



BOOK OF MORMON CENTRAL

<https://bookofmormoncentral.org/>

Type: Newsletter

Insights, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Spring 1989)

Editor(s): FARMS Staff

Published by: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies



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.



FOUNDATION FOR
ANCIENT RESEARCH &
MORMON STUDIES

INSIGHTS

AN ANCIENT WINDOW

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

THE PROPHETIC BOOK OF MORMON, VOLUME 8 IN THE NIBLEY COLLECTED WORKS, IS NOW AVAILABLE

For Hugh Nibley, the Book of Mormon is prophetic in every sense of the word. It was written by prophets and about prophets. It was foreseen by prophets and foresees our day. It is a book brought forth by prophetic gifts for prophetic purposes. It speaks in a clarion voice with words of counsel to those who would survive the last days.

The articles in this outstanding volume, brought together under one cover for the first time, approach the Book of Mormon through a variety of prophetic themes. They range from the meaning of the sticks mentioned in Ezekiel 37, historical corroboration of Nephi's vision of Columbus, and internal and external evidences of the divine origins of the Book, to jolting messages about the modern world and of things that will soon come to pass.

Most of these 23 chapters have previously appeared in various publications, but some are published here for the first time. Most are carefully developed papers; others are transcripts of talks. Titles include "New Approaches to the Book of Mormon," "Kangaroo Court," "Howlers in the Book of Mormon," and "Scriptural Perspectives on How to Survive the Last Days."

Over 20 volumes are now projected in the Nibley series. This is the fourth and concluding volume of the Book of Mormon component of *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*. The materials are presented in this volume in the order in which they were written over the last 40 years, to give the reader a sense of Nibley's consistent but diverse work on the Book of Mormon since he joined the faculty at Brigham Young University in 1946.

No one has made the Book of Mormon more an object of persistent, serious, and extensive study than Hugh Nibley. And no one sees more clearly than he does the need for this endeavor to continue. This 595-page volume will give insights to every thoughtful reader of the Book of Mormon.

SYMPOSIUM ON WARFARE IN THE BOOK OF MORMON HELD

The F.A.R.M.S. Symposium on Warfare in the Book of Mormon was held on March 24 and 25 at Brigham Young University. The conference was convened by William J. Hamblin and Stephen D. Ricks, and included among its participants and speakers Matthew Hilton, Hugh W. Nibley, Daniel C. Peterson, John L. Sorenson, Terrence L. Szink, John A. Tvedtnes, Bruce A. Warren, John W. Welch. The topics ranged from "Why is there so much warfare in the Book of Mormon?" to a detailed discussion of the armor used by the Book of Mormon peoples. For example, no armor is mentioned to protect the legs, which is consistent with the Mesoamerican practice.

Brother Nibley astutely compared the Book of Mormon's perception of war with the principles of war described by von Clausewitz in his classic *Vom Kriege (War, Politics, and Power)*. For example, according to von Clausewitz, "War is . . . a continuation of [state] policy by other means . . . [War] is not merely a political act but a real political instrument." According to Nibley, "The Book of Mormon begins with the war in Jerusalem and ends with the war at Cumorah. In between there are a lot of wars. They all deal with political ambition, for example, the political ambitions of Zerahemnah, Amulon, Amalickiah, and many other men of political ambitions who wished to

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
John L. Sorenson
Chairman
Noel B. Reynolds
John W. Welch
Stephen D. Ricks

ADVISORY BOARD
Merrill J. Bateman
J. Robert Driggs
William E. Evenson
Wilford M. Hess
Kirk A. Magleby
Harold L. Miller

Hugh W. Nibley
Russell Peek
R. Douglas Phillips
Chauncey C. Riddle
Charles D. Tate
Robert K. Thomas
Jay M. Todd

OFFICERS
Stephen D. Ricks
President
Janet Twigg
Office Manager

promote themselves. They began with political parties, and ended up at war."

Several hundred people attended the three sessions. Some papers presented at the conference—"Fortifications in Mesoamerica and in the Book of Mormon" by John L. Sorenson, "An Oath of Allegiance in the Book of Mormon" by Terrence L. Szink, and "Book of Mormon Tribal Affiliation and Military Castes" by John A. Tvedtnes—are now available as F.A.R.M.S. Papers.



