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Insights

A WINDOW ON THE ANCIENT WORLD

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Institute Addresses BYU President's Leadership Council

On 19 March 2004, at the invitation of Brigham Young University president Cecil O. Samuelson, Institute executive director Noel B. Reynolds led some 200 members of the President's Leadership Council and university deans and directors through an overview of the work of FARMS and the Institute. The purpose of the two-hour presentation was to reprise the Institute's activities that are having a positive impact on the international academic scene and on other fronts in ways that add luster to the university.

In introductory remarks, Reynolds noted that more than 300 scholars (over half of them BYU faculty and staff) have contributed to Institute publications, most of which have been FARMS publications. He went on to explain the Institute's structure and three principal aims: academic research on Restoration scripture, scholarly efforts focused on other religious traditions, and leadership in the interpretation of Latter-day Saint scriptures.

Later in the presentation, Reynolds focused on the work of FARMS. He noted recent discoveries that have shed light on Lehi's probable route from Jerusalem to the embarkation point at Bountiful. Aided by photographs and maps, he traced that route with reference to the scripture account, pointing out notable landmarks along the way such as a "continually running" river and a "firm and . . . immovable valley" consistent with Nephi's descriptions in 1 Nephi 2:6–10. The altars at Nihm (Nehem) confirm the existence of an ancient locale corresponding to Book of Mormon Nahom (see 1 Nephi 16:34). Reynolds ended his narrative at Wadi Sayq, an oasis along the southern coast of Oman that fits Nephi's description of Bountiful. He showed photographs of the site and described the remains of an ancient building (a small temple?) the likes of which Omani archaeologists had never seen before. (For full

treatments of this research, see *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7/1 [1998]: 4–21; 8/1 [1999]: 54–63; 10/2 [2001]: 56–61.)

Turning to the New World, Reynolds affirmed that although researchers are not finding definitively Nephite cities in Mesoamerica, they are finding Mesoamerica in the Book of Mormon. The illustrations he used depicted elements of ancient Mesoamerican kingship, imagery, demographics, and construction that correspond to descriptions in the Book of Mormon.

Daniel C. Peterson, director of the Middle Eastern Texts Initiative, noted that METI's nine dual-language texts have been making significant friends for BYU and the church in the Islamic world.

Celebrated by prominent Middle Eastern diplomats, these volumes have involved scholars from institutions all over the world and are broadening BYU's academic reputation. One translation series, *The Medical Works of Moses Maimonides*,

is acclaimed by both Jews and Muslims, bridging, as Maimonides did, both worlds. And the Eastern Christian Texts series focuses on Eastern Christianity, expanding the reach of these BYU Press publications to Christians, Muslims, and Jews.

Pursuing a similar theme, Kristian Heal, director of the Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts, reviewed the center's

in this issue

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Of Punctuation and Parentage

As is well known, when the words of the Book of Mormon were translated “by the gift and power of God,” there was no punctuation at all in the early manuscripts, and that is the way the translated text was delivered to E. B. Grandin’s print shop. Typesetter John Gilbert reported that when he sat down to prepare the text for publication, “every chapter . . . was one solid paragraph, without a punctuation mark, from beginning to end.”¹ So he added punctuation and paragraphing as he went along. He did a good job, especially for someone reading the book for the first time, but there are a few sentences that could have been punctuated in more than one way, with slightly different results. Since the punctuation of the Book of Mormon does not enjoy the same revealed status as the words themselves, it may be worth considering some of the alternatives.

For instance, Alma 54:23–24 currently reads as follows:

I am Ammoron, and a descendant of Zoram, whom your fathers pressed and brought out of Jerusalem. And behold now, I am a bold Lamanite; behold, this war . . .

The word *behold* is a common interjection in the Book of Mormon that means something like “pay attention to what follows,” and *behold now* may simply be an intensification of that idea (as

in Helaman 7:29). But what if we shifted the comma after *now* back one word?

