



# BOOK OF MORMON CENTRAL

<https://bookofmormoncentral.org/>

---

Type: Newsletter

---

## Insights, Vol. 14, No. 2 (March 1994)

Editor(s): FARMS Staff

Published by: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies

---



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.



The Foundation for  
Ancient Research  
& Mormon Studies

# INSIGHTS

AN ANCIENT WINDOW

1994, No. 2

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

March

## New F.A.R.M.S. Book Shows Olive Tree Allegory Merits Honor and Attention

One of the most magnificent allegories in all of sacred literature, Zenos's allegory of the olive tree in Jacob 5, is the focus of a new collection of essays by LDS scholars: *The Allegory of the Olive Tree: The Olive, the Bible, and Jacob 5*. The result of more than ten years of research, culminating in the 1992 annual F.A.R.M.S. symposium, these twenty-one essays by twenty LDS scholars examine the allegory of the olive tree and related topics from many perspectives, including historical, botanical, symbolic, reli-

gious, linguistic, and theological. Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch, both professors at BYU, edited the volume.

The allegory in Jacob 5 reflects an Israelite background and a prophet who is deeply interested in "cultivating" a righteous posterity in the promised land and who is fascinated by the almost miraculous regenerative powers and remarkable productivity of the amazing olive tree.

The authors of these essays an-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

## Dead Sea Scroll Expert Gives F.A.R.M.S. Lecture

Emanuel Tov, an eminent Dead Sea Scrolls scholar, delivered the seventh annual F.A.R.M.S. lecture on February 22 in the BYU Varsity Theater on "The Hebrew Bible in the Dead Sea Scrolls." Tov is Editor-in-Chief of the Dead Sea Scrolls Publication Project and a world-renowned expert on the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls. A transcript and video of his presentation are available on the order form. Tov gave a similar lecture in Salt Lake City (both lectures were presented to overflow crowds).

Professor Tov has published widely on the Bible and on the Dead Sea Scrolls. In 1993 his *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* received an award from the Biblical Archaeological Society for the best book relating to the Old Testament, and in 1990 volume 8 of *Discoveries in the Judean Desert* received the prestigious Shkupp Prize for Best Book in Biblical Studies. His professional activities, in addition to directing the Dead Sea Scrolls Publication Project, include serving as Editor of the Hebrew University Bible Project and as Co-director, Computer Assisted Tools for Septuagint Studies.

Each year the Foundation for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## What Does Recent Scholarship Really Say about the Book of Mormon?

A recently published collection of essays purports to examine the Book of Mormon using the latest scholarly tools and information. The authors of *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology* assert that such scholarship shows the Book of Mormon is *not* of ancient origin, that it was written, not translated, by Joseph Smith in the nineteenth century and reflects that time and that time alone.

What *does* recent scholarship say about the Book of Mormon?

According to the reviewers in the latest issue of the *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, the best new scholarly studies of the Book of Mormon affirm or are compatible with the book's claims for itself—that it is an ancient text containing sacred writings.

The reviewers conclude that the approaches taken in *New Approaches* are not particularly new, nor are they particularly scholarly. The criticism mentioned in the book's subtitle turns out not to be the rigor-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



# F.A.R.M.S. UPDATE

The Foundation for Ancient Research & Mormon Studies

Number 93

March 1994

## Revisiting the Land of Jerusalem via the Dead Sea Scrolls

For over 160 years, beginning at least with the 1833 publication of Alexander Campbell's *Delusions*, countless critics have claimed that the Book of Mormon's use of the phrase "land of Jerusalem" was a major error and proof that the book was false. They especially criticized the use of this phrase in reference to the place where Christ would be born. That phrase was not used in the Bible nor in the Apocrypha. Therefore, the critics concluded, it was an example of Joseph Smith's ignorance and evidence that he had tried to perpetrate a fraud. (For a thorough overview of this argument, see the essay by Daniel Peterson in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 5:62-78*.)

For anyone honestly concerned with the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, there was little to argue about after Hugh Nibley showed in 1957 that one of the Amarna letters, written in the 13th century B.C. and discovered in 1887, recounted the capture of "a city of the land of Jerusalem, Bet-Ninib" (*CWHN* 6:101). Predictably, this evidence, along with further evidence of the general usage of this type of terminology in the Old World (see John W. Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, 170-72), has been ignored by critics of the Book of Mormon.