AN OATH OF ALLEGIANCE IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

According to Terrence L. Szink, "an important element in any military endeavor is the loyalty of the soldiers. Obviously, even the most brilliant military tactics will fail if the troops are unfaithful in fulfilling their duty." As a result, loyalty oaths were often administered among soldiers in the ancient Near East. These oaths often included "simile oaths," where some object is likened to the persons making the oath. Thus, in the Hittite loyalty oath, the person administering the oath said, after placing wax and mutton fat in the hands of each of those taking the oath, "just as this wax melts, and just as the mutton fat dissolves, whoever breaks these oaths ... let him melt like wax, let him dissolve like mutton fat." To this the men declared "So be it."

Szink's paper analyzes how this is similar to the oath that the people took in Alma 46. They all "came running together with their armor girded about their loins, rending their garments in token, or as a covenant, that they would not forsake the Lord their God; or, in other words, if they should transgress the commandments of God, or fall into transgression, and be ashamed to take upon them the name of Christ, the Lord should rend them even as they had rent their garments" (Alma 46:21).

Several other aspects of oaths are described in this very readable paper.

BOOK OF MORMON TRIBAL AFFILIATION AND MILITARY CASTES

This intriguing article, presented by John A. Tvedtnes at the F.A.R.M.S. Symposium on Warfare in the Book of Mormon, treats both the social structure and hereditary military leadership of Nephite and Lamanite society. Although specific tribal affiliation is often telescoped into a bipolar political division of Nephites and Lamanites, Tvedtnes notes that "as early as the second generation in the New World, descendants of Lehi's colony were calling themselves Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites," from the founders of these respective lineage groups. Awareness of specific tribal affiliation was maintained until the end of Nephite history. Further, according to Tvedtnes, "military and political leadership among the Nephites and related peoples was often a responsibility inherited from one's father." This has parallels in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica and other ancient societies, and helps to explain the extreme youthfulness of Mormon, the editor of the records, at the time of his advancement to general of the Nephite armies.

WHAT WAS A "MOSHIAH"?

In 1965, John Sawyer published an article entitled "What Was a Moshiah?" in *Vetus Testamentum* 15 (1965): 475-86, available on the attached order form. He argues that the term *mošia^c* was an ancient Hebrew term that originally had meaning in Hebrew culture but came to be used among their titles for God. Sawyer's analysis may shed light on the name Mosiah in the Book of Mormon.

The Hebrew word *mošia^c* (pronounced moe-shee-ah) undoubtedly appeared in several texts on the Plates of Brass. This word was not, however, transliterated by the King James translators, thus it would not have been known to Joseph Smith from the Bible.

While the exact derivation of the Book of Mormon name Mosiah is uncertain, it is evidently similar to the Hebrew *mošia^c*, which means "savior." People in danger cry out, "but there is no

mošia^c" (Deut. 22:27). This "word invariably impl[ie]d a champion of justice in a situation of controversy, battle of oppression." A person so called was a hero appointed by God, who peacefully liberates a chosen people.

The term *mošia^c* applies perfectly to the Mosiahs in the Book of Mormon. King Mosiah I was a God-appointed hero who delivered the chosen people of Nephi, escaping into the land of Zarahemla (Omni 1:12-14). Mosiah II freed his people from the risk of unrighteous monarchs. Alma could be called a God-inspired *mošia^c* who peacefully saved his covenant people from king Noah and the Lamanites, and Limhi functioned similarly. The doctrinal theme of God's salvation is also strong in the book of Mosiah. Thus, that book, like the book of Judges in the Old Testament, appears to have been very meaningfully named.

The Hebrew term *mošia^c* was also used as a divine title, and one can easily see why. God, too, was and is such a savior. The Book of Mormon adds support to Sawyer's idea that the divine title *mošia^c* originally had a general cultural meaning, for it seems to preserve traces of that when it says that "the knowledge of a savior shall spread throughout every nation" (Mosiah 3:20), "in other words a savior of the world" (1 Nephi 10:4). Sawyer's article opens several interesting ideas to be pondered.



ARTICLE EXPANDED

Warren and Michaela Aston's paper (AST-88) reporting their second expedition to Yemen and Oman has now been enlarged. They have uncovered more information about an area called Nehhm and several very fertile locations in addition to Salalah along the southern coast of Arabia which are alternate locations for the original Bountiful.

JOHANNESSEN VISIT

Professor Carl Johannessen, professor of geography at the University of Oregon, lectured in March at BYU on his research on evidence for pre-Columbian maize in India and nearby areas. F.A.R.M.S. has provided support for his work. He presented BYU botanists and others with an impressive array of actual specimens, pictures of sculptured representations of cobs of corn on Indian temples, and linguistic and historical data. His material seems to demonstrate that this American plant was well known and used in south and east Asia centuries before Europeans could have introduced it. An implication is that at least one voyage from America to Asia has taken place across the Pacific Ocean centuries ago. This evidence concretely supports the often-expressed view that abundant Asian-American cultural parallels resulted from a series of early voyages.