I am Ammoron, and a descendant of Zoram, whom your fathers pressed and brought out of Jerusalem. And behold, now I am a bold Lamanite; behold, this war . . .

It may be preferable to apply the *now* to what follows because Ammoron’s point is that once he was a Zoramite (allied with the Nephites) but now he is a Lamanite. In fact, he is now the king of the Lamanites (so the word *behold* may even be taken in the unusual sense of “look at me!”). This reading makes sense in the context of the passage as well: Ammoron is closing a belligerent letter to Moroni with a strong rejection of Nephite culture and everything associated with it. (Incidentally, the original manuscript has a slightly different wording here that seems to support the alternative punctuation: “And behold I am now a bold Lamanite . . .”)

Another example of punctuation affecting meaning is the familiar confession of faith by Helaman’s 2,000 stripling warriors in Alma 56:48:

And they rehearsed unto me the words of their mothers, saying: We do not doubt our mothers knew it.

As the verse now stands, it appears that the young men are express-

ing confidence in their mothers’ testimonies: “We do not doubt [that] our mothers knew it.” But with a break in the middle—either a semicolon or a period—the meaning changes slightly: “We do not doubt; our mothers knew it,” which to me implies something along the lines of “We do not doubt, because our mothers knew it.” Or even, “We do not doubt. After all, our mothers knew it.” Once again, the amended punctuation fits the context better—the previous verse makes it clear that God’s promise of deliverance depended on the faith of the young men themselves rather than on the belief of their mothers. And indeed, in the next chapter Helaman credits their miraculous preservation to their own lack of doubts (Alma 57:21, 26–27).

The two examples above make for relatively minor changes in meaning, but there is at least one verse where alternative punctuation takes us into the world of the ancient Hebrews. In the current version of 2 Nephi 4:3, Nephi begins his account of Lehi’s last words and blessings as follows:

Wherefore, after my father had made an end of speaking concerning the prophecies of Joseph, he called the children of Laman, his sons, and his daughters, and said unto them . . .

The word *called* here means “summoned,” but with the dele-

tion of a couple of commas, the scene shifts dramatically:

Wherefore, after my father had made an end of speaking concerning the prophecies of Joseph, he called the children of Laman his sons and his daughters, and said unto them . . .

In this reading, when Lehi “called the children of Laman his sons and his daughters,” he was actually adopting his grandchildren as his own children. This may seem counterintuitive, but it makes sense of the words that follow in that verse (“Behold, my sons, and my daughters, who are the sons and the daughters of my first-born”) as well as in verse 5, where he definitely refers to his grandchildren as his own sons and daughters.

Even more tellingly, Lehi’s actions echo those of the patriarch Jacob, who in a similar situation—giving last blessings and dividing territory—adopted the sons of his son Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) and made them independent tribes (see Genesis 48:1–6). This interpretation is further supported by the fact that Lehi has just spoken at length in chapter 3 about Joseph and his descendants, and he himself comes from the tribe of Manasseh (Alma 10:3); he is certainly aware of the precedent. (Note that Lehi similarly adopts the children of Lemuel in 2 Nephi 4:8–9.)²


As with other passages in the Bible, Genesis 48 has been thoroughly analyzed by generations of scholars. Adoption was rare in ancient Israel and is not mentioned in the Mosaic law, but this instance seems fairly straightforward. Jacob says to his son Joseph:

And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance. (Genesis 48:5–6)

In fact, the placing of the children on Jacob’s lap, mentioned in verse 12 (“And Joseph brought them out from between his [Jacob’s] knees”), is often regarded as a part of an ancient adoption ceremony (see also Genesis 30:3).³ And Jacob specifically mentions that his actions are the result of a revelation about his descendants in the land of promise.

As he came to the end of his life, Lehi, like Jacob, tried to prepare his family for a future in a new land. In particular, he was concerned about the children of his two oldest sons, Laman and Lemuel, who had already shown signs of rebellion. He adopted these grandchildren in an effort to tie them more closely to himself and to the covenant given by the Lord (in 2 Nephi 4:4 he reminds them of the terms of that covenant: “Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land”)

This adoption was a bold move, but it was not entirely new. It was part of the family history of a man who, after God called him to relive sacred history by traveling to a promised land, named his next two sons Jacob and Joseph.

