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



INSIGHTS

The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

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Volume 27
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President Samuelson Remembers Elder Maxwell in Institute Lecture



Recalling how his longtime friend and mentor inspired others without preaching or condemning, President Cecil O. Samuelson shared memories of Elder Neal A. Maxwell at a lecture on March 23, 2007. The president of Brigham Young University and a member

of the First Quorum of the Seventy, President Samuelson spoke at the inaugural annual lecture of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship.

Members of Elder Maxwell's family, including his widow, Sister Colleen Maxwell, were among the hundreds who gathered on the BYU campus to hear President Samuelson speak. Noting the importance of transmitting to future generations of students and scholars "the touch and feel of the man Neal Maxwell," President Samuelson related several first-hand experiences that had enriched his life and the lives of others.

"I felt like I knew Neal Maxwell for many years before he really knew me," said President Samuelson. When he was about 10 years old, President Samuelson's mother worked with Elder Maxwell's mother in their stake Primary. Later, when President Samuelson was a student at the University of Utah, he recalled that "many of my friends knew Neal Maxwell personally, and he was greatly admired as a superb teacher, an aggressive basketball player with very sharp elbows, and a true friend to many students."

By the 1980s, President Samuelson enjoyed increasing opportunities to be with Elder Maxwell. Frequently, several friends gathered at Elder Maxwell's office for a sack lunch and discussion. "Rather than talk, Elder Maxwell asked questions that involved everyone. It was clear that he expected us to ponder the future of the kingdom [of God]. 'What do you feel will be the greatest opportunities

or challenges the Church will face in the next 20 years?' he would ask."

On one church assignment, Elder Maxwell was experiencing serious back pain, as he did from time to time. "No one would have known about this except for the small cushion he used to get through long meetings and plane trips." When President Samuelson herniated a disk in his own lower back helping a fellow passenger with luggage, Elder Maxwell was especially solicitous. "At a meeting the next day I thought I had masked my discomfort well when Elder Maxwell handed me his cushion and said, 'You need this more than I do.' And he would not take no for an answer." This experience was typical of Elder Maxwell's continual thoughtfulness for others.

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Institute Supports Graduates and Undergraduates

The Maxwell Institute continues to encourage and support the work of graduate and undergraduate students through two funds.

Nibley Fellowship Program

Each year at this time we remind graduate students about the Nibley Fellowship Program and its application deadline. Named in honor of the late eminent Latter-day Saint scholar 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 Maxwell Institute, particularly work done under the auspices of one department of the Institute, the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, such as 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.

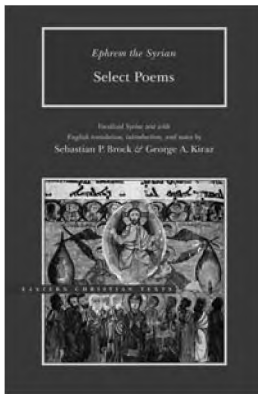
Those interested in applying for the first time or who wish to renew their fellowships for the

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FOR MORE INFORMATION
The Neal A. Maxwell
Institute for
Religious Scholarship
200 WAIH, BYU
Provo, Utah 84602
(801) 422-9229
(800) 327-6715
maxwellinstitute.byu.edu

TO ORDER PUBLICATIONS
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New Book Features Work of Poet, Theologian



The Maxwell Institute's Middle Eastern Texts Initiative has released the newest book in its Eastern Christian Texts series, a bilingual Syriac/English edition of *Select Poems* of Ephrem the Syrian. From the second to the eighth century AD, when Arabic supplanted it, Syriac was a

major literary language across the Middle East; it is essentially a Christian form of Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus, the original apostles, and the first Jewish Christians.

St. Ephrem, who died in AD 373 in Edessa (anciently a major city, located in modern-day Turkey) while caring for victims of a plague, is the most important poet and theologian of the Syriac Christian tradition. The author of numerous homilies and commentaries as well, he has sometimes been called the "Harp of the Spirit" because of the many hymns he composed. His writing was so popular and his name so honored that, for centuries after his death, other authors wrote hundreds of works that were attributed to him.

