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The Foundation for
Ancient Research
& Mormon Studies
1990, No. 5, November

INSIGHTS

AN ANCIENT WINDOW

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

New Publication Asks: "Was Columbus the First across the Ocean?"

More than three years of research will culminate this month with the appearance of *Pre-Columbian Contacts with the Americas across the Oceans: An Annotated Bibliography*, by John L. Sorenson and Martin H. Raish. Prominent scholars are enthusiastic about this 1250-page, 2-volume set (see sidebar).

"You may have fired the shot heard round the world," said Dr. George F. Carter of Texas A&M. He refers to the "revolution" necessary to open this controversial subject to reconsideration by scholars. A large majority of them have long denied that any significant early voyages reached the New World.

"Diffusionists," who believe that voyages were made before Columbus, typically cite slim evidence, which has been easy to brush aside by those with minds already made up. "Average anthropological professors still are totally firm that no evidence of diffusion to America exists," notes Carl L. Johannessen, University of Oregon geography professor, applauding the groundbreaking new work.

Of course when the Book of Mormon reports groups reaching America from Eurasia by sea, it tends to get painted as fakery with the same brush of scorn used on other "diffusionist" works. Sorenson and Raish were convinced that this bias was in part the result of ignorance by the reputed experts of a huge body of published evidence. So they have aimed to provide a

research tool that would make obscure but valuable sources accessible—even unavoidable.

The bibliography has over 5600 entries. It covers a huge range of publications by all types of writers—popularizers and scholars, pro, con, and on the fence. Descriptions sketch what most of the books and articles have to say. Works are drawn from a dozen languages (all foreign titles are translated to English) and from such diverse fields as anthropology, archaeology, art, botany, folklore, geography, linguistics, and the history of sailing. Relevant pieces by LDS scholars are included. A 100-page index quickly locates references to any topic.

Sorenson is Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at BYU and a long-time F.A.R.M.S. worker. Raish is with the library, State U. of New York, Binghamton, and is an art historian. F.A.R.M.S. previously published two working editions of the bibliography. The new version is greatly expanded and improved.

This is the first publication from F.A.R.M.S.' new scholarly publishing arm, Research Press. The 2-volume hardbound set may be ordered by F.A.R.M.S. subscribers at a special pre-publication price of \$69.00 until Jan. 15, 1991 (thereafter \$89.00). See the attached order form. Subscribers could also urge libraries in their area to acquire the set. Publication Nov. 1990.

Reviewers' Comments on the Bibliography

"Your great bibliographical project . . . will greatly enhance the quality of discussion in the field." Joseph Needham, history of Asian science, Cambridge University.

"Impressive bibliography and monumental effort." Betty J. Meggers, anthropology, Smithsonian Institution.

"A magnificent contribution . . . amusing, enlightening, and unbelievably useful. I am one of the better-informed people on this subject, but I had not seen ten percent of the papers cited." George F. Carter, geography and anthropology, Texas A&M.

"Nobody can afford to offer an opinion on this subject from now on without having carefully considered this essential volume." David H. Kelley, archaeology, University of Calgary.

"This jewel of a work amazes, awes, and pleases me." Mary Ritchie Key, linguistics, University of California, Irvine.

"Extremely complete." Walter Gardini, anthropology, Universidad del Salvador, Buenos Aires.

"Monumental accomplishment." Hasso von Winning, archaeology, Southwest Museum, Los Angeles.

"Incredible. . . . An extremely important compilation." Stephen C. Jett, geography, University of California, Davis.

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

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F.A.R.M.S. UPDATE

The Foundation for Ancient Research & Mormon Studies

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The Book of Mormon and the Heavenly Book Motif

The Book of Mormon has been dismissed with the assertion "you don't get books from angels... it is just that simple." However, evidence from the ancient world indicates that many sacred works have been delivered to men by angels or other heavenly beings. Indeed, according to Orientalist Geo Widengren, "Few religious ideas in the Ancient East have played a more important role than the notion of the Heavenly Tablets or the Heavenly Books," which are "handed over [to a mortal] in an interview with a heavenly being" (*Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book* [Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1950], 7).