(This was something of a departure in his family; none of the four older boys were named after patriarchs.) With the deletion of a few commas, the Hebrew roots of Lehi’s last words come more clearly into focus. How was John Gilbert to know? 

By Grant Hardy

Notes

1. Gilbert’s entire memorandum that contains this statement (dated 8 September 1892) is reproduced in Royal Skousen, “John Gilbert’s 1892 Account of the 1830 Printing of the Book of Mormon,” in *The Disciple as Witness: Essays on Latter-day Saint History and Doctrine in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks, Donald W. Parry, and Andrew H. Hedges (2000). The statement is on page 402 (p. 3 of Gilbert’s memorandum); capitalization has been normalized.
2. Royal Skousen suggests that the wording in 2 Nephi 4:8 (“he caused the sons and daughters of Lemuel to be brought before him”) is equivalent to the wording in verse 3 (“he called the children of Laman”). He explains that the two passages are part of a narrative sequence in which calling for (summoning) the children makes sense, since “it appears that [Lehi] had all of his immediate family around him, but the children of his two sons had to be called.” Nevertheless, Skousen agrees that “obviously, Lehi treats these grandchildren as his children—he calls both groups ‘my sons and my daughters.’ It is as if he has given up on Laman and Lemuel; he never directly addresses them as individuals” (private communication, 5 Jan. 2004).
3. For the Near Eastern background of this practice, see “Adoption” in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. John W. Welch has written of the cultural and legal issues surrounding 2 Nephi 1–4 (though without this particular interpretation). See his “Lehi’s Last Will and Testament: A Legal Approach,” in *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, the Doctrinal Structure*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (1989), 61–82.

FARMS Symposium Opens Window on Lehi's World

FARMS's publication earlier this year of *Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem* was a significant milestone in Book of Mormon studies. The prodigious effort marshaled the research talents of 19 BYU scholars in a multidisciplinary reconstruction of Lehi's Old World environment. Those who acquaint themselves with this groundbreaking research will read 1 Nephi with new eyes—with a greater awareness of the sociocultural context and lifeways of Lehi's world.

A FARMS Book of Mormon Symposium held at BYU on 21 February 2004 provided further opportunity to publicize this new research. The half-day event featuring presentations by several contributing scholars and excellent visual aids stirred the interest of a spectrum of people eager to add a new dimension to their understanding and appreciation of the Book of Mormon.

The guiding question behind both the book and the symposium was, How can visualizing life in Lehi's Jerusalem help us to better understand the opening chapters of the Book of Mormon?

As if in answer to that question, John W. Welch, one of the editors of *Glimpses*, began the first session with a tantalizing overview titled "Culturegram: Jerusalem 600 BC." In fitting tour guide persona, he mapped the terrain of the upcoming presentations and highlighted salient research findings, raising expectations for the day's proceedings and emphasizing how "seeing things in light of Lehi's day makes the scriptural account vivid. We learn a lot by being on location." Underscoring the importance of this new research, Welch remarked, "Nibley brought us Lehi in the desert. *Glimpses* brings us Lehi in the city."

For example, Jerusalem back then was a small city just below the Temple Mount with a population small enough (about 25,000) to fit in BYU's Marriott Center. The book of prophecy given to Lehi was likely a scroll since there were no bound books at the time. Welch also touched on the political mood, domestic life, olive culture, temple ritual, Sabbath observance, legal trials (held at the

town gates), and capital offenses such as striking a parent and being a false prophet—the latter evidencing Lehi's courage as a true prophet preaching among the wicked in Jerusalem.