Now from the Dead Sea Scrolls comes an even more specific occurrence of the phrase "land of Jerusa-

lem" that gives insight into its usage and meaning—in a text that indirectly links the phrase to the Jerusalem of Lehi's time.

Robert Eisenmann and Michael Wise, in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered* (1993), discuss one document that they have provisionally named "Pseudo-Jeremiah" (scroll 4Q385). The beginning of the damaged text reads as follows:

... Jeremiah the Prophet before the Lord  
[... wh]o were taken captive from the land of Jerusalem  
[*Eretz Yerushalayim*, column 1, line 2] (p. 58)

In their discussion of this text, Eisenmann and Wise elaborate on the significance of the phrase "land of Jerusalem," which they see as an equivalent for Judah (*Yehud*):

Another interesting reference is to the "land of Jerusalem" in Line 2 of Fragment 1. This greatly enhances the sense of historicity of the whole, since Judah or 'Yehud' (the name of the area on coins from the Persian period) by this time consisted of little more than Jerusalem and its immediate environs. (p. 57)

Based on the evidence from Qumran, and in the words of Eisenmann and Wise, we can conclude that consistent usage of such language among a people of Israel who fled Jerusalem at the time of Jeremiah also "greatly enhances the sense of historicity" of the Book of

Mormon.

Critics of the Book of Mormon will not likely give up this argument, despite the evidence. This is not surprising, after all, because the part of their argument that the phrase was not known in Joseph Smith's day was correct. Virtually all opponents of the Book of Mormon have to assume, *a priori*, that the text is a purely human 19th-century document in order to justify their rejection of the text. In the case of "land of Jerusalem," since the phrase could not be explained as being part of Joseph's learning environment and since it was not known in biblical literature, they incorrectly concluded that Joseph must have been wrong. Trying to prove a negative, they argued from silence and puffed this supposed error into what they believed was one of their highest polemical mountains of evidence against the Book of Mormon.

The phrase *was not* current in Joseph's day, but, unknown to him, it was an accurate usage for the day in which he claimed the book was written. Thus, despite the critics' best efforts, Joseph's supposed "error" becomes one more evidence of the Book of Mormon's authenticity.

Based on research by Gordon C. Thomasson



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

## Review Gives Latest Word on Book of Mormon Scholarship

ous, balanced scrutiny promised in its preface, but a relentless criticizing and dismissing of the Book of Mormon's claims to be of ancient origin, with little substance and little merit.

This issue of the *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* departs from the usual format of reviewing a large number of books to examine just one, because that one, though not worthy of such scrutiny on its own terms, addresses the crucial issue of the historicity of the Book of Mormon and because it is something of an anomaly—attacks on the Book of Mormon, even ones garbed in robes of supposed schol-

arship, are not new, but they usually come from outside The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints instead of from individuals who claim to have a spot within.

The *Review* contains articles that examine *New Approaches* as a whole and a number that review individual chapters. Some of the reviews go beyond an evaluation of the chapters reviewed to explore the subjects addressed in those chapters, breaking new ground in important aspects of the study of the Book of Mormon. Reviewers include:

Richard Lloyd Anderson  
Davis Bitton

John Gee  
William J. Hamblin  
Louis C. Midgley  
Robert L. Millet  
Daniel C. Peterson, editor  
Matthew Roper  
Royal Skousen  
James A. Smith  
John L. Sorenson  
Martin Tanner  
John A. Tvedtnes  
John W. Welch

Use the order form in this issue of *Insights* to get this latest, insightful *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*.

## New Book Discusses Imagery and Significance of the Olive

swer many questions about the olive and the allegory, including:

- What does Zenos's allegory mean?
- Why was the olive such a powerful image among the people of the Bible?
- What has the image of the olive tree meant to God's prophets and people in ancient times and today?
- What significance did the olive have in ancient religion and literature?
- What importance did the olive have in the life of ancient Israelites?
- How accurate are the physical details of the allegory—the methods of grafting, pruning, and cultivating?
- Who was Zenos and when did he live?

- How do Zenos's words, his vocabulary, and his rhetoric affect the meaning of his allegory?
- What are the meanings of the symbols of the allegory—the roots, the bitterness of the fruit, the loftiness of the tree, the ripening and decay, the pruning and burning, the growing old, and the rejuvenation?

As the authors answer these and many other questions, they shed light on the allegory's important meaning, deep emotion, rich wisdom, and divine feeling. And they bear testimony to the many forms of God's love and care for his children.

