



# BOOK OF MORMON CENTRAL

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Type: Newsletter

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## Insights, Vol. 19, No. 2 (February 1999)

Editor(s): FARMS Staff

Published by: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies

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The Newsletter of  
the Foundation for  
Ancient Research  
and Mormon Studies

# INSIGHTS

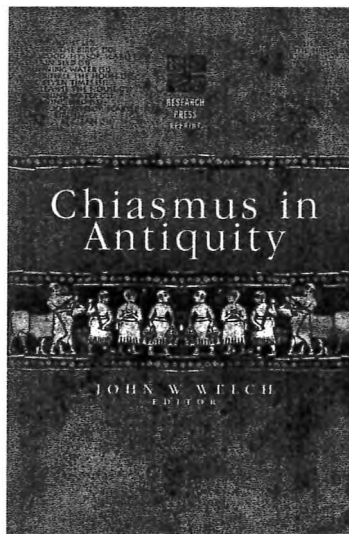
## A WINDOW ON THE ANCIENT WORLD

February 1999

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

### Reprint Examines Chiasmus in Ancient Literature

*Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis*, a groundbreaking book out of print for a decade, is now published for the first time in the United States as a FARMS reprint (see the enclosed order form). First released in 1981 in Germany, this volume of essays edited by Professor John W. Welch devotes more than three hundred pages to identifying and analyzing chiasmus in ancient texts. Chiasmus is a form of literary parallelism in which the elements of a textual passage are first presented in one order and then



repeated in reverse order.

The critical acclaim that *Chiasmus in Antiquity* has received persuaded FARMS to bring it back into print. In 1994 John Breck, for example, called it "a remarkable achievement. Its several articles taken together constitute a milestone in modern literary criticism and should be compulsory reading for anyone seriously interested in the 'shape' of biblical literature" (Breck, *The Shape of Biblical Language*, 1994). Other prestigious scholars

*continued on page 7*

### Imaging Charred Scrolls: Petra and Herculaneum

FARMS is involved in two overseas projects in which its use of state-of-the-art multispectral imaging technology is helping illuminate the writing on ancient scrolls damaged by fire long ago.

#### PETRA

The April 1998 issue of *INSIGHTS* reported that a FARMS-sponsored team successfully determined the best method of digitally photo-imaging carbonized scrolls from ancient Petra as a step toward creating a searchable computer database of these fragile texts. Using a tunable photographic filter, the team produced remarkable images in which the cursive Greek script is clearly distinguished from the black background of the burned papyri.

Since then, team members Steven W. Booras of FARMS's Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts (CPART) and Gene Ware of BYU's

School of Technology have presented their findings at an April conference in Florence, Italy. In late October they returned to Amman, Jordan, and in six weeks finished imaging 152 of the total 180 scrolls from 493 glass plates. The remaining 28 scrolls are so thoroughly carbonized that it is unlikely they can be suitably unrolled for imaging.

This project will help open a new window on history now that the legibility of the fire-blackened scrolls has been improved through modern imaging technology. The assorted legal documents from sixth-century Petra shed valuable light on life during a sketchy period in Petra's history. For example, place-names mentioned in the documents may enable scholars to locate several archaeological sites.

Now that the imaging is complete, the team

*continued on page 7*



The Foundation for  
Ancient Research  
and Mormon Studies

# FARMS UPDATE

A Report on Research in Progress

Number 123

## Was Mulek a “Blood Son” of King Zedekiah?

The Book of Mormon identifies Mulek as the only son of King Zedekiah to escape execution during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem (Omni 1:15; Helaman 8:21). Like the Lehites, Mulek and those with him fled Jerusalem and were “brought by the hand of the Lord across the great waters” (Omni 1:16). Descendants of the group later settled in the land of Zarahemla, where the people under Mosiah discovered them and Mosiah became king when the two groups merged into a single polity (Omni 1:19).

