



BOOK OF MORMON CENTRAL

<https://bookofmormoncentral.org/>

Type: Newsletter

Insights, Vol. 12, No. 2 (March 1992)

Editor(s): FARMS Staff

Published by: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies



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The Foundation for
Ancient Research
& Mormon Studies

INSIGHTS

AN ANCIENT WINDOW

1992, No. 2

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

March

Two New Books to Be Released Soon

A Decade of Research Explored and Documented

This month, F.A.R.M.S. and Deseret Book will release their newest book, *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*. This volume reports the highlights of F.A.R.M.S. research over the last ten years. It is designed to appeal to a very wide audience.

Since 1981, the Foundation has issued articles and Updates—brief, readable reports on current discoveries about the origins and contents of the Book of Mormon. All of those Updates and several other findings have been gathered and systematically organized in this volume.

The complete collection has been edited by John W. Welch, assisted by Carolyn Cannon, Melvin Thorne, and Richard Tice. Two high school students, Anita Cramer and Christina Welch, also worked on the project to ensure that all of its material was presented in a way that would be pleasing to young readers.

"No other book offers quite this range of precise information, with one interesting point coming right after another," says one reviewer. "It's great for browsing, since each chapter is short and independent. It is also a brilliant resource for all teachers and students."

In this book, the F.A.R.M.S. Updates have themselves been updated. New notes and comments have been added about subsequent developments since the time each discovery was made. In addition, many illustrations and indices make this fascinating and significant research easily understandable and readily usable.

One of the main purposes of F.A.R.M.S. is to see that scholarly information about

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Nibley Considers the Temple in the Cosmos

Hugh Nibley's long-awaited treatment of the temple, which is volume 12 of the *Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, will be released early in April by F.A.R.M.S. and Deseret Book.

From the beginning of time, the temple has been the link between the chaos and dissolution of this temporal world and the beauty and permanence of the eternal realms. As Hugh Nibley explains, "The temple is a scale model of the universe. The mystique of the temple lies in its extension to other worlds; it is the reflection on earth of the heavenly order, and the power that fills it comes from above."

In *Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present*, Brother Nibley explains the relationship of the House of the Lord to the cosmos. In "Temple," the first part of the volume, he focuses on the nature, meaning, and history of the temple, discussing such topics as sacred vestments, the circle and the square, and the symbolism of the temple and its ordinances.

In the second part, "Cosmos," he discusses the cosmic context of the temple—the expanding gospel, apocryphal writings, religion and history, the genesis of the written word, cultural diversity in the universal church, and the "terrible questions": Where did we come from? Why are we here? and Where are we going?

According to Brother Nibley, it is in the temple where "time, space, and lives are extended," where men and women are invited to step "beyond this ignorant present" and gain a

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Symposium on March 21

See story on page 6 for details.

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

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

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F.A.R.M.S. UPDATE

The Foundation for Ancient Research & Mormon Studies

Number 81

March 1992

Language and Script in the Book of Mormon

In what language was the Book of Mormon written? The most obvious answer is some form of Egyptian. Moroni states that "we have written this record . . . in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian" (Mormon 9:32). Nephi confirms this at the very beginning of the record when he says, "I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians" (1 Nephi 1:1).

While the simplest interpretation of these statements (and others like them in the Book of Mormon) is that the language of the Book of Mormon is Egyptian, some—including Sidney Sperry, John Sorenson, and John Tvedtnes—have suggested a slightly different understanding: while the script (the written characters) of the plates is a form of Egyptian, the underlying language of the plates may be Hebrew ("the learning of the Jews"?). The probability that this view is correct is enhanced by considerable research conducted in the last decade on Papyrus Amherst 63.

Work on this scroll indicates that using one script to convey another language was not unknown in the Middle East in ancient times. The scroll dates from the second century B.C. and was written in an Egyptian demotic script (a sort of shorthand Egyptian). For years it was unintelligible to Egyptologists, who assumed that it should be read as Egyptian.

In 1944 Raymond Bowman of the University of Chicago realized that although the script is Egyptian, the underlying language is Aramaic ("An Aramaic Religious Text in Demotic Script," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*

3 [1944]: 219-31). His effort to translate portions of the text as Aramaic proved successful, but no further work was done on the scroll for nearly forty years. Work in the last decade, however, has led to universal agreement on the distinction between the script in which this papyrus is written (demotic Egyptian) and the underlying language (Aramaic). Interestingly, among other writings on the scroll is a version of Psalm 20:2-6. So we find an Egyptian script used to convey a Semitic language (Aramaic) version of a scriptural text—just like the original script of the Book of Mormon may be an Egyptian script used to convey scripture in a Semitic language (Hebrew).

