more than even before, the prospects for shedding light on the Book of Abraham are intriguing.

Encyclopedia Selling Briskly

The F.A.R.M.S. office has been receiving a steady stream of orders for the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, published by Macmillan. We are pleased that many F.A.R.M.S. readers are taking advantage of the opportunity to obtain this excellent reference source. We believe your family will enjoy and learn from the informative articles and numerous excellent illustrations.

The main 4 volumes (without the scripture volume containing the texts of the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price) are available for \$249.00. In addition, a very limited, deluxe, leather-bound edition of all 5 volumes is available for \$750.00. See the order form for details.

Scholars Discuss Geography

On December 7, a "working group on Book of Mormon internal geography," consisting of 14 people, met in Provo. The invitation to meet had been sent by convenor John Sorenson to all who had received from F.A.R.M.S. a copy of his "Source Book" on the subject, along with selected other people.

The intent was to work toward consensus on an internal map. It was found, however, that great variation existed in interpreting even basic passages of the scripture relevant to the topic, so methodology was discussed. No course of action could be planned. Hence, while it appears unlikely that any such group can fruitfully attempt the task again, Sorenson plans to continue his own work on the subject, which will incorporate suggestions from the session.

Electronic Bulletin Board Formed

F.A.R.M.S. has received notice of the formation of MORMON-L, an electronic bulletin board on Mormon studies. The organizers indicate that it is open to all persons, Mormons and non-Mormons alike, who wish to engage in substantial discussion of topics relating to Mormonism. The following guidelines will regulate the bulletin board:

- All communications will pass through an editor. The editor will not dictate topics or approach. Moderation of the discussion will be strictly limited to screening out blatant personal attacks or overtly evangelical postings. Content and style will never be altered.
- MORMON-L is not to be used for active evangelism, whether pro- or anti-Mormon. The purpose is discussion and exchange, not conversion or condemnation.
- To join MORMON-L, you must have access to the Bitnet computer communications network. For information about computer communications, contact the computer support personnel at your institution, or your local computer store. You may also be able to receive MORMON-L postings through such commercial services as Compu-serve.
- To subscribe to MORMON-L, send the following message to `LISTSERV@BYUVM.BITNET`: "Subscribe Mormon-l <your name>" leaving the subject header blank. Your name will then be added to the list.
- If you wish to communicate directly with the list moderators without having your communication posted to the list itself, contact:
J Michael Allen
<HISJMA@BYUVM>
William J. Hamblin
<HISWJH@BYUVM>
David C. Wright
<WRIGHT@HUSC3>

Elder Maxwell Speaks at F.A.R.M.S. Banquet of Consecration and the Gospel's "Democracy of Demands" that Builds an "Aristocracy of Saints"

Elder Neal A. Maxwell's remarks at the F.A.R.M.S. annual banquet in September continue to inspire and challenge us. For those of the Foundation's friends who were not able to attend the banquet, and for those who attended and have asked for a written copy to ponder, excerpts from his talk are reproduced here:

Appreciation for F.A.R.M.S.

I have come to thank you for all that you do, individually and collectively! Your organization's scholarship is used to protect and build up the Kingdom.

Don't underestimate the importance of what you do as articulators of the faith. In praising C. S. Lewis, Austin Farrer wrote: "Though argument does not create conviction, lack of it destroys belief. What seems to be proved may not be embraced; but what no one shows the ability to defend is quickly abandoned. Rational argument does not create belief, but it maintains a climate in which belief may flourish" (Austin Farrer, *Light on C.S. Lewis* [Harcourt and Brace], p. 26).

One recent example is the F.A.R.M.S. effort to draw our attention to the discovery of certain papyri with passages of possible relationship to the Book of Abraham and its facsimiles. It is too soon to know all the implications of what F.A.R.M.S. reported, but it illustrates something. I believe the Prophet Joseph, though not a perfect man, will be vindicated in his statement about his own mission, which was, "I never told you I was perfect, but there is no error in the revelations which I have taught" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* [SLC: Deseret Book, 1972], p. 368). . . .

Joseph will go on being vindicated in the essential things associated with his prophetic mission. Many of you here, both now and in

the future, will be part of that on-rolling vindication through your own articulation.

Thank you for helping to provide the needed climate.

You may also help another special group, who, if they heed, need a particular strengthening. Lewis's mentor in absentia, George MacDonald, noted how it is often the "incapacity for defending the faith they love [which] turns men into persecutors." Happily, defenders beget defenders. . . .

Gospel Democracy

I share next these additional thoughts with you simply because they are on my mind—not because of any extra relevance to this audience.

One of the sobering dimensions of the gospel is its democracy of demands as it seeks to build an aristocracy of saints. Certain standards and requirements are laid upon all disciples. The member who is an automobile mechanic doesn't have your scholarly skills, nor likely you his skills. But both of you are under the same spiritual obligations to keep the same commandments and the same covenants. Furthermore, the mechanic is under the same obligation to develop the attributes of patience and meekness as are you.

Frankly, the world holds to no such democratic view. If one is a superb scholar in a narrow discipline, such is considered enough. One so gifted can then be as bohemian in behavior as he likes. But it is not so in the Kingdom, is it?