Supposing Mulek to have been a literal son of Zedekiah, some Latter-day Saint scholars have explored reasons why Mulek is not named in the Bible, how he survived Nebuchadnezzar’s purging of Judah’s nobility (2 Kings 25:7; Jeremiah 39:6), and why the people of Zarahemla (descendants of Mulek’s group) allowed a newcomer, Mosiah, to be their king rather than their current leader, Zarahemla, who descended from Mulek (Mosiah 25:2).<sup>1</sup> Recent evidence introduces an interesting new possibility: Perhaps Mulek was not a “blood son” of King Zedekiah, but a “son” in some other sense.

A bulla (clay seal) from Israel bears the official seal of King Jehoiakim’s “son” Yerahme’el. Prominent Jewish scholar Hershel Shanks translates the

seal impression thus: “Belonging to Yerahme’el ‘son’ of the King.” He explains: “I have put ‘son’ in quotation marks because it is not clear whether the term denotes a biological son. Scholars are of three minds—at least: (1) the word means what it says; (2) ‘son’ refers to a royal official unrelated by blood to the king; (3) ‘son’ refers to any male scion [descendant] of the royal family.”<sup>2</sup>

Five people in the Bible are referred to as “son of the king,” Shanks notes, of which three have police or security functions. This is the case in Jeremiah 36:26, where the king sends Jerahmeel (Yerahme’el) to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch, his scribe. Yet we can hardly suppose that Jerahmeel was an actual son of the king, because thirty-year-old King Jehoiakim would have been too young at the time to have a grown son.<sup>3</sup>

In light of such information, we may reconsider Helaman 6:10 and 8:21, which represent Mulek as being a “son” of Zedekiah. If Mulek was not a blood son of the king, his preservation despite the report in 2 Kings 25:7 that Zedekiah’s sons (presumably all of them) were slain becomes more understandable: that report may refer only to “blood sons.”

Moreover, if Mulek was not a literal heir to the Judahite throne, this may help explain why Zarahemla and his “exceedingly

numerous” people (Omni 1:17) accepted Mosiah as king, apparently without question or incident. In terms of the tradition of the Judahite fathers of Mulek’s group, Zarahemla, as a descendant of Prince Mulek, might seem to have deserved the kingship. But Mosiah, though not of the preferred royal line through Judah, at least had major appurtenances of kingship that Zarahemla lacked. Mosiah’s possession of such sacred Nephite relics—the plates of Nephi, the brass plates, the sword of Laban, the Liahona—and the impressive fact of his literacy may have conferred on him a special aura that helped convince the people of his suitability to rule as king.

Mosiah’s qualifications for the kingship would have been even stronger if the “Mulekites” knew that Zarahemla’s lineage was not securely tied to Judahite kingship. Of course, whether or not Zarahemla had claim to royal lineage through Mulek, Mosiah’s strengths carried the day.

### NOTES

1. These issues are treated in Sorenson, “The ‘Mulekites,’” *BYU Studies* 30/3 (1990): 6–22. See “New Information about Mulek, Son of the King,” in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon* (1992), 142–44.

2. Hershel Shanks, *Jerusalem: An Archaeological Biography* (1995), 107–8.

3. See *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, s.v. “Jerahmeel.”

By John L. Sorenson

## Chiasmus Bibliography Marks Thirty Years of Research

As a missionary in Germany in 1967, John W. Welch, along with his companion, attended a theological lecture in which the professor explained chiasmus, a kind of literary parallelism prevalent in the Bible. Soon thereafter Welch was the first person to discover superb examples of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon, a strong indication of that record's ancient and artistic composition. Bringing this to the professor's attention, Welch was unceremoniously dismissed. But the response a few months later from a Jesuit priest who was an authority on the subject was encouraging, even prophetic: "You are very fortunate. I think you have found your life's work."