This situation is perhaps something like what might occur if a native speaker of Japanese used the characters of the English language to write his Japanese tongue (for whatever reason—perhaps to teach the Japanese language to an audience that could not understand the Japanese characters). One would still need to understand the Japanese language to understand what was written, because it would not be English—it would be Japanese written in characters normally used for English.

Why would the Nephites have written in Egyptian characters to convey the Hebrew language? Certainly the Nephites, even in Moroni's time, were still familiar with Hebrew. In the same passage in which Moroni makes it clear that the characters on the plates are Egyptian, he states that "if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew" (Mormon 9:33), indicating that he would have pre-

ferred to write in Hebrew. Alma 18:13 seems to indicate that their spoken language was some form of Hebrew. This appears to be confirmed by research that shows evidence of Hebrew forms even in the English translation of the Book of Mormon.

So why use Egyptian at all? Apparently Hebrew characters took up more space than the same words written in Egyptian characters. Moroni states that if the plates had been *larger*, he and others would have written in Hebrew. What we know of Egyptian scripts that might have been in use at the time Lehi left Jerusalem (about which, incidentally, Joseph Smith knew nothing) indicates that those Egyptian characters may take up less space than the Hebrew characters required to express the same thought.

In the years that followed Lehi's departure, Egyptian scripts became even more compact. We don't know if the same happened to the reformed Egyptian that the Nephites used, but whether or not it did, there are striking parallels between the two documents. The demotic Egyptian-Aramaic Papyrus Amherst 63 is more compact than would have been the case if the Aramaic script had been used, just as the Book of Mormon plates could be more compact using Egyptian characters rather than Hebrew; but just as Moroni noted that using Egyptian led to imperfections that would not have existed if he and others could have written in Hebrew, Papyrus Amherst 63 is much more difficult to read and has much more ambiguity than if it had been written in Aramaic script.

Based on research by Stephen D. Ricks

Paper Studies Characteristics of Oral Culture in the Book of Mormon

A recent fascinating study by William Eggington of the BYU English Department suggests that, by and large, Book of Mormon peoples functioned as an oral culture. Although the Lehite community had access to print as a technology, Eggington believes that they wrote only to accomplish narrow (i.e., religious) goals and that their writings retained many features of a nonprint culture. His evidence comes from certain indicators and memory-aiding devices within the text of the Book of Mormon, including repetitious patterns, balanced patterns, formulaic expressions, and parallelisms.

Eggington's research into the problems of communication between oral and literate cultures in Australia leads him to believe that the members of such cultures can understand each other only when they understand the nature of communication in the other culture. Therefore, he believes that understanding the characteristics of oral culture amongst the Book of Mormon peoples will help modern readers go

beyond their own cultural values and the high linguistic expectations of a literate culture and appreciate better the intent of each speaker and writer in the Book of Mormon.

Originally presented at the F.A.R.M.S. brown bag seminar at BYU, this paper has been expanded and refined and is now available as a F.A.R.M.S. paper on the order form in this issue of *Insights*.

Study Aid Again Available

The "Wide Margin Edition" of the Book of Mormon, prepared by Eldin Ricks, is available through F.A.R.M.S. This edition has wide margins and is printed in 29 separate 30-page booklets (in a 3-ring binder), making it convenient for students and teachers to take small sections of the Book of Mormon to Gospel Doctrine class for teaching or making notes.

Tours Planned on Lehi's Arabian Trail

Bountiful Tours of Australia is preparing the first ever tours on the trail that Lehi likely took from Jerusalem to Bountiful. Warren Aston will lead 22-day tours along this trail, limited to 15 participants for each tour, departing Sept. 7, Sept. 28, Nov. 2, and Nov. 23, 1992. As Lehi's journey is followed from Jerusalem to Bountiful, events and places described in the Book of Mormon will take on new relevance and meaning.

If you are interested in more

information on these tours, please contact F.A.R.M.S. for a brochure from Bountiful Tours.

Warren and Michaela Aston have conducted extensive research and fieldwork on this trail over the last eight years, partially funded by F.A.R.M.S. They will participate in a multi-national expedition of researchers coordinated by F.A.R.M.S. and BYU that will examine the likely site of Bountiful in April 1992.