The twenty texts contained in this volume offer a broad and varied introduction to Ephrem's poetry

and have been deliberately arranged according to the outline of the saint's concept of salvation history, commencing with Paradise and continuing through the mortal ministry of Jesus into the life of the Christian church as Ephrem knew it. They bear such titles as "On Human Language about God," "Mary and Eve as the World's Two Eyes," "On the Fall," "Christ, the New Passover Lamb," "A Disputation between Death and Satan," and "Joy at the Resurrection."

The editors and translators of Ephrem's *Select Poems* are Sebastian P. Brock and George A. Kiraz. Until his retirement in 2003, Dr. Brock was Reader in Syriac Studies at the University of Oxford, in England, and he is generally regarded as the premiere Syriac scholar in the West. Dr. Kiraz, a native speaker of Syriac and a former student of Dr. Brock who earned his PhD from Cambridge University, is the founder and director of Beth Mardutho: The Syriac Institute and the president of Gorgias Press.

Readers of *Select Poems* will find it a fascinating window into a form of Christianity that was nearer in time, in space, and in language to the primitive church than the denominations with which we in the West are typically familiar. St. Ephrem's hymns express an early and vibrant form of the Christian faith that was still flourishing in its original Middle Eastern home. ■

By Daniel C. Peterson

Director and editor in chief of the Middle Eastern Texts Initiative

Contributions Sought for Completion of the Collected Works of Hugh Nibley

The scholars and staff at the Maxwell Institute have energetically set the goal of finishing the Collected Works of Hugh Nibley within the next three years. March 27, 2010, will be the 100th anniversary of Hugh Nibley's birthday, and we would like to have the approximately 20-volume set completed by that date. Under the direction of John W. Welch, general editor of the Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, various supplemental electronic releases and a series of conferences in 2010 focusing on the lasting legacies of Nibley's scholarship are also planned.

Brother Nibley left several boxes of complicated, unpublished manuscripts that will result in the publication of at least one additional volume. Numerous articles that have been published elsewhere will appear in the remaining volumes of the Collected Works.

Editorial work has already begun on Brother Nibley's final manuscript, *One Eternal Round*, which is being coauthored and prepared for publication by Professor Michael Rhodes and illustrated by Michael Lyon. *One Eternal Round* is the culmination of Nibley's lifelong research on the Book of Abraham and the facsimiles, particularly Facsimile 2, the hypocephalus. This manuscript covers a wide range of topics that illuminate our understanding

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Ephrem and the Patriarchal Wives

Ephrem the Syrian, who died in AD 373 in Edessa, wrote one of earliest extant commentaries on Genesis and Exodus. In this commentary he weaves a new biblical story by selecting from both the narrative background and foreground—not in an arbitrary way, but as a very deliberate process. One of the new themes that Ephrem weaves into his retelling is the unwavering righteousness and spiritual receptiveness of the patriarchal wives.

When Ephrem tells the story of Rebekah, he adds that she went with Abraham's servant because she knew that "it was the will of the Lord that she should go" [21.4.2].¹ Later, Rebekah overheard what had passed between Isaac and Esau and she "went and counseled Jacob lest the birthright of Esau be contrary to the word of God which said 'the elder shall serve the younger'" [25.1]. At the end of this episode, Isaac is unable to alter the blessing he gave to Jacob because "he knew that the will of the Lord had been accomplished just as it had been told to Rebekah." Rachel likewise takes her father's idols, not out of desire for them—rather "she despised them as being useless"—but because she loved the God of Jacob [29.4.2].

When we turn to Ephrem's Sarah we see an even more vocal and strong character than her biblical counterpart; one who is willing to resist Pharaoh ("she did not exchange her husband for a king" [9.3]) and stand up against the king Abimelech ("She said in a loud voice before everyone, 'It is not right that you transgress the legal custom concerning your wife by [committing] adultery, not even by the taking of another wife'" [17.3]). Ephrem's Sarah was a woman who recognizes God's hand in her life ("Sarah saw that God was her help" [17.3]) and acted on the basis of His promises.