The next two presentations took up archaeological issues. Jeffrey R. Chadwick, an associate professor of church history and doctrine who has done extensive archaeological work in Israel, discussed the 1 Nephi references to Lehi's "house at Jerusalem" (1:7) and his "land of inheritance" (2:4), arguing that the two were different locations (the house being in the city and the ancestral land lying some 21 miles north of Jerusalem, in the territory of Manasseh). He suggested that Lehi's ancestors fled their Manasseh homeland around 724 BC to escape the Assyrian onslaught and eventually settled in Jerusalem, perhaps in what was known as the Mishneh quarter of Jerusalem, where refugees avoided deportation to Assyria.

Dana M. Pike, a professor of ancient scripture, discussed Hebrew inscriptions dating to Lehi's time. He discussed several artifacts, such as the Ketef Hinnom amulets (two small rolls of silver foil with religious inscriptions) and the approximately 700 seals and bullae (seal impressions) found to date, attesting to an extensive practice of written communication. He listed many sociocultural and religious implications of the artifacts and concluded that they augment the depictions in the Bible and 1 Nephi.

Glimpses coeditor Jo Ann H. Seely, an instructor in ancient scripture, began the next session with a slide presentation covering everything from the Temple of Solomon, tomb paintings, stone altars, and Bedouin tents to Wadi Sayq (a site on the Omani coast that fits Nephi's description of Old World Bountiful) and the recently discovered gold book from Bulgaria that dates to 600 BC (see *Insights*, vol. 23, no. 5, 2003, for a report).


Archaeobotanist Terry B. Ball, an associate dean of Religious Education, and botany professor Wilford M. Hess spoke via videotape on Book of Mormon cereal grains (e.g., wheat, corn, and barley; see Mosiah 9:9) and textiles (e.g., linen and silk), flesh-

ing out the agricultural scene in the New World. Although there is no empirical evidence for wheat in pre-Columbian America, Ball said, it could have been cultivated there anciently but later disappeared if the intensive cultivation it requires was disrupted. Hess discussed maize, neas and sheum (perhaps grains but possibly tuber crops), and grape and olive cultivation. Ball concluded that corn, neas, and sheum were most likely native crops new to Lehi's people, who probably brought other crops with them to the New World and successfully cultivated them.

David R. Seely, a coeditor of *Glimpses* and a professor of ancient scripture, pointed out how knowing the religious background of the ancient Israelites can lead to better appreciation of the three purposes of the Book of Mormon stated on its title page ("to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers," "that they may know the covenants of the Lord," and to bring all to a knowledge that "Jesus is the Christ"). For example, in their portrayal of sacred history, the Bible and Book of Mormon highlight the long relationship of God with his children. That relationship is defined by covenant, regularly taught with symbols from the temple, and reconfirmed through covenant renewal. Throughout the law of Moses, many different symbols taught the ancients (and

teach moderns too) about the nature and reality of the coming of the Messiah in Jesus Christ.

S. Kent Brown, the director of Ancient Studies, posed the question, Why did Lehi's party flee southeast into Arabia rather than southwest into Egypt, known as a land of refuge since Abraham's time? In answer, he identified routes leading from Jerusalem to Egypt and Arabia and elaborated on the commercial and military contacts that Jerusalem enjoyed with Arabia. One early contact was the Queen of Sheba, from whose powerful kingdom incense, gold, rams, spices, and precious stones eventually came to the temple at Jerusalem. Brown concluded that Lehi must have received a directive from the Lord to flee into Arabia since Egypt was the usual destination for refugees. Yet Lehi probably knew something of the routes to Arabia, and his party would not have been "completely uncomfortable" traveling there given the commercial and military contacts and infrastructure along the way.

For more information on the book *Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem*, see "New Book Offers Views of Jerusalem as Lehi Knew It" (*Insights*, vol. 23, no. 6, 2003). To order a copy of the book, use the enclosed mail-order form or visit the FARMS section (under "BYU Publications") of byubookstore.com. 