Continued from page 1

Reexploring

the Book of Mormon is distributed as widely as possible and in a form as understandable as possible. As a companion to *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, which was one of last year's very popular books, *Reexploring the Book of Mormon* has been long awaited and often requested by F.A.R.M.S. readers.

This book does more than gather circumstantial evidence for the Book of Mormon. It detects

and explores many facets of the record's internal complexity. It helps define the rich literary, anthropological, historical, and spiritual settings in which this scripture was written and translated. *Reexploring the Book of Mormon* will help build new avenues of appreciation for the book that "contains the truth and the word of God."

Available for delivery in late March.

Temple & Cosmos

clear perspective of the great plan of the eternities.

Richly illustrated by Michael Lyon, Tyler Moulton, Nate Pinnock, and Mark Clifford, volume 12 of the *Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* is likely to become one of the favorites in the series. It will be released early in April; you may order it now on the enclosed order form and we will send it to you as soon as copies are available.

Scholar Watch

Working Groups Formed

Geology and Environment

Under the auspices of F.A.R.M.S., Marlon Nance (Geology Department, Univ. of California, Davis) is organizing a working group on Geology and Environment in the Book of Mormon. The goals of the group are to:

1. Look for geological evidence of events described in the Book of Mormon.
2. Describe environmental factors that probably affected Book of Mormon people.
3. Publish research findings through F.A.R.M.S.

Fields of expertise may include, but are not limited to, geology, ecology, oceanography, archaeology, geography, meteorology, and paleoclimatology. A few topics that could be considered are:

Mining

- location and extraction evidence
- ore types and occurrence
- nonmetallic mining, e.g., clays, flint, obsidian

Regional geology

- natural barriers: mountains, swamps, rivers, deserts
 - soils: occurrence and sources
 - histories of active faults and volcanos
 - geologic mapping of selected areas
- Natural disasters and the destruction of 3 Nephi 8-10*
- volcanic eruptions and hazards
 - lava and ash flows
 - ash falls
 - land slides
 - mud and debris flows
 - earthquakes: tsunamis, seiches, subsidence, ground rupture
 - severe tropical storms

Weather and climate

- climatic regimes affecting settlement and crops
- drought and noncharacteristic weather

Oceans and currents

- winds and currents affecting migrations
- El Niño and climate

All interested parties are invited to propose topics or express interest. Please respond by sending research suggestions and an indication of interests, abilities, and availability to F.A.R.M.S.

Art and Illustrations

A project is underway to prepare textual and visual resource files to aid artists and media producers in representing Book of Mormon peoples with (Mesoamerican) historical accuracy. Volunteers within a reasonable distance of Provo who have qualifications and a desire to assist (initially probably as library "gofers") are invited to write to F.A.R.M.S. detailing their interest, availability, and relevant background.

Ships

A working group is being formed under the direction of Warren Aston and John Sorenson to study how ships were built in the 6th century B.C., which may help us understand the construction of Nephi's ship and its voyage to America. Persons with substantial knowledge of the history, design, construction, or sailing of small craft are invited to participate.

Because members of the proposed group are likely to reside at sizable distances from each other, communication will be by mail, at least initially, using English. Those capable and interested are invited to send a letter to the Foundation detailing their qualifications.

Welch Appointed Editor of *BYU Studies*

John W. Welch, founding president and continuing member of the board of directors of F.A.R.M.S., has been appointed editor-in-chief of the 32-year-old *BYU Studies*.

This scholarly journal, published quarterly, has long been "dedicated to the correlation of revealed and discovered truth and to the conviction that the spiritual and intellectual are complementary avenues of knowledge." It accepts articles, poems, short stories, and essays on academic subjects from all fields of learning.