Ephrem's firm belief in the righteousness of Sarah is further seen in his retelling of the story of the binding of Isaac (Genesis 22). Ephrem tells us that when God called Abraham to take his son and offer him as a burnt offering, "He did not inform Sarah because he had not been commanded to inform her" [20.1.2]. Neither did Abraham tell anyone else in his household, lest they try and stop him, or snatch Isaac away, or persuade him to put off the sacrifice. Thus Ephrem implies that it was not a question of Sarah's faithfulness, but rather

Abraham's. This point is explicitly made when Ephrem poses the hypothetical question, What if Abraham had told Sarah? He tells us later what the rest of the camp would have done, but the answer for Sarah is completely different: "She would have persuaded him to let her go and participate in his sacrifice just as she had participated in the promise of his son." Ephrem is introducing a very interesting scene into the tradition by asking this one question of the text. He highlights Sarah's response by making it clear that everyone else in the camp would have been unable to bear the news of what Abraham had been commanded to do. Only Sarah could bear his burden with him, but she is not called to it.²

Not only does Ephrem see women playing a more significant role in the Old Testament narratives, he is also responsible for introducing women choirs into the worship services of the Syriac Christians. As a later Syriac poet records, "Ephrem saw that women were silent from praise [in the church] and in his wisdom he decided it was right that they should sing out."³ It is thought that he composed songs particularly for women's choirs.⁴ It may well be the case that Ephrem was personally responsible for early Syriac writers seeing a greater role for biblical women in the biblical narrative. Certainly a contributing factor would have been the very positive role of women in the New Testament, in particular Mary the mother of Jesus. ■

By Kristian S. Heal

Director of the Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts

Notes

1. Citations in brackets refer to St. Ephrem the Syrian: *Selected Prose Works*, trans. Edward G. Mathews and Joseph P. Amar (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1994).

2. Note that Gregory of Nyssa and Josephus take the opposite view that Sarah would have been so distraught by the command that Abraham would not have been able to obey God. Edward Noort and Eibert J. C. Tigghelaar, *The Sacrifice of Isaac: The Aqedah (Genesis 22) and Its Interpretations* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 104.

3. Paul Bedjan, comp., *Acta martyrum et sanctorum Syriace* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1968), 3:672.

4. Cf. Sebastian P. Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem*, rev. ed. (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian, 1992), 168–72.

Second Volume of Maimonides Series Continues to Illuminate Ancient Medicine



With the publication of *Medical Aphorisms: Treatises 6–9*, the second volume of the Medical Works of Moses Maimonides series, the Middle Eastern Texts Initiative (METI) at the Maxwell Institute continues its project of bringing to light original texts and translations from the sci-

entific, philosophical, and theological traditions of the three great religious civilizations that trace their ancestry to Abraham: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Now with added funding from the Library of Congress, METI continues to actively edit and prepare for publication works in all three of these branches of faith-oriented learning.

“We hope that as more people become aware that these three traditions grew up, as it were, in the same house together,” said D. Morgan Davis, managing editor of the series, “and were once in dialogue about a great many things of interest to all, we can renew our own commitment to similar kinds of dialogue in our times about our mutual interests and concerns. There is much of value that we have to offer one another, beginning with the respect and confidence that comes when we truly practice our shared values of compassion, forgiveness, and love of God and our fellow man.”


Moshe ben Maimon, or Abū ‘Imrān Mūsā ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh, better known as Moses Maimonides, is among the most celebrated rabbis in the history of Judaism and the author of works on many subjects. His writings include influential philosophical and medical treatises in Arabic and two of the most important works on Jewish law. He is perhaps best known for his effort to reconcile Aristotelian philosophy with biblical teaching. Born in 1138 in Córdoba, Spain, Maimonides eventually settled in Egypt, where he practiced medicine. He died in 1204.