For example, from these essays we learn:

1. You really can cut a shoot from an olive tree and stick it in the ground and it will grow; this and other agricultural details from the

allegory are accurate—with one exception, which seems to emphasize the miraculous nature of God's mercy.

2. The name *Gethsemane* means "oil press," and just as in that garden oil was pressed out of olives under great pressure, so under a great burden there flowed from the Savior both blood and mercy.

Insights like these abound in the book. Don't miss this opportunity to increase your understanding and appreciation of this piece of sacred literature. *The Allegory of the Olive Tree*, copublished by Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., is available on the order form in this issue at a substantial discount. See the back of the order form for more details on the authors and topics found in this remarkable volume.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

## Professor Tov Discusses Dead Sea Scrolls in F.A.R.M.S. Lecture

Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (F.A.R.M.S.) sponsors a lecture or symposium on the Book of Mormon or other ancient scripture. Previous lectures have focused on warfare in the Book of Mormon, temples in the ancient world, Maya harvest festivals and the Book of Mormon, and the allegory of the olive tree in Jacob 5.

In this year's lecture, Professor Tov provided a good overview of the biblical material found in the scrolls. Of the approximately 800 compositions found among the scroll fragments, about one quarter are texts of the books found in the Hebrew Bible—the earliest known copies of these texts.

"The chief importance of these texts," Tov said, is that they provide "understanding of the development of the Hebrew Bible." There are many differences between the texts found in the scrolls and the books of the Hebrew Bible as we have it today. Analyzing these differences may help scholars understand the process by which the biblical texts were developed and transmitted. "But the differences are in the details," Tov emphasized. "The message remains the same."

The scrolls can also help us understand the "development of Hebrew and Aramaic, some of the culture of the period [the scrolls have been dated from approximately 250 B.C. to A.D. 70], the history of ideas, and the period in which Christianity began."

While Professor Tov acknowledged that there were parallels between ideas contained in some of

the scroll fragments and the teachings of the early Christians, he believes that current research findings do not point to any connection between the two groups. He also pointed out similarities between the Qumran community and the LDS community, particularly between the way of life that is prescribed in the "Manual of Discipline" scroll and the way of life that he observed among the Mormons and that is shown in the Book of Mormon.

Tov also reviewed some of the history of the work on the scrolls. While acknowledging the work accomplished by the original committee of eight scholars, Tov pointed out how much faster the work of translation was proceeding now that the second generation of scholars working on the scrolls had been expanded to a team of sixty, almost equally divided between Israel, Europe, and the United States.

Professor Tov was accompanied in his visit to Provo by Dr. Weston Fields, executive director of the Dead Sea Scrolls Foundation. They consulted with researchers at F.A.R.M.S. and Brigham Young University on a joint F.A.R.M.S.–BYU project to produce a comprehensive electronic database of the Dead Sea Scrolls and related materials on CD-ROM. The database "will be a great tool for scholars and students of the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls," said Tov. "It will facilitate tremendous research speed and I hope its use will be of great benefit to my colleagues" in the Dead Sea Scrolls Publication Project.

The database will greatly increase the availability of essential re-

search materials to scholars and students of the Bible, Dead Sea Scrolls, and related literatures. It will eventually contain all the materials that scholars will need for Dead Sea Scrolls research and will make them available instantaneously and in a fully indexed and linked format on screen.

When completed, the database will constitute the first major contribution of the LDS community to the larger world of Christian and Jewish scholarship on the Bible and related literatures. It will eventually be linked to a comparable database of Book of Mormon materials.

Tov also announced two additional areas of cooperation between F.A.R.M.S. and his publication project. As an offshoot of the database project, F.A.R.M.S. will supply concordances to be printed in each volume on the scrolls yet to be published.

And he announced that Donald W. Parry, a member of the F.A.R.M.S. board of directors who is presently in Jerusalem teaching an intensive language course through the BYU Jerusalem Center, is providing what Tov called "work-in-kind" help to the scrolls publication project, with support from F.A.R.M.S. Specifically, Parry is assisting Frank M. Cross with his volume on the long-awaited Samuel scroll.

During their visit to Utah, Tov and Fields were also involved in fund-raising for the Dead Sea Scrolls Foundation for the publication and preservation of the Dead Sea Scrolls.



## F.A.R.M.S.—Sponsored Researcher Searches for More Plant Evidence of Voyages from India to America

Assisted by a grant from the Foundation, Carl L. Johannessen, Emeritus Professor