Latest *Occasional Papers* Treats Old Testament Themes

In "Who Controls the Water? Yahweh vs. Baal," the lead article in *Occasional Papers* 4, Fred E. Woods presents a fascinating discussion of the polemical usage of water and storm language in the Deuteronomistic History (the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings). As Woods notes, the most active deity at the Canaanite city of Ugarit (located in present-day Syria near the Mediterranean coast) is Baal, the god of water and storm. The strong denunciation of Baal in the Old Testament indicates that the Baal cult had deeply penetrated Israelite culture. And while scholars have long been aware of

the explicit warnings against worshipping Baal, the metaphorical arguments against Baal have gone virtually unnoticed.

Scholars generally agree that the key to understanding the Canaanite religion of Baalism is the Ugaritic Texts, clay tablets that were discovered in Syria in 1929 and deciphered in 1930. With the discovery of these tablets, a so-called Canaanite bible emerged, with frequent references to Baal, a god portrayed with "his weapon, the lightning, and his voice, the thunder." As the Israelites left the desert and entered Canaan (the long, narrow strip of land that

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lay between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea), they entered a lavish agricultural area unknown to them. When they encountered an unpredictable climate and their faith was tried, some may have asked their Canaanite neighbors something like, “What do you do to ensure the fertility of the land?” This seems to have led many Israelites into false worship, which culminated in their embracing Baalism. This prompted the Deuteronomic editors to attempt to resuscitate the covenant people by reminding them that Yahweh and not Baal controlled all aspects of water and storm, and thus life.

This attack against Baalism was both polemical—meaning that it represented an aggressive refutation of the opinions of others—and literary—meaning that it used metaphorical rather than literal language. So it is not surprising that the showdown on Mount Carmel between Elijah and the prophets of Baal contains the most obvious climax of water and storm polemics.

When all Israel was gathered to Mount Carmel (perhaps the most neutral position for an encounter between the gods of Canaan and Israel), Elijah admonished them: “If Yahweh is God, follow him; and if Baal, follow him!” (1 Kings 18:21; translation by Fred Woods). The prophets of Baal tried in vain to get their god to consume a sacrificial bull with

fire. Elijah then poured an abundance of water in the trench and upon the altar and called upon his God, who consumed the sacrifice and the water with fire (probably lightning). The people standing by cried, “Yahweh, he is the God” (1 Kings 18:39). Soon there followed an abundance of rain. Israel was thus powerfully reminded of Yahweh’s divine power and of his ability to provide for and protect his covenant people on condition of their obedience to the stipulations of his divine laws.

The two other articles in this issue of *Occasional Papers* also deal with Old Testament themes. “Justice and Mercy in the Book of Deuteronomy (Is There Mercy in the Old Testament?),” by Jared Ludlow, uncovers examples of God’s mercy within the book of Deuteronomy to show how both the law of justice and the law of mercy played vital roles in exhorting the covenant Israelites to righteousness. “Garment of Joseph: An Update,” by Brian Hauglid, examines a short passage from the writings of a 10th-century Arabic scholar about the garment of Joseph and argues that Hugh Nibley’s earlier translation of this passage may have been inaccurate.

To purchase a copy of *Occasional Papers 4*, use the enclosed mail-order form or visit the FARMS section (under “BYU Publications”) of byubookstore.com. 

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use of cutting-edge technology to image ancient manuscripts in order to preserve their contents, improve their legibility, and make them available for study. The Institute’s Dead Sea Scrolls CD-ROM database, featuring BYU’s WordCruncher software, is now the gateway to scrolls research. Other imaging projects include the Maya murals in Bonampak, Mexico; carbonized manuscripts from ancient Petra (near Amman, Jordan) and Herculaneum (near Naples, Italy), the latter the subject of the *Out of the Ashes* PBS television program; and ancient Syriac texts from the Vatican Apostolic Library’s vast archives.

Back in the Americas, the Institute has been asked to digitally image the ancient Maya religious text known as the Popol Vuh. It is also working with the Smithsonian Institution’s Freer Gallery on digitally imaging the most important New Testament text in America—the Codex Washingtonianus, or the Freer Manuscript of the Gospels, dating to the fourth or fifth century AD.