Medical Aphorisms is undoubtedly the best known and most compendious of Maimonides’ medical works. It consists of about 1,500 aphorisms culled mainly from the treatises of Galen, either as

direct quotations or as summaries, and arranged into 25 treatises. Most of the traditional medieval medical subspecialties are represented in this work, including anatomy, physiology, gynecology, hygiene, and diet. In addition, Maimonides includes a section addressing unusual cases from Galen, and another containing his own criticisms of Galen’s theories.

Medical Aphorisms: Treatises 6–9 is the second volume of a new critical edition of the *Medical Aphorisms*, with a fresh, annotated English translation. The central subjects of the treatises in this volume are prognosis, aetiology, therapy, and pathology. Most of these aphorisms are based on the works of Galen. Because the source texts from which several of them were derived are no longer extant, these aphorisms provide tantalizing clues about aspects of Galen’s thought that are otherwise unknown. They thus serve as a window onto the ancient medical theories of Galen as well as on the medieval practice of Maimonides.

The Medical Works of Moses Maimonides is a series edited by Gerrit Bos of the University of Cologne. Professor Bos is chair of the Martin Buber Institute for Jewish Studies at the University of Cologne. He is widely published in the fields of Jewish studies, Islamic studies, Judaeo-Arabic texts, and medieval Islamic science and medicine, having many books and articles to his credit. He recently received the Maurice Amado award for his work on Maimonides’ medical texts.

Medical Aphorisms: Treatises 6–9 is available from the BYU Bookstore (www.byubookstore.com). 

From Other Publishers

Muhammad: Prophet of God, by Daniel C. Peterson (Erdmans, 2007), is a concise biography of Islam’s founder, one of the most influential men in history. “The best scholarly text on the prophet Muhammad written by a Christian,” writes Professor Parviz Morewedge of New York City. “A must-read, especially for non-Muslims who are interested in a solid, compassionate treatment of Muhammad’s vision and accomplishments.” “An admirable book,” San Diego State’s Khaleel Mohammed says in the foreword, “written in a clear, fluid style that makes it suitable for both scholars and nonscholars.” Available in bookstores including the BYU Bookstore.

Welch Expounds the Sermon on the Mount at Museum of Art Lecture

On January 31, John W. Welch addressed the topic “The Five Faces of the Savior in the Sermon on the Mount” as part of the Museum of Art lecture series on the life of Christ, which has now concluded.

Welch, Robert K. Thomas professor of law at BYU, editor in chief of *BYU Studies*, and the founder of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, spoke about five specific layers of instruction within the Sermon text in Matthew 5–7. As Welch related, “the Sermon on the Mount is not a scrapbook” of moral maxims, but more importantly it reveals the Savior’s different “faces of salvation.”

Expressing his love and appreciation for this text, Welch first addressed the ethical, moral, and allegorical meanings taught by the Savior in his Sermon on the Mount. With these first three layers, the Savior taught basic principles of and directions about leading a Christlike life. For example, when Christ instructs his disciples to “Pray for them which despitefully use you” (Matthew 5:44), Matthew uses the Greek word *eulogeite*, which means not just to pray for them privately, but also “to speak well of, to thank, and even to praise.” Christ gave his followers clear instructions on how to implement this higher moral law: the ser-

mon concludes by instructing listeners and readers to build our “house upon [the] rock” of Christ (Matthew 7:24).