Of course we all enjoy the fruits of the labors of secular geniuses who are visibly or significantly flawed in some respects. Nor would we desire to diminish from their important contributions. A just God will surely credit them. However, God will neither excuse them or us from

keeping His commandments nor from the requirement given to us by Him and His Son to become more like Him. . . .

Consecration

Whatever our fields of scholarship, the real test is discipleship, not scholarship. But how special when these can company together, blending meekness with brightness, and articulateness with righteousness. These desired outcomes only happen to a significant degree when there is commitment bordering on consecration. Therefore, perhaps a word about consecration is appropriate.

You will recall the episode in the fifth chapter of the book of Acts about how Ananias and Sapphira "kept back part" of the monetary proceeds from their possessions. We usually tend to think of consecration in terms of property and money. Indeed, such was clearly involved in the foregoing episode. But the various ways of keeping back part are worthy of consideration by all of us. There are so many things we can withhold besides property, things which really ought to be put on the altar. This may occur even after giving a great deal, as did Ananias and Sapphira. We may mistakenly think, having done so much, that surely it is alright to hold back a remaining part. Yet, obviously, there can be no total submissiveness when this occurs.

Lately, when speaking of the Atonement, a particular scripture has helped. It is about how Jesus allowed His will to be swallowed up in the will of the Father. "Yea, even so he shall be led, crucified, and slain, the flesh becoming subject even unto death, the will of the Son being swallowed up in the will of the Father" (Mosiah 15:7).

KBYU-TV Broadcasts Nibley Class— F.A.R.M.S. Reaches a New Audience

KBYU-TV began broadcasting Hugh Nibley's Book of Mormon class on January 5. Every Sunday afternoon in 1992 at 5:00 P.M. (MST) you can watch another stimulating and informative class session.

Thousands of BYU students have benefited from this class, but this is the first time that other students of the scriptures have had access to Nibley presenting a class on the book that he loves and knows so well. And it is vintage Nibley, with his insights, humor, and passionate convictions.

Videocassette copies and transcripts are also available on the enclosed order form.

KBYU is committed to broadcasting this series for one year, but the 5:00 P.M. time slot is a very popular one and they will only keep it in that slot (instead of moving it to 6:00 A.M.) if they are convinced there are a sufficient number of viewers interested. Their phone number is (801) 378-0050, and their address is KBYU-TV, University Hill, Provo, UT 84602, should you wish to communicate your interest.

In addition to making Nibley's insights available to a wider audience, this series of broadcasts will introduce F.A.R.M.S. to many people. Another recent effort to make more people aware of the services of the Foundation was made possible by the generosity of the Living Scriptures company. They included in their catalog, mailed to over 300,000 homes, an insert about F.A.R.M.S. and the services and products we offer.

We are doing our part to make as many people as possible aware of the latest developments in Book of Mormon research, and we hope that you will do your part. A recent survey of a randomly sampled group of our subscribers (watch for more details in the next issue of *INSIGHTS*) indicates that most of our

readers learned about F.A.R.M.S. either through a mass mailing or through a friend.

To help you share the services of F.A.R.M.S. with your friends, we are preparing a video about the Foundation, which we will send you to show to people who might be interested in knowing more about Book of Mormon research. Details will be given in future issues of *INSIGHTS*.

New CD-ROM

Infobases has released the first edition of a gospel study system on CD-ROM. It includes the standard works, volumes 1-10 of the *Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, and 41 titles by Church leaders. The CD also contains search and retrieval software. Infobases intends to sell updates to the CD containing 10-20 titles every 3-6 months. For more information, see the flier included in this mailing.

continued from page 5

Elder Maxwell's Banquet Remarks

While pondering that very concept I came across this parallel quote from Brigham Young: "When the will, passions, and feelings of a person are perfectly submissive to God and His requirements, that person is sanctified. It is for my will to be swallowed up in the will of God, that will lead me into all good, and crown me ultimately with immortality and eternal lives" (*Journal of Discourses*, 2:123).

Scholars might hold back differently from a businessman, or a politician. There is an almost infinite variety in ways in which one can hold back. One might be giving as to money and serving as to time, and yet hold back a significant portion of himself. One might share many talents but hold back a pet grievance from resolution. A few hold back a portion of themselves so as to please a particular gallery of peers. Some might hold back a spiritual insight from which many could profit, simply because they wish to have their "ownership" established. Some hold back by not appearing totally and fully committed, lest they incur the disapproval of a particular circle in which their consecration might be disdained.

Some thus give themselves but not fully and unreservedly. While a form of selfishness, I am inclined to think the holding back somehow gets mistakenly regarded as having to do with our individuality, which some presume we will lose if we are totally "swallowed up." Of course, our individuality is actually enhanced by submissiveness and by righteousness. It is sin which grinds us down to a sameness—to a monotonous, single plane.

In any case, there is no lasting place in the Kingdom for unanchored brilliance. Fortunately, those of you I know are both committed and contributive. In any case, ready or not, you serve as mentors and models for the rising generation of Latter-day Saint scholars and students. Let them learn, among other things, submissiveness from the eloquence of your example.

God bless you!