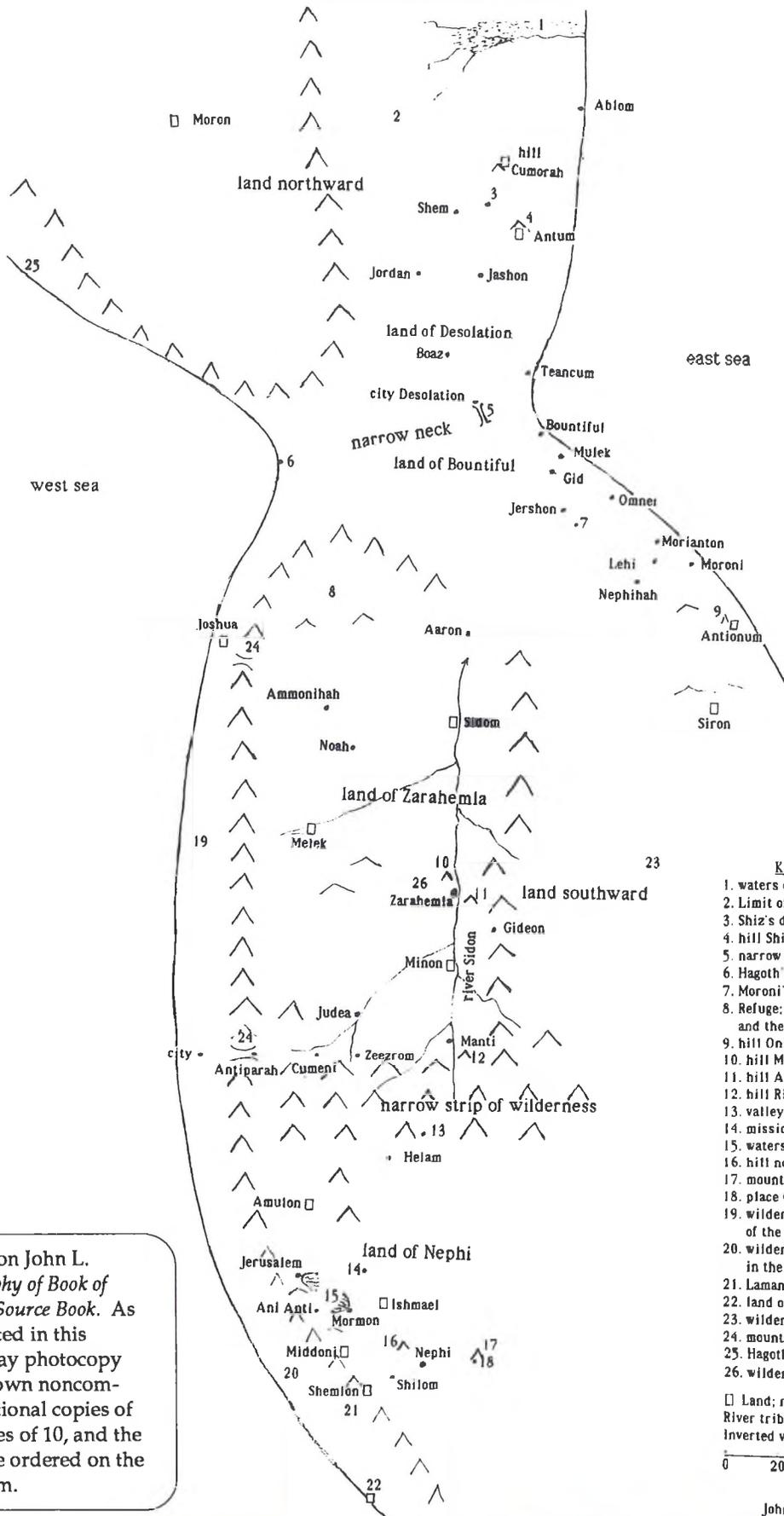
"*BYU Studies* is one of the bargains of the century right now," states Welch. "The subscription rate has not been raised for about twenty years. That will probably have to change, but for right now people can still subscribe, as many years in advance as they want, for \$10.00 or less per year. Those are 1972 prices!"

This journal gives scholarly perspectives on many LDS topics. "There is a general misconception that *BYU Studies* is simply of the BYU, by the BYU, and for the BYU. But it is a publication for all disciplines that are of interest to Latter-day Saints," comments Welch.

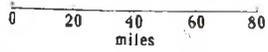
Having recently finished work as one of the editors of the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Welch plans with *BYU Studies* to publish a cumulative index, to produce a general catalog of back issues, to distribute the journal in electronic media, and to give the publication a larger format, more departments, and broad appeal to general readers.

To subscribe to *BYU Studies* before the price goes up simply use the enclosed voucher.