Welch noted that most people see only the first three faces or meanings in the Sermon on the Mount. Yet, as Welch emphasized, “Jesus was more than a moral philosopher.” If Christ only offered advice on a good way to live, his message would not have been so astonishing. According to Welch, the amazing power of the Savior’s sermon is found in the fourth uniting face: Christ taught with divine authority, which enabled him to confidently extend promises and signal warnings. He also taught sacred ritual (which becomes especially evident when the Sermon text is juxtaposed with 3 Nephi 12–14, the Sermon at the Temple in Bountiful). For example, Welch noted that in Matthew 5:48 Christ invites us to become “perfect,” or “the Greek word *teleios*, [which] when used in ritual settings means to become fully and completely initiated and introduced into the sacred experience” of ritual worship. Thus the Sermon is not simply moral theology but also divine revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The BYU Museum of Art’s exhibit of *Beholding Salvation: Images of Christ* will continue through June 16. The lecture series has been cosponsored by the Religious Studies Center at BYU. It is anticipated that a CD containing all the lectures will be available from Deseret Book in the fall of 2007. 📖

President Samuelson Remembers Elder Maxwell

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In his last visit to BYU in 2004, Elder Maxwell spoke to the President’s Leadership Council. “In a way,” said Elder Maxwell, “LDS scholars are a little bit like the builders of the Nauvoo Temple, who worked with a trowel in one hand and a musket in the other. Today, scholars building the temple of learning must also pause on occasion to defend the kingdom. I personally think this is one of the reasons the Lord established and maintains this university.”

Concluding his tribute, President Samuelson advised that “the magnificent charge to those privileged to serve in and with the Maxwell Institute is to be men and women of faith and to influence

others as well who have high levels of Christian devotion, expertise in their areas of scholarly endeavor, and accomplishment with both trowels and muskets.”

Video of President Samuelson’s address is now available to view on the Institute’s Web site at maxwellinstitute.byu.edu. 📺

Contributions Sought for the Collected Works of Hugh Nibley

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of the Book of Abraham and the plan of salvation. Nibley brings together a vast array of evidence supporting the authenticity of the subject matter in the Book of Abraham, including Egyptian, Mesopotamian, classical, apocryphal, medieval, Kabbalistic, and alchemical sources. Myth, ritual, ancient drama—all are woven together in Nibley’s inimitable way. There is also a groundbreaking chapter on the geometric and mathematical aspects of the hypocephalus.

One manuscript in the collection is appropriately called “The End of What?” This volume has its roots in a long typescript written by Nibley in the 1950s that has been recently discovered among his papers. It is a history of Christianity from the time of the New Testament to the time of the Restoration by Joseph Smith in the 19th century. It asks such questions as What did the early apostles expect to happen in the future? When did they think Jesus would come? What would the “end” be? and What would need to happen before the end? In typical Nibley style, this manuscript is wide-ranging, interesting, and well informed. It challenges some of the conventional wisdom in Christian history, and it

offers a Mormon point of view on early Christianity and its developments.

Other materials that will likely appear in the Collected Works include some brief autobiographies, poetry and early essays, interviews and panels, book reviews, forewords in books, the ancient world, satire, pieces about the Book of Mormon and Book of Abraham, early Christianity, personal essays, politics, Brigham Young, education, and temples.

The completion of the Collected Works of Hugh Nibley will leave a lasting, foundational contribution to LDS scholarship on key scriptural and religious topics that will inform the studies and bless the lives of many students, readers, and scholars.

All readers and supporters of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship and FARMS are invited to donate to this long-term, expensive project. If you are in a position to support this important effort with a gift, please contact Ed Snow at 801-422-9047 and ed_snow@byu.edu or mail your check payable to “The Maxwell Institute CWHN Project.” Readers everywhere are indebted to Brother Nibley, who gave very openly of his time and scholarship to everyone. Your generosity will help repay that debt and will preserve for future generations the groundbreaking work of Brother Nibley—one of the Church’s and world’s preeminent scholars and believers. 📖