The newly released *Chiasmus Bibliography* is the most recent fruit of Welch's long-standing interest in chiasmus. Citing articles and books that discuss chiasmus in scripture and other literature, this seventy-page bibliography is the most exhaustive work of its kind ever completed. "Because

discussions about chiasmus are often buried in works of broader scope where they cannot be found using computerized library searches," explains Welch, "the new bibliography is a great help to anyone who wants to know the ways in which chiasmus has been used by students of the scriptures."

Welch included a bibliography on chiasmus in his 1970 thesis, which was greatly expanded by Robert F. Smith in *Chiasmus in Antiquity* (now reprinted by FARMS; see the related story on page 1). In 1987 Welch extended this work and published it through FARMS as a study aid under the title *Chiasmus Bibliography*, which he and Daniel B. McKinlay have now expanded even further.

This new version of the bibliography lists about 900 works on chiasmus by author and title and includes full publication information. Brief remarks by FARMS librarian and researcher Daniel B. McKinlay identify the

configuration of the chiasms under discussion in each entry, and a scripture index lists the principal verses analyzed, facilitating scripture study and comparison. Arranged alphabetically by author and categorically by scripture, more than 450 entries relate to the Old Testament, 300 to the New Testament, 25 to the Book of Mormon, and 80 to other literature. The bibliography is a unique and valuable resource but is not complete, says Welch, who invites readers who find additional works pertaining to chiasmus to send that information to him in care of FARMS.

"Chiasmus is an important element of Hebrew literary style," says Welch, who is the founder of FARMS and a law professor at BYU. "Containing many fine examples of chiasmus, the Book of Mormon is in the class of literature that is most at home with the Bible. *Chiasmus Bibliography* is a scholarly tool, a work that anyone interested in chiasmus should at least be aware of."

### Corroborations

## Ancient Manuscripts Fit Book of Mormon Pattern

The Prophet Joseph Smith's claim that he translated an ancient text from gold plates he had found buried in the ground was greeted with disbelief in the press and in early anti-Mormon literature. Alexander Campbell, a prominent American religious leader who wrote the first book critical of the Book of Mormon, scoffed at the fact that it had

been translated "from the reformed Egyptian!!!"<sup>1</sup> Critics derided the Book of Mormon by calling it the "gold Bible," reflecting the skepticism about scripture being written on metal plates.

Ironically, the earliest extant manuscripts containing biblical text have the same three features that were stumbling blocks for

early detractors of the Book of Mormon. One of these manuscripts was written on metal plates, one manuscript was written in a reformed Egyptian script, and a set of manuscripts was concealed for future recovery.

The earliest of all known manuscripts displaying biblical text was found in 1980 when archaeologists opened an ancient

*continued on page 4*

## Ancient Manuscripts (continued from page 3)

tomb adjacent to the Scottish Presbyterian church of St. Andrew in Jerusalem. They discovered two small rolled-up strips of silver with a Hebrew inscription of the priestly blessing found in Numbers 6:24–26. From paleographic evidence (handwriting analysis), the scrolls have been dated to the end of the seventh century B.C. or the beginning of the sixth century B.C.—about the time Lehi left Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup>

The second-oldest-known manuscript citing a Bible text is written in Egyptian demotic script and dates to the fourth century B.C. Its date of discovery is unknown, but it was purchased in Egypt as part of a collection about 1875 by Lord Amherst of Hackney, England. Known as Papyrus Amherst 63, it includes a quote of Psalm 20:2–6. Though the language of the text is Aramaic, the language spoken by the Jews of that time, it is not written using the Aramaic alphabet. Instead it is written in Egyptian demotic, an ancient cursive script that can properly be called “reformed” Egyptian.<sup>3</sup>

Ranking third in age among known Bible manu-

scripts are the Dead Sea Scrolls. The oldest of these documents, discovered in 1948, is a copy of the book of Exodus (4Q17) written in the middle of the third century B.C. Like the Book of Mormon, the Dead Sea Scrolls were concealed in the earth to come forth at a later time.