Map of Book of Mormon Places
Based Wholly on the Text



- Key to Numbers**
1. waters of Ripliancum
 2. Limit of Nephite retreat
 3. Shiz's death: plates left
 4. hill Shim
 5. narrow passage
 6. Hagoth's ships
 7. Moroni's camp
 8. Refuge: between the l. Bountiful and the l. of Zarahemla (3 Ne. 3)
 9. hill Onidah
 10. hill Manti
 11. hill Amnihu
 12. hill Riplah
 13. valley of Alma
 14. missionary dispersal pt.
 15. waters of Mormon
 16. hill north of Shilom
 17. mount Antipas
 18. place Onidah
 19. wilderness on the west of the land of Zarahemla
 20. wilderness, on the west, in the land of Nephi
 21. Lamanite king's land
 22. land of first inheritance
 23. wilderness (Al. 43:22)
 24. mountain pass
 25. Hagoth's destination (?)
 26. wilderness of Hermounts
- Land; no city mentioned
 River tributaries illustrative only
 Inverted v's - mountains or hills



John L. Sorenson, Nov. 1990

This map is based on John L. Sorenson's *Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book*. As with all items printed in this Newsletter, you may photocopy this map for your own noncommercial use. Additional copies of this map, in bundles of 10, and the Source Book can be ordered on the enclosed order form.

The Olive Tree and Jacob 5: Symposium Set for Saturday, March 21

On Saturday, March 21, F.A.R.M.S. will hold a symposium at which numerous studies will be presented about the masterful allegory of the olive tree in Jacob 5. Over a dozen speakers will report their findings from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. in room 205 JRCB (Law School) at Brigham Young University.

The public is invited, and there is no admission charge. Ample free parking is available next to the Law School Building. Topics will include—

- Olive symbolism in the ancient Near East.
- Parallel texts from the Bible and other Jewish writings.
- The cultivation and horticulture of olive trees.

- Interesting ideas about Zenos.
- The economic and religious importance of olives in ancient Israel.
- The use and interpretation of Jacob 5 in LDS Church history.

For a more detailed program, contact the F.A.R.M.S. office.

This symposium is the F.A.R.M.S. Annual Book of Mormon Lecture for 1992. Plan to come and spend the day with some of those who give dedicated hours of service week after week to Book of Mormon research at the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies. New materials will be on display, and there will be opportunities to share ideas with other interested individuals.

Book of Mormon Text Reformatted

Donald W. Parry has reformatted the text of the Book of Mormon so that the reader can easily see the hundreds of examples of parallel and repetitive patterns in the Book of Mormon. For instance, 1 Nephi 22:26 has been formatted with indented lines labeled with English letters, and certain words have been underlined to reveal the passage's chiastic structure:

- A And because of the righteousness of his people,
 B Satan has no power;
 C wherefore, he cannot be loosed for the space of many years;
 B for he hath no power over the hearts of the people,
 A for they dwell in righteousness

Such formatting helps the reader easily identify ten different parallelistic forms, including both synonymous and antithetical parallelisms, and chiasmus. This study aid also shows different forms of repetition (a subcategory of parallelism), including like sentence beginnings, random repetition, and regular repetition. (The majority of the Book of Mormon, of course, consists of historical narrative and has not therefore been formatted into parallelistic patterns.)

Included is an eighty-page paper that introduces the various parallel forms and outlines the significance of such forms in the prophetic writings.

Although this work is yet preliminary, it will prove useful for both teachers and students of the Book of Mormon. The paperbound volume consists of 500 pages and is available with the 80-page paper on the order form in this issue.

Dead Sea Scrolls Photos Acquired

A significant addition to the F.A.R.M.S. research library is the recently published two-volume set of photographs of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Patient and skillful work will be required before any conclusions can be drawn about their contents.

The books are 9" x 12", with approximately 525 pages containing 1785 photographs. Most of the texts are fragmentary.

This acquisition will aid several scholars already at work on projects to be published in the series *Ancient Texts and Mormon Studies*. Douglas Clark of Salt Lake City is nearly finished with his introduction, translation, and notes on the Genesis Apocryphon.

Stephen Ricks has commenced work on the *Rule of the Community (Manual of Discipline)*, while Donald W. Parry is at work on the *Temple Scroll* and Robert Cloward is treating the *Habakkuk Peshet*.

A recent article in the *Biblical Archaeology Review* ([November–December 1991]: 64–65) shows some of the interesting things one may expect to learn as more of these scrolls come to light. One text from about 200 B.C. cautions priesthood holders against giving their "inheritance to foreigners," for they will "trample you" (cf. Matthew 7:6; 3 Nephi 14:6). Another speaks of a Messiah who "shall heal the wounded and resurrect the dead, [and to] the Poor announce glad tidings."

While it is still too early to speak with confidence about these texts, the future has now arrived for scholarship on the Dead Sea Scrolls.