Peterson discussed the recent achievements of FARMS research. He noted that recent issues of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* and the *FARMS Review* feature articles (some are posted on lds.org) by experts who refute charges

that DNA science disproves the Book of Mormon. He highlighted other groundbreaking research, such as Royal Skousen's work on the manuscripts of the Book of Mormon that, among other important findings, has uncovered direct translations of Hebraic structures that were edited because they do not work in English; and John Gee's work on the Joseph Smith papyri that details the origin and extent of the papyri, showing that what is now extant is a small percentage of what Joseph had to work with.

President Samuelson wrapped up the presentation with a strong endorsement of the work of the Institute and its role in bringing friends to BYU.

This report is a sampling of the extensive research that FARMS is conducting, much of which can be read about on the newly revamped FARMS Web site. Also, in the next newsletter, read highlights of FARMS's achievements in scripture research during its first 25 years. 📖

Nibley Fellowship Program

Each year at about this time we remind graduate students about the Nibley Fellowship Program and its application deadline. Named in honor of Hugh Nibley, this program provides financial aid to students enrolled in accredited PhD programs in areas of study directly related to the work and mission of the Institute, particularly work done under the name of FARMS—studies of the Book of Mormon, the Book of Abraham, the Old and New Testaments, early Christianity, ancient temples, and related subjects. Applicants cannot be employed at the Institute or be related to an Institute employee.

Those interested in applying for the first time or who wish to renew their fellowships for the 2004/2005 academic year must do so by **30 June 2004**. To obtain guidelines and an application form, contact M. Gerald Bradford, Institute for the Study and Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts, Brigham Young University, PO Box 7113, Provo, UT 84602 (phone: 801-422-8619; e-mail: bradfordmg@aol.com).

The Institute awarded Nibley Fellowships to 16 graduate students for the 2003/2004 academic year: **Sharon Mar Adams**, Religious Thought, University of Denver; **Stephen**

M. Bay, New Testament, Early Christianity, University of Illinois at Urbana—Champaign; **Daniel Belnap**, Northwest Semitics, University of Chicago; **Lincoln H. Blumell**, New Testament, Early Christianity, University of Calgary; **David Calabro**, Hebrew Bible, Ancient Near East, University of Chicago; **Cory Daniel Crawford**, Hebrew Bible, Preexilic History, Harvard University; **Matthew J. Grey**, Archaeology, History of Antiquity, Andrews University; **Taylor Halverson**, Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity, Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible among Second Temple Groups, Indiana University; **Ronan James Head**, Assyriology, Johns Hopkins University; **Joseph Ponczoch**, Classics, Brigham Young University; **Melissa Proctor**, Ancient Judaism, Contemporary Religious Thought, Brown University; **Aaron Pace Schade**, Northwest Semitic Epigraphy, University of Toronto; **Brent James Schmidt**, Early Christianity, Patristics, New Testament, University of Colorado at Boulder; **Thomas Benjamin Spackman**, Comparative Semitics, Arabic, Hebrew Bible, University of Chicago; **Valerie Triplet-Hitoto**, Second Temple Judaism (Bible, Dead Sea Scrolls, Apocrypha), École pratique des hautes études, La Sorbonne, Paris; **Mark Alan Wright**, Mesoamerica, Maya Religion and Epigraphy, University of California, Riverside. 📖

BYU and Institute Projects Showcased at AAR/SBL Meetings in Provo

BYU and Institute scholars gave presentations at all five sessions of the Rocky Mountain–Great Plains regional meeting of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature on 26–27 March 2004. Because several sessions took place on the BYU campus for the first time, and because one-third of the 51 presenters were BYU-affiliated scholars (8 of them closely associated with the Institute), the event was an ideal opportunity for the university to showcase its contributions to religious scholarship.