Exodus, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Revelation contain elements of the Heavenly Book motif, while more than a dozen books of pseudepigraphic literature (Jewish writings c. 200 B.C. to A.D. 200) and early Christian literature do as well. Elements of this motif, which can be seen also in the story of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, include: (1) A divine being gives a book to a mortal; (2) the mortal is commanded to read the book; (3) he is then told to copy the book; and (4) he is commanded to preach the message of the book to other mortals. In what follows, we shall consider the elements of this motif as they relate to the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the pseudepigraphic book of *1 Enoch*, and the early Christian *Vision of Hermas*.

In Exodus 31, Moses goes to the top of Mount Sinai to commune with the Lord. He receives many instructions orally, which he then relays to the children of Israel below. At the conclusion of his meeting, the Lord gave Moses "two tables of testimony . . .

written with the finger of God" (Ex. 31:18; cf. Ezek. 2:9-10; Rev. 10:8).

In the books of Ezekiel and Revelation, the prophets are commanded to eat the scroll (Ezek. 3:17-21; Rev. 10:9-10), symbolically suggesting that they have internalized its message. Further, John is commanded that he "must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" (Rev. 1:11).

In the book of *1 Enoch*, an angel commands Enoch to "look at the tablets of heaven [and] read what is written upon them" (*1 Enoch* 81:1). Enoch does as he is commanded. "I looked at the tablets of heaven, read all the writing (on them), and came to understand" (*1 Enoch* 81:2). Then he is commanded to make a copy for his posterity: "Write it down for them and give all of them a warning" (*1 Enoch* 81:6). Thereafter, Enoch preaches from the copy.

Another example of these motifs is found in the early Christian *Vision of Hermas*. During a vision, Hermas saw a "woman, arrayed in a splendid robe, and with a book in her hand; and she sat down alone, and saluted me" (*Visions* 1, 1, 2). After a short conversation, she asks, "Do you wish to hear me read?" (*Visions* 1, 1, 3). Hermas replies that he does. In response to her reading, Hermas says, "Then I heard from her, magnificently and admirably, things which my memory could not retain. For all the words were terrible, such as man could not endure. The last words, however, I did remember; for they were useful to us, and gentle" (*Visions* 1, 1, 3). After reading to him, she asks him, "Can you carry a report of

these things to the elect of God?" He replies, "Woman, so much I cannot retain in my memory, but give me the book and I shall transcribe it." "Take it," she says, "and you will give it back to me." Hermas then transcribes "the whole of it letter by letter." However, no sooner did he finish transcribing the writing of the book, than "all of a sudden it was snatched from my hands; but who the person was that snatched, I saw not" (*Visions* 1, 2, 1).

Similarly, the angel Moroni "said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent. . . . While he was conversing with me about the plates, the vision was opened to my mind that I could see the place where the plates were deposited, and that so clearly and distinctly that I knew the place again when I visited it" (Joseph Smith—History 1:34-42). Later, "the same heavenly messenger delivered them up to me" (Joseph Smith—History 1:59).

Through the "gift and power of God," Joseph Smith was able to read and translate a portion of the plates given him by the angel Moroni, a copy of which was made by Joseph Smith's scribe. The original (as in the case of Hermas) was returned to Moroni by Joseph Smith, but the translation has become a prime source of preaching and the basis of much missionary work since that time.

Based on research contributed by Brent E. McNeely.

Giving to F.A.R.M.S.: A Unique Opportunity

The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies is like no other foundation in the world. It is dedicated to promoting and coordinating groundbreaking research on the Book of Mormon and to popularizing and distributing those results as widely as possible. Giving to F.A.R.M.S. is one of the few organized ways people can do something specific to help bring the Book of Mormon to light.