Time has a way of vindicating the prophets. Included among the many evidences that in recent decades have come to light in support of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon are archaeological discoveries that have confirmed certain aspects of what the Prophet Joseph Smith said about the physical characteristics of that ancient American record. —Contributed by John Gee and John A. Tvedtnes

### NOTES

1. See Campbell's *Delusions* (1832).
2. The finds were reported by Gabriel Barkay in “The Divine Name Found in Jerusalem,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 9/2 (1983): 14–19; and “Priestly Blessings on Silver Plates” (in Hebrew), *Cathedra* 52 (1989): 46–59; see *Insights* (summer 1986): 1.
3. For a bibliography of the scholarship on Papyrus Amherst 63, see John Gee in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 96–97 n. 147.

### Scripture insight

## The Sermon on the Mount: Restoration of the Higher Law

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus introduced a higher law that had not been in force since the days of Moses. In order to fully understand the sermon, we must begin by examining the law of Moses.

Appearing to Moses in the Sinai wilderness, the Lord said, “When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain” (Exodus 3:12). When the children of Israel had assembled at the base of the mountain, the Lord promised, “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people. . . . And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Exodus 19:5, 6).

In the end, however, only a few of the Israelite leaders were allowed to go atop the mountain to see God (Exodus 24:9–11), and only one tribe, Levi, received the priesthood. The reason for this change

is found in the intervening events. Immediately after the Lord recited the Ten Commandments to all Israel, “all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die” (Exodus 20:18–19).

That report indicates the people's unwillingness to communicate directly with God and their desire to have Moses be their intermediary.<sup>1</sup> By so doing, they rejected the responsibility of being a “kingdom of priests.” Joseph Smith explained that “God cursed the children of Israel because they would not receive the last law from Moses. . . . The Israelites prayed that God would speak to Moses

*continued on page 5*

## The Sermon on the Mount (continued from page 4)

and not to them; in consequence of which he cursed them with a carnal law" (*History of the Church*, 5:555).<sup>2</sup> In so doing, they were rejecting the higher priesthood, which holds the keys of communing directly with God (D&C 107:18–19), and consequently did not become the "kingdom of priests" God intended them to be. The situation is also described in Doctrine and Covenants 84:21–26:

And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the [Melchizedek] priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; for without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live. Now this Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God; but they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence; therefore, the Lord in his wrath, for his anger was kindled against them, swore that they should not enter into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory. Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also; and the lesser priesthood continued, which priesthood holdeth the key of the ministering of angels and the preparatory gospel.

According to Paul, the old law of carnal commandments "was added because of transgressions, till the seed [Christ] should come to whom the promise was made" (Galatians 3:19). The seventh chapter of Hebrews notes that, with the coming of Christ as a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, there was necessarily a change in the law. The prophet Jeremiah recorded the Lord's promise of a "new covenant" that was to replace the covenant made in the days of Moses. This new law would be placed in the people's hearts and they would all have direct access to the Lord, along with forgiveness of sins (Jeremiah 31:31–34).

Hebrews 8:7–13 and 10:16–20 cite the Jeremiah 31 passage as evidence that the covenant of Moses was to be replaced by a higher covenant under Christ. For this reason, the early Christians saw themselves as the chosen of God in the place of Israel, leading Peter to paraphrase the Lord's original promise at Sinai (Exodus 19:6), saying, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people" (1 Peter 2:9).

In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ said that he

was not "come to destroy the law, or the prophets . . . but to fulfil" (Matthew 5:17), and he reiterated the need to keep the commandments (Matthew 5:19–20). He then proceeded to explain the difference between the law of Moses and the higher law that he was establishing. Whereas the law of Moses commanded not to kill (Exodus 20:13), Christ teaches that we should not be angry (Matthew 5:21–22). The law of Moses forbade adultery (Exodus 20:14), but Christ tells us not to lust in our hearts (Matthew 5:27–28).