According to Thomas Wayment, a BYU assistant professor of ancient scripture who chaired the event, many AAR/SBL officers at the national level (such as the current president and director of SBL) come from the Rocky Mountain–Great Plains region. “In this regard, it was an important move on our part to bring the regional meeting here—so that leading scholars from around the nation could have the opportunity to see the type of work that is going on here at BYU,” Wayment said. “To say it mildly, they were very impressed with what is being done here on campus.”

The Institute’s work of digitally imaging ancient manuscripts was one of two BYU projects that caught the attention of participants. “One attendee (a national officer) was so impressed that she promised to promote the work of BYU at the national level,” said Wayment, who added that the informative presentation further solidified BYU’s already-strong position in that field. The other project that attracted attention was the Joseph Smith Papers Project of the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History. This research intrigued non–Latter-day Saint scholars in attendance because of the potential they see in it for “affecting scholarship on Mormons and Mormonism in general,” Wayment said.

Brief reports of the presentations by BYU scholars and other specialists working on Institute-sponsored projects follow. Titles of

presentations appear in quotation marks, and the order of the reports is chronological.

- *Daniel C. Peterson, professor of Islamic studies and Arabic; topic: “Yahyā ibn ‘Adī and The Reformation of Morals.”* Yahyā, a 10th-century Arab Christian author, discusses in his book (published in English translation in 2002 in BYU’s Eastern Christian Texts series) specific social virtues and vices and offers sage practical advice on how to cultivate moral perfection. He echoes earlier Hellenistic notions of the philosophical or reasonable way of life, setting forth a nondenominational or ecumenical view of human virtue. Presumably, Yahyā hoped to appeal to both Christians and Muslims in the imperial capital of Baghdad where he taught and worked, and found in Hellenistic thinking possible common ground for ethics in a religiously divided society.

- *Brian M. Hauglid, assistant professor of ancient scripture, co-principal investigator with John Gee on FARMS’s Book of Abraham Research and Publication Project; topic: “The Biblical Muhammad and the Islamic Abraham.”* Muslims in the 9th through 11th centuries did a two-fold (overlapping) creative process of Islamization of early texts. One creative process composed the biography of Muhammad in such a way that it biblicalized his life story, placing him within the context of biblical prophets. Examples of biblical themes include his birth and childhood, his call and preaching, the persecution he endured, and his eventual triumph in Mecca. Another creative process rewrote the stories of biblical prophets (Abraham was Hauglid’s focus) in order to support the Islamic message (monotheism vs. idolatry). In both senses, Muhammad, the Qur’an, and the rise of Islam reinforce the conception of Islam as the rightful successor to Judaism and Christianity.

- *Steven W. Booras, Institute technical operations manager; Roger T. Macfarlane, associate professor, chair of the Department of Humanities,*

Classics, and Comparative Literature; and Kristian Heal, director of CPART; topic: "At the Nexus of Technology and Scholarship: How Technology Is Changing the Way We Can Work." The Institute is succeeding in its efforts to bring scholars in closer contact with manuscript resources for the study of the ancient world. One example is the Dead Sea Scrolls database, which allows scholars to search, for example, for technical terms and to verify the standard transcription of the scrolls by checking photographs directly. Another example is the Institute's forthcoming copublication of a DVD containing complete electronic facsimiles of 33 Syriac manuscripts totaling more than 14,000 pages of text. (Syriac was the Aramaic dialect spoken by Christians in the Middle East before the rise of Islam.) This publication is the result of a joint BYU–Vatican Apostolic Library initiative to facilitate greater access to the Library's considerable manuscript treasures.

- *John Gee, William "Bill" Gay Assistant Research Professor of Egyptology; topic: "Initiation and the Egyptian Temple."* The daily temple liturgy from Karnak, Egypt, distinguishes between rituals that can be performed by a priest (wab) and others that must be performed by a prophet (Hm-nTr). The distinction demarcates which areas of the temple may be entered by which grade of priest. Records of initiation from the same time and place and whose phraseology interlocks with the temple liturgy and with passages in the Book of the Dead relating to initiation enable scholars to reconstruct something of the temple initiation and its practical importance to everyday life in the temple.