As you plan your year-end charitable giving, F.A.R.M.S.'s needs are worth careful thought. The scriptures exhort us to "make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness" (Luke 16:9; D&C 82:22), which means that we should use our wealth to do good things that will have lasting eternal value.

The need for money in the Foundation is great. The number of projects that need attention is steadily increasing and the worldwide audience is rapidly expanding. Your dollars can make a big difference. We pledge to use each dollar productively and effectively.

We hope you will want to support this unique Foundation this year. Think of it as a great opportunity to do some good in a world that needs it.

You have our personal thanks,
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F.A.R.M.S. Praised at Fund-raising Dinner

F.A.R.M.S. sponsored an "Evening of Excellence" fund-raising dinner on August 24 in Provo. The featured speaker was Dr. Truman Madsen, who urged those in attendance to continue

to support the Foundation financially and in any other way possible.

Brother Madsen, who had just returned from Europe the previous day, reflected on the increasing visibility and credibility of LDS people and projects throughout the world. He cited successes, such as obtaining permission to build a temple in Sweden and to extract names in Israel, that were the result of the trust and respect that influential people have come to feel for Latter-day Saints. He told how scholarship has played a crucial role in building that trust.

He said that Church teachers and leaders need the kind of materials and information that F.A.R.M.S. prepares, publishes, and distributes in order to continue this kind of success. With large numbers of people joining the Church each day, he believes that the Foundation's role of providing scholarly support becomes more essential every day.

"The cause of truth and righteousness needs all the friends it can get," Brother Madsen believes. "F.A.R.M.S. is devoted to that project, and I say let's support the program."

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S&R-90	Sorenson, John L. and Martin H. Raish, <i>Pre-Columbian Contacts with the Americas across the Oceans: An Annotated Bibliography</i> , 2 vol., hardbound, 1250 pages ISBN 0-934893-14-4, regularly \$89.00, prepublication sale ends Jan. 15, 1991		\$69.00	
PRE-90	Preece, Michael, "Book of Mormon Lands," color, 24 by 30 inches		\$4.75	
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New Book of Mormon Geography Map Available

A handsome new wall map suitable for classroom use has been developed by Dr. Michael Preece, a Salt Lake physician and student of the Book of Mormon. It follows the model of geography in John Sorenson's *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*. Dr. Sorenson assisted in the project.

The topography was drawn by a professional cartographer. Plausible locations for Book of Mormon lands and cities are clearly marked on the three-colored, 24-by-30-inch map. Dr. Preece does not claim that the locations are certain, but they are backed up by a great deal of research. Used with caution, this map may help individuals and classes visualize Book of Mormon peoples and events with more concreteness. Copies may be ordered on the form in this Newsletter.

Nibley's Latest Lectures Now on Audiotape

Facsimile #2 of the Pearl of Great Price is an Egyptian hypocephalus. Anciently such documents were placed under the head of a deceased person before burial. In a series of twelve lectures recently sponsored by F.A.R.M.S. and delivered at BYU, Hugh Nibley discussed "what the Egyptians themselves said about the

hypocephalus," "what Joseph Smith said about it," and the facsimile's meaning and importance.

These lectures are now available on audiocassettes. It should be noted that the tapes lack the visual aids used by Brother Nibley during the lectures. However, this research will be published in the future as part of the *Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, and the book will be replete with pictures and illustrations. To order the tapes, please use the order form in this Newsletter.

Dinner Completes Nibley Birthday Celebration

A dinner to note the completion of the two-volume *By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday* was held on September 7. In attendance were Brother and Sister Nibley, over half of those who contributed articles to the volumes, members of the administration at BYU, and Elder Neal Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve.

Brother Nibley was given copies of the two volumes, signed by many contributors, as well as birthday greetings from several who contributed articles but were unable to attend and from dozens of well-wishers whose financial support facilitated the completion of the project. We wish Brother Nibley continued good health and many more years of productive life.

Time to Renew? Don't Be Left Out!

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As one person put it, "It's like getting the National Geographic. There's always something interesting to read in the F.A.R.M.S. Newsletter."

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