Thus, while the higher law condemns sinful acts, its real emphasis is on the thoughts that engender those acts. This is what is meant by the law's being written in our hearts instead of on tables of stone, as in the days of Moses (see Jeremiah 31:33; Isaiah 51:7; Proverbs 3:3; Ezekiel 11:19–20; 2 Corinthians 3:3). It may also explain what the Prophet Joseph Smith meant when he said that the Israelites "would not receive the last law from Moses," if he was referring to the last of the Ten Commandments, "Thou shalt not covet" (Exodus 20:17). This was the one commandment for which one could not be punished under the law of Moses, since it would be impossible to find witnesses who could testify about the thoughts and intents of another person. Under the higher law, God judges us not only on the basis of our outward actions and words, but also by taking into account even our thoughts (Mosiah 4:30; Alma 12:14).

—Contributed by John A. Tvedtnes

### NOTES

1. Brigham Young explained the situation thus: "If they had been sanctified and holy, the children of Israel would not have travelled one year with Moses before they would have received their endowments and the Melchisedec Priesthood. But they could not receive them, and never did. Moses left them, and they did not receive the fulness of that Priesthood. After they came to the land of Canaan, they never would have desired a king, had they been holy. The Lord told Moses that he would show himself to the people; but they begged Moses to plead with the Lord not to do so" (*Journal of Discourses*, 6:100).

2. The Bible confirms that the law given to Israel through Moses was a lesser law. Referring to the time of the Egyptian exodus, the Lord told Ezekiel that he had given the Israelites "statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live" (Ezekiel 20:25). Citing Exodus 19:5, which we noted earlier, the Lord informed Jeremiah that the complex sacrifices of the law of Moses had not been part of his original commandment of obedience (Jeremiah 7:22–24).

## Study Guides on New Testament Themes Available

Richard Lloyd Anderson, professor emeritus of church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University, has made available two outstanding course supplements on the New Testament. His expansive knowledge of the New Testament and early Christianity is readily apparent in *Guide to the Life of Christ* and *Guide to Acts and the Apostles' Letters*.

*Guide to the Life of Christ* moves through the Savior's life chronologically and focuses on his central teachings as found in the Gospel accounts. It provides summaries, background material, study questions, and excerpts from other important sources to make study of these four books more meaningful and rewarding.

*Guide to Acts and the Apostles' Letters* begins

where the Gospels leave off. Given perhaps the least attention in Latter-day Saint circles, Acts and the letters contain the beliefs, organization, and message of Christ's original church. This guide focuses on the apostles as teachers of Christ's doctrine and offers the same types of study aids found in *Guide to the Life of Christ*.

These two study guides, originally produced as readings supplemental to Religion 211 and 212 classes at BYU, provide excellent material for any student of the scriptures. Because of their value to New Testament studies, *Guide to the Life of Christ* and *Guide to Acts and the Apostles' Letters* can now be purchased as FARMS Reprint Editions (see the enclosed order form for further information).

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### Media center

## Dead Sea Scrolls Documentary Available on Video

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the status of ongoing scroll research by scholars from Brigham Young University and FARMS were the focus of a one-hour KBYU-TV documentary that premiered on 24 January 1999. Titled *LDS Perspectives on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, the program is available on videocassette from FARMS (see the order form).

Since the initial discovery of the scrolls in 1947, researchers the world over have spent fifty years piecing together tens of thousands of scroll fragments in an effort to understand these ancient religious texts and gain insight into Judaism and Christianity. The fragments represent nearly all of the Hebrew Bible and over eight hundred different works written in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic.

BYU and FARMS became involved in Dead Sea Scrolls research in the early 1990s when BYU professor Truman G. Madsen was invited to join the board of the Dead Sea Scrolls Foundation. This led to an agreement with FARMS to create a CD-ROM collection of the scrolls and, later, to the appointment of several BYU faculty members to the international team of scroll editors.

For the past two years, KBYU-TV has followed the research being done at FARMS and BYU. The resulting documentary, produced by KBYU's Sterling Van Wagenen and directed by Curtis Briggs, is a compelling look at a sensational

discovery that, even after more than a half century, continues to arouse widespread interest.