REVIEW OF BOOKS ON THE BOOK OF MORMON

Since publication of the last Newsletter, the first issue of the F.A.R.M.S. *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* has been printed. It contains seventeen reviews of fourteen different books, most of which appeared during the years 1987-88. Some of the reviews are actually "review essays," since they represent important contributions to Book of Mormon studies in their own right.

John Clark's 51-page review of *Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon*, by F. Richard Hauck, entitled "A Key for Evaluating Nephite Geographies," offers a useful checklist for testing geographical hypotheses against the Book of Mormon. Those interested in this subject will not want to miss it. It may, in fact, become indispensable for future studies in the area. Louis Midgley contributes a challenging piece on methodology in writing scriptural commentaries among the Saints.

Enthusiastic responses to the *Review* have come from many quarters. We invite letters to the Editor for next year's *Review*.

WEDNESDAY BOOK OF MORMON SEMINARS

The Wednesday Seminar is a faculty research seminar organized by Noel Reynolds (Political Science, BYU). It has met bi-weekly this year to hear discussions on current research related to the Book of Mormon.

Robert Millet (Chairman, Ancient Scripture, BYU) discussed difficulties in clarifying the Nephite concept of the divine nature, especially in light of contemporary Latter-day Saint conceptions.

Wilfred Griggs (Ancient Scripture, BYU) spelled out some of his findings on early Egyptian Christianity which are being published in his *Early Egyptian Christianity* (E. J. Brill, 1989). Professor Griggs has assembled strong evidence for the presence of significant Christian communities in Egypt within a few decades of the crucifixion.

John E. Clark (Archaeologist, BYU-New World Archaeological Foundation) discussed how to evaluate recent models for the geography of the Book of Mormon. He drew attention to the differences in assumptions, consistency, and scholarly care given to details in the text found in the recent efforts to locate a geographical setting for the Book of Mormon. His essay, "A Key for Evaluating Nephite Geography," in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1* (1989): 20-70, is an expanded version of this presentation.

Royal Skousen (English, BYU) reported on progress in his F.A.R.M.S.-sponsored "critical text" project. By entering the original texts of the Book of Mormon independently on separate computers, he and colleagues have already identified a few scribal errors that crept in between the Original and Printer's manuscripts. This project will lead to a definitive critical text, eventually revising the version currently being circulated by F.A.R.M.S.

Alan Goff (BYU graduate student in English) advanced a literary interpretation of 1 Nephi 16:34-39, using Old Testament stereotypes to explain why Nephi recounted the death of Ishmael as he did. The example demonstrates how new techniques of literary analysis that are currently proving fruitful for Bible scholars might profitably be applied to

the Book of Mormon.

Roger Keller (Church History and Doctrine, BYU) explored the possible significance of differences in the vocabulary of Mormon and Moroni.

Louis Midgley (Political Science, BYU) examined interpretations of the Book of Mormon which find some religious meaning in the text while rejecting it as an authentic ancient history, or which see nineteenth-century phrasings in it while maintaining that it still contains ancient historical materials.

Kent Brown (Ancient Scripture, BYU) examined numerous, subtle indications in the Book of Mormon of the exodus theme. This motif is used to describe the deliverance of God's people from bondage and captivity, e.g., Lehi's exodus from Jerusalem and Alma's from the Land of Nephi. The exodus theme is also linked to the atonement and applied to repentant individuals as in Alma 36.

Stephen Ricks (Hebrew and Semitic Languages, BYU) presented a version of his paper later presented at the Symposium on Warfare in the Book of Mormon. He examined various significant parallels between "holy war" in the ancient Near East and in the Book of Mormon.

Stephen Robinson (Ancient Scripture, BYU) discussed the ways he has developed to answer the question: "Are Mormons Christians?" His arguments from ancient historical materials show clearly that Latter-day Saint beliefs fit well within the range of views that have historically been considered "Christian." These arguments were originally developed while Robinson taught at Lycoming College in Pennsylvania, and were presented at the request of Protestant ministers in surrounding communities.

Grant Hardy (History, BYU) reported on his efforts to identify the contributions of Mormon as editor of the Book of Mormon. Some of these are subtle and significant in understanding the text with the use of techniques drawn from contemporary biblical studies.