From Elder Neal A. Maxwell

Given its unique importance, it is not surprising that ever since the Book of Mormon was published in 1830, disbelievers and detractors have preferred any explanation

of its coming forth to the real one! This disdain was forseen by the Lord, who consoled Joseph: “Behold, if they will not believe my words, they would not believe you, my servant, Joseph, if it were possible that you should show them all these things which I have committed unto you” (D&C 5:7). Apparently, even if skeptics had been shown

the Urim and Thummim and the plates, it would not have convinced them. . . . One early enemy of the church, E. D. Howe, mistakenly assigned authorship of the Book of Mormon to Reverend Spaulding (who died in 1816), 14 years before the Book of Mormon was published). The Spaulding “explanation” once caused such a needless stir! . . . In more recent years, another “explanation” has been advanced: Joseph Smith supposedly took his main ideas, say these critics, from the writings of one Ethan Smith, who wrote a book called *View of the Hebrews*. . . . One would no more read Ethan’s book for doctrine than he would read the telephone directory in search of a plot! (“The Gift and Power of God,” video presentation, as quoted in *The Neal A. Maxwell Quote Book*, ed. Cory H. Maxwell [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 31.) 📖

Institute Supports Students

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2007–2008 academic year should know that the deadline for submitting a completed application form and all supporting documentation is **August 31, 2007**. To obtain guidelines and an application form, contact M. Gerald Bradford, The Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University, 200 WAIH, Provo, UT 84602 (telephone: 801-422-8619; e-mail: bradfordmg@aol.com).

The Maxwell Institute awarded Nibley Fellowships to 16 graduate students for the 2006–2007 academic year.

Continuing Nibley Fellows are **Sharon Mar Adams**, biblical interpretation, philosophy, theology, Department of Religious and Theological Studies, Iliff School of Theology, University of Denver; **Jared William Anderson**, history of the Bible, gospel traditions, textual criticism, Department of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; **Lincoln H. Blumell**, early Christianity, Department and Centre for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto; **David E. Bokovoy**, Hebrew Bible and ancient Near East, Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies, Brandeis University; **Corey Daniel Crawford**, Hebrew Bible, preexilic history, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University; **Matthew J. Grey**, ancient Mediterranean religions, Department of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; **Cameron Gabe LaDuke**, Judaism of the Second Temple period, Department of Biblical Studies, Yale Divinity School; **Paul Derek Miller**, theology, ethics and culture, School of Religion, Claremont Graduate University; **Brent James Schmidt**, Greek, New Testament, early Christianity, Department of Classics, University of Colorado, Boulder; **Thomas Benjamin Spackman**, comparative Semitics, Hebrew Bible, Arabic, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago; **Valerie Triplet-Hitoto**, Second Temple period, Department of Religious Sciences, École Pratique des Hautes Études, La Sorbonne, Paris; **Shirley (Shirl) Irene Wood**, biblical interpretation, New Testament, Iliff School of Theology, University of Denver; **Mark Alan Wright**, Mesoamerican archaeology, Maya religion and epigraphy, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Riverside.

New Nibley Fellows are **Matthew Bowen**, biblical studies, Department of Theological and Religious Studies, Catholic University of America; **Matthew P. Yacubic**, Mesoamerica, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Riverside; **John D. Young**, religious and cultural history, medieval studies, University of Notre Dame.

Russel B. Swensen Endowed Mentorship Fund

The Russel B. Swensen Endowed Mentorship Fund was created as a result of a generous gift from Robert (Bob) Gay in honor of his father William (Bill) Gay. This fund was named in honor of a beloved BYU professor and was created in 2002 to provide grants to selected undergraduate students each year who are pursuing degrees in fields of study related to the Maxwell Institute's broad areas of interest and who have secured an agreement to conduct research under the supervision of a BYU faculty member.

The Maxwell Institute awarded Swensen mentorships to four Brigham Young University undergraduate students for 2006. **David Linhorst** is conducting research on "The Mormon Doctrine of Deification." His faculty mentor is Professor David Paulsen of the Department of Philosophy. **Paul Lambert** is focusing on a specific phase of Joseph Smith's translation of the King James Bible. Thomas Wayment, professor of Ancient Scripture, is his mentor. **Frank Kelland** is using magnetic resonance imaging to read the text of ancient carbonized papyri. His mentor is Travis Oliphant, professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering. **Stanley Thayne** is concluding research on the "History and Perceptions of Mormonism in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania after 1829." His mentor is Professor John Spencer Fluhman of the Church History and Doctrine Department.