Although the Dead Sea Scrolls are not yet fully understood, they have shed valuable light on the people who used them some two thousand years ago and have afforded new perspectives on broader concerns such as how the Bible was transmitted to our day and what the Jews believed during the intertestamental period.

BYU academic vice president and former FARMS president Noel B. Reynolds points out that both the Book of Mormon and the Bible mention the coming forth of additional scripture—a promise that Reynolds says “gives Latter-day Saints a keen interest in multiple scripture traditions because of the possible connections that might emerge over time between some of these various sources.”

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### News notes

Increasingly, university classes in American religion are including significant components on Mormonism. Most recently, one non-LDS scholar at Chicago's DePaul University ordered copies of Hugh W. Nibley's *Approaching Zion* for his students to use in studying Mormonism this spring.

## Petra and Herculaneum (continued from page 1)

anticipates three to five months' work in three distinct phases before the database can be presented to the American Center for Oriental Research (ACOR) in Amman: (1) the raw data must be organized into a multivolume CD-ROM set, (2) illegible segments must be digitally enhanced, and (3) images of torn scroll fragments must be digitally "stitched" into an accurate representation of the original documents.

When the database is finished, it will prove a great boon for scholars from the University of Michigan and the Academy of Finland, who have a contract with ACOR and the Jordanian Antiquities Authority to complete translation of the documents by 2003. Although FARMS will have the right to publish the database once the texts are translated, it is not yet clear whether there is sufficient interest in the Petra scrolls among Latter-day Saint scholars to make such publication worthwhile.

FARMS agreed to undertake the Petra project to provide a worthwhile service, to test and improve its application of multispectral imaging technology, to enhance its reputation in the international scholarly arena, and to open the way for other opportunities. An ancient library at Herculaneum has proved to be one such opportunity.

### HERCULANEUM

Located a few miles from Naples, Italy, Herculaneum was obliterated by the same violent

eruption of Mt. Vesuvius that buried Pompeii in A.D. 79. Excavation work at Herculaneum began in 1798 at the library of Philodemus (an Epicurean philosopher), resulting in the discovery of about eighteen hundred scrolls. Written mostly in Greek, the scrolls treat various philosophical topics and date to the third century B.C.

Ironically, effects of the destroying fire preserved the scrolls for future scrutiny. Had they not been carbonized, the scrolls would probably have decayed long ago in the wet climate of southern Europe. Professor Knut Kleve of the University of Norway visits Naples each year to chemically treat the charred scrolls so they can be unrolled. Some two hundred scrolls have not yet been unrolled.

As a result of the work done at Petra, Naples officials have asked CPART to photo-image the Herculaneum scrolls. After meeting with Professor Kleve in Oslo, Norway, Steven Booras will go to Naples in February to assess the project. The FARMS board will use his report to determine whether CPART should become involved.

The Herculaneum project hits a little closer to home for FARMS than does the Petra project because, once translated, the Herculaneum scrolls will provide insights into the cultural climate of Greco-Roman ideologies and philosophy prevalent at the time of the Savior, Paul, and the early Christian church.

## Reprint Examines Chiasmus (continued from page 1)

have found it "a much needed and very welcome volume" (Stanislav Segert, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 46 [1984]), "a good collection of some important chiastic passages" (James H. Charlesworth, *Religious Studies Review* 8/3 [1982]), and "a reference work not only to be read, but to which the scholar will want to return frequently. . . . It is highly recommended" (John S. Kselman, *Dialogue* 17/4 [1984]).