In future sessions, John Sorenson will analyze a problem in Book of Mormon chronology, and Noel Reynolds will detail the content of the gospel or doctrine of Christ as taught by the Nephite prophets. For further information, contact the F.A.R.M.S. office.

ORDER FORM

CAT. No.	Author and Title	Qty.	Price	Total
AST-89	Aston, Warren & Michaela, "The Search for Nahom and Lehi's Trail," 35 pp.		\$2.25	
CHR-89	Christenson, Allen J., "The Use of Chiasmus by the Ancient Quiché-Maya," 13 pp.		\$1.00	
REV-88	F.A.R.M.S., <i>Review of Books on the Book of Mormon.</i>		\$5.00	
GOD-89	Godfrey, Kenneth A., "The Zelph Story," 50 pp.		\$3.00	
MTH-89	Matthews, Robert J., "Some Thoughts on the Atonement," 28 pp.		\$1.75	
N-8	Nibley, Hugh W., <i>The Prophetic Book of Mormon.</i>		\$18.95	
N-ONE	Nibley, Hugh W., "One Eternal Round (Hermetic Version)," 45 pp.		\$2.75	
SAW-65	Sawyer, John, "What Was a Mošia ^c ?" <i>Vetus Testamentum</i> , 12 pp.		\$.75	
SOR-89	Sorenson, John L., "Fortifications in the Book of Mormon and in Mesoamerica," 16 pp.		\$1.00	
SZI-89	Szink, Terrence L., "An Oath of Allegiance in the Book of Mormon," 6 pp.		\$.50	
TVE-89	Tvedtnes, John A., "Book of Mormon Tribal Affiliation and Military Caste," 20 pp.		\$1.25	

Tax-Deductible Contributions:

Annual Minimum.....\$10.00.....(\$5.00 for students and low-income families)

To get the 8 monthly Updates \$50.00

To get complimentary copies of articles \$500.00

To get complimentary copies of books and media productions \$1000.00

Total Purchases:	
Annual Minimum:	
Contributions:	
Total Enclosed:	

Circle one: **Visa** or **MasterCard** Card No. _____ Exp. Date _____

Cardholder's Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

U.S. Currency
Only.

Return to: F.A.R.M.S.
P.O. Box 7113
University Station
Provo, Utah 84602

ZELPH

In recent years, discussions of Book of Mormon geography have concentrated on limited areas in Mesoamerica. The story of "Zelph, the white Lamanite," is frequently cited as evidence that the Nephites occupied the entire North American continent and fought some of their final battles near the Illinois River. Who was Zelph, and are his bones relevant to the Book of Mormon? Researcher Kenneth Godfrey shows why one should be cautious in drawing specific geographical conclusions from this incident.

When Zion's Camp reached the Illinois River in June 1834, some of the party explored nearby Indian mounds. They dug into the top of the highest one, and just below the surface they found a skeleton of a large man with a stone arrowhead in his rib cage. Soon after, Joseph Smith had a vision about this man. While his words were comforting and interesting to the camp, exactly what he said is obscure in some important respects, because the accounts vary.

In his paper "The Zelph Story," Godfrey, a C.E.S. administrator, reviews all the original journals from Zion's Camp and compares the information contained in each. A copy of each document is included in the Appendix. Since this paper attempts to display all the known evidence on this incident, it is an important contribution to our understanding of the event.

VISIT OF JACOB NEUSNER TO BYU

Jacob Neusner, Ungerleider Distinguished Scholar of Judaic Studies and University Professor at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, an outstanding scholar in Judaic Studies and author of the book *The Glory of God Is Intelligence*, published by the Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University, spoke on February 22 at a lecture sponsored in part by F.A.R.M.S. His topic was the "Power of Imagination." Drawing his examples from Judaism and contemporary American life, he stressed the importance of religion and the "moral imagination" in establishing and maintaining a society that recognizes a law of God and governs accordingly.

RULES FOR SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS

Any researcher is welcome to submit a paper for possible publication by F.A.R.M.S. Submissions need to follow certain rules: (1) The subject must seriously involve the Book of Mormon, although it need not deal exclusively with that scripture (exceptions will be considered); (2) it must follow basic conventions of scholarly research, including paying serious attention to previous work on this topic; (3) a particular objective or thesis must be evident; and, (4) clear logic and language is essential. One typed/printed copy (double-spaced and proofread) should be sent; it will not necessarily be returned. If possible,

follow the guidelines of the University of Chicago Press (for a model, see a recent F.A.R.M.S. book), although any reasonably clear format will serve at first. If we can find suitable reviewers, we will return their comments to the author, but we cannot guarantee review nor any particular schedule, since all involved are volunteers.