- *John A. Tvedtnes, senior resident scholar; topic: "The Reforms of Tiglath-Pileser III and Their Influence on Ancient Israel."* In 737 BC, the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III, seeking to strengthen his growing empire, initiated a series of reforms that have proved to be enduring. These included creating a standing army, placing Assyrian officials in capital cities, establishing a postal and spy network, bringing royal offspring of vassal kings to the Assyrian

capital for enculturation, replacing deceased vassal kings with loyal princes, and sending prisoners of war to settle distant lands, thus breaking their ties with their homeland and the local deities. Tiglath-pileser's reforms remained in place with his successors and with the kingdoms of Babylon and Persia that came to rule the region after the Assyrians. Thus we find the Babylonians taking Jewish kings and princes as hostages (e.g., Daniel and his friends) and replacing Jewish kings at will. People from Israel and Judah were deported to other parts of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires, leading to the Diaspora. The taking of hostages still occurs in the Middle East, and Tiglath-pileser's standing army, postal system, and spy network remain part of modern civilization.

- *John W. Welch, Robert K. Thomas Professor of Law; topic: "The Bible in American Law."* For centuries, the Bible was considered an integral part of the law, and therefore its foundational influence was systemic and organic. To a degree that may be surprising to some people, many biblical concepts concerning law, ethics, civil liberties, judicial procedures, government, and society continue to provide significant ingredients in the American images of justice, mercy, rights, duties, and the common law. For example, the right against self-incrimination found in the Fifth Amendment grew out of Roman, Canon, and Jewish law, but William Tyndale can be credited for launching its adoption into English law. His English translation of the Bible (1525) and exposition on "swear not" in Matthew 5–7 (1530) boldly asserted that scripture rejects the idea of compelling a person to bear witness against himself. The case of the adulteress in John 8 was also influential in showing that Jesus did not require her to testify for or against herself. From such developments, the right against self-incrimination found its way into the American Constitution. Biblical provisions do not, and in many cases should not, control American law, but neither

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can nor should they be eliminated from the realities of American law.

Besides turning a spotlight on religious studies at BYU and providing faculty and Institute scholars with opportunities to develop professional contacts and keep abreast of research in their fields, the regional meeting may yet yield more tangible benefits. "One of the nice things about the regional meetings is that they are small enough to encourage discussions after the presentations," Wayment said. "As a result, several publication opportunities were made available to BYU faculty who presented at the meeting." ■

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant, edited by John Gee and Brian Hauglid, is the third volume in the Book of Abraham Series. It includes papers from a FARMS-sponsored conference on the Book of Abraham and covers such topics as Abraham's vision of the heavens, commonalities between the Book of Abraham and noncanonical ancient texts, and the significance of the Abrahamic covenant. Available summer 2004.

Theodore Abu Qurrah, translated and introduced by John C. Lamoreaux of Southern Methodist University, includes first-ever English translations of most of Theodore Abu Qurrah's writings, which treat such issues as the characteristics of true religion and the nature of free will. Abu Qurrah (fl. AD 810), the bishop of Harran (in modern-day southeast Turkey), was one of the first Christians to write in Arabic and to mount a sustained theological defense of Christianity against Islam. Available fall 2004.

The FARMS Review (vol. 16, no. 1), edited by Daniel C. Peterson, features a look at the mention of secret combinations in legal materials from the early 19th century and a look at trends in Book of Mormon apologetics. Other articles review books on the Mountain Meadows Massacre, violent fundamentalism, baptism for the dead, and Thomas S. Ferguson's search for archaeological evidence supporting the Book of Mormon. Available summer 2004.

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Primary research interests at FARMS include the history, language, literature, culture, geography, politics, and law relevant to ancient scripture. Although such subjects are of secondary importance when compared with the spiritual and eternal messages of scripture, solid research and academic perspectives can supply certain kinds of useful information, even if only tentatively, concerning many significant and interesting questions about scripture.

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