In addition to editing the volume, Welch authored four chapters. His first chapter, "Chiasmus in Ugaritic," published originally in *Ugaritforschungen*, examines the sophisticated character of chiasms in Ugaritic literature and shows how this

literary tradition influenced the poetic composition of the Old Testament. In "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," Welch discusses the most prominent chiastic arrangements in that scriptural record, pointing out that the "design and depth of the Book of Mormon often come to light only when the book is studied with chiastic principles in mind." A third chapter, "Chiasmus in the New Testament," displays the basic chiastic outlines of various New Testament books and their central passages, and Welch explains how this patterning supplies often-overlooked elements of order and meaning. "Chiasmus in Ancient Greek and Latin

*continued on page 8*



## Reprint Examines Chiasmus

(continued from page 7)

Literatures," Welch's fourth study in the book, discusses how several classical writers, beginning with Homer, used chiasmus to organize and ornament their writings.

In "Chiasm in Sumerian-Akkadian," Robert F. Smith offers a preliminary survey of evidence for chiasms of varying lengths in late Sumerian and Akkadian literary texts, concluding that essential chiastic forms were known and used by ancient Mesopotamian authors. Smith also compiled the book's massive index of chiastic structures in numerous bodies of literature.

"Chiasmus in Hebrew Biblical Narrative" presents Israeli scholar Yehuda T. Radday's evidence that writers of the Hebrew Bible often structured their texts chiastically to signal key ideas and narrative turning points. Radday also notes that the greater the extent of chiasmus in a text, the older the text usually is. Another biblical scholar, Wilfred G. E. Watson, in "Chiastic Patterns in Biblical Hebrew Poetry," reviews the status of what is known about chiasmus in ancient Hebrew poetry. In this pioneering work, which lays the foundation for Watson's more recent publications, he defines key terms, offers detailed classifications, and discusses the function and value of chiasmus as a poetic device.

In "Structure and Chiasm in Aramaic Contracts and Letters," Bezalel Porten, a specialist in ancient Aramaic literature at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, describes the organization and chiastic features of sixteen Aramaic documents dealing with land ownership and other matters. He concludes that able scribes used chiasmus and other stylistic devices to lend desired structure and balance to their texts. Jonah Fraenkel, another Israeli scholar of Hebrew and Aramaic literature, discusses chiasmus in several Talmudic narratives and argues that their authors used chiasmus as an artistic and rhetorical tool to engage their audience and impress upon them a religious or moral message.

This volume also includes a preface by renowned biblical scholar David Noel Freedman, an introduction by John Welch, and a bibliography (which has been updated to include works since 1980 in *Chiasmus Bibliography*; see related story on page 3).

In the introduction, which Freedman calls "indispensable," Welch states that chiasmus has become "one of the most salient developments in the study of ancient literature over the past few decades." Although written over twenty years ago, *Chiasmus in Antiquity* is still a helpful resource for serious students and scholars alike, and it promises to enrich one's knowledge of this subtle poetic form whose important function in ancient literature has often been overlooked.

## INSIGHTS

A WINDOW ON THE ANCIENT WORLD

Published by the  
**Foundation for  
Ancient Research  
and Mormon Studies**

P.O. Box 7113, University Station  
Provo, Utah 84602  
1-800-327-6715

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### The Purpose of FARMS

The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) encourages and supports research about the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ and other ancient scriptures. It also works to preserve ancient religious documents.

FARMS is a nonprofit educational foundation affiliated with Brigham Young University. Its main research interests include ancient history, language, literature, culture, geography, politics, and law relevant to the scriptures. Although such subjects are of secondary importance when compared with the spiritual and eternal messages of the scriptures, solid research and academic perspectives alone can supply certain kinds of useful information, even if only tentatively, concerning many significant and interesting questions about the scriptures.

The Foundation works to make interim and final reports about this research available widely, promptly, and economically. These publications are peer reviewed to ensure scholarly standards are met. The proceeds from the sale of these publications, including most royalties, are used to support further research and publications on the scriptures. As a service to teachers and students of the scriptures, research results are distributed in both scholarly and popular formats.

It is hoped that this information will help all interested people to "come unto Christ" (Jacob 1:7) and to understand and take more seriously these ancient witnesses of the atonement of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.