We welcome submission of any paper in any format to be placed in our files as part of an archive of research on the Book of Mormon, but papers that do not meet the criteria listed above will not be reviewed.

THE PURPOSE OF F.A.R.M.S.

The intent of the Foundation is to investigate the Book of Mormon and its contexts using academic and rational methods in order to enhance understanding of the scripture. Conviction about the authenticity of the Book of Mormon remains in the spiritual domain (testimony). Scholarly work is seen as complementary.

F.A.R.M.S. is an independent, non-profit organization. It is not a part of and does not speak on behalf of any other organization. Views expressed by authors published by F.A.R.M.S. are their own and not necessarily those of this organization nor of other workers involved.

At the present time over 17,000 readers routinely receive the Foundation's materials. We very much appreciate their support.

Please add the following individuals to the F.A.R.M.S. mailing list:

Name _____	Name _____	Name _____
Address _____	Address _____	Address _____
_____	_____	_____
Name _____	Name _____	Name _____
Address _____	Address _____	Address _____
_____	_____	_____
Name _____	Name _____	Name _____
Address _____	Address _____	Address _____
_____	_____	_____

ONE ETERNAL ROUND (HERMETIC STYLE)

In the third and final lecture in his series on "The Terrible Questions," Dr. Hugh Nibley spoke on "One Eternal Round (Hermetic Version)." A transcript of this talk can now be ordered. According to Dr. Nibley, the central ritual of all ancient religion was concerned with achieving "a one-ness with the divine existence," in gaining "a return to celestial company . . . a yearning for the restoration of a firmly held common existence of man and of the Godhead." Preservation of the knowledge of these rites was considered to be of the highest importance, but because of "the normal rascality of the race," it was forced underground or into the wilderness. Still, every effort was made to preserve this information in a hermetic (sacred/secret) tradition. Unfortunately, the hermetic tradition was itself the object of abuse and quackery: there were many (such as the gnostics) who claimed to have this knowledge "without having to make their claims good." In the Restored Gospel, and particularly in the temple, Nibley asserts that the genuine hermetic tradition has been preserved, thereby making possible a true at-one-ment of mankind with God.



THE ATONEMENT AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

In a faculty lecture recently presented to the BYU Religion Department, Dean Robert J. Matthews discussed the Atonement. He articulated several "points of doctrine" taught in the Book of Mormon on the Atonement and carefully focused on the teachings of individual Book of Mormon prophets. Several of their points are often misunderstood. This presentation, now also available from F.A.R.M.S. as a paper, clearly and impressively teaches several important dimensions of the atonement of Jesus Christ, and will be of assistance to all teachers and students of scripture.

FORTIFICATIONS IN THE BOOK OF MORMON AND IN MESOAMERICA

Archaeologists have consistently denied that ancient Mesoamerican peoples systematically practiced warfare. The Book of Mormon, however, reports a great deal of warfare and fortifications. Only in the last 15 years has a small set of experts begun to see warfare playing an important role in this area, although of course it has been common everywhere else in the world. In his article, John Sorenson identifies over 300 archaeological sites which

were fortified (no more than a few dozen of these have been generally recognized as such until now). Dates are given for various features of the fortifications (for example, moats, gateways, stone walls). It is clear that nearly all the important features were present from 2000-3000 years before the Spaniards arrived. Since this significant development is so contrary to the views of previous authorities, further study and excavation at fortified locations are needed.

THE USE OF CHIASMUS BY THE ANCIENT QUICHÉ-MAYA

Allen J. Christenson shows for the first time in professional literature that chiasmus was known in pre-Columbian America. His article, which includes part of the material in CHR-88, appeared in *Latin American Indian Literatures Journal* 4/2 (1988): 125-50. Here he discusses nine texts, including the Popol Vuh from the Quiché Indians of highland Guatemala, all of which display this literary feature. (This area is correlated with the land of Nephi in several current versions of Book of Mormon geography.) These texts are thought to have been based on hieroglyphic manuscripts among the Quiché or were written soon after the Spaniards arrived. No texts composed after 1580, when Spanish influence began to be strongly felt, show chiasmus, demonstrating that it is not a "natural" or psychologically based feature but a cultural one.



FOUNDATION FOR
ANCIENT RESEARCH
& MORMON STUDIES

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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage

PAID

Provo, Utah 84601
Permit No. 80