The Swensen Mentorship recipient for 2007 is **Christopher J. Dawe**. He is conducting research on the ancient practice of ritual anointing known as *Chrism* recounted in the *Gospel of Philip* and Cyril's *Mystagogical Catechesis*. His faculty mentor is Ancient Scripture professor Gaye Strathearn.

Swensen Mentorship grants are administered by BYU's Office of Research and Creative Activities (ORCA). For information about the Swensen Mentorship Fund, contact M. Gerald Bradford at the address, phone number, or e-mail listed above. ■

Book Excerpt: Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon

Royal Skousen's work continues on the *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon*. Below is an excerpt from part four, forthcoming this summer.

Alma 43:13–14

*and thus the Nephites were compelled alone to withstand against the Lamanites
which were a compound of Laman and Lemuel and the sons of Ishmael
and all those which had [desented >jg dissented 1| dissented ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRST]
from the Nephites
which were Amlicites and Zoramites
and the [desendants 0|descendants ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRST] of the priests of Noah
now those [desenters 0|desendants 1|descendants ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRST]
were as numerous nearly as were the Nephites*

At the beginning of Alma 43:14, the original manuscript reads *desenters*, which Oliver Cowdery miscopied into the printer's manuscript as *desendants*; in other words, he ended up replacing *dissenters* with *descendants*. This mistake (a visual error) was facilitated by the similar spelling Oliver used for both these words. Notice that earlier in this verse Oliver wrote *dissented* as *desented* in ⓪ (but which the 1830 typesetter respelled in ⓪ as *dissented*). Moreover, at the end of verse 13, Oliver spelled *descendants* as *desendants* in both manuscripts. The proximity of this last instance prompted the error at the beginning of verse 14.

Here we have a clear example where the current text states a highly improbable increase in population. It is at most only a couple of generations since the priests of Noah (the Amulonites) got their start, yet the current text states that by this time their descendants were nearly as numerous as the Nephites! On the other hand, the original manuscript makes perfectly good sense when it claims that there had been so many dissenters over the years that now these Nephite dissenters had become nearly as populous as the remaining Nephites. The original, correct reading thus shows how precarious the situation had become for the Nephites.

Summary

Restore in Alma 43:14 the reading of the original manuscript: “now those **dissenters** were as numerous nearly as were the Nephites”; here the text is referring to the total number of Nephite dissenters, which includes the descendants of king Noah's priests.

Symbols

⓪ stands for the original manuscript (⓪)

1 stands for the printer's manuscript (⓪)

A–T stands for printed editions of the Book of Mormon, from the 1830 (A) to the 1981 (T)

jg means that John Gilbert, the 1830 typesetter, made the change in the printer's manuscript

INSIGHTS

Paula W. Hicken, *Managing Editor*

Jacob D. Rawlins, *Production Coordinator*

Brette Jones, *Editorial Intern*

A Publication of

THE
NEAL A. MAXWELL INSTITUTE
FOR RELIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

Andrew C. Skinner *Executive Director*

M. Gerald Bradford *Associate Executive Director*

Alison V. P. Coutts *Assistant Executive Director*

S. Kent Brown *Director, FARMS, Willes Center*

Daniel C. Peterson *Director, METI*

Kristian Heal *Director, CPART*

John W. Welch *Editor in Chief, BYU Studies*

Monte F. Shelley *Director, RTG (WordCruncher)*

The Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship encourages and supports research on the Book of Mormon, the Book of Abraham, the Bible, other ancient scripture, and related subjects. The Maxwell Institute publishes and distributes titles in these areas for the benefit of scholars and interested Latter-day Saint readers.

Primary research interests at the Maxwell Institute 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.

The Maxwell Institute makes reports about this research available widely, promptly, and economically. These publications are peer-reviewed to ensure that scholarly standards are met. The proceeds from the sale of these materials are used to support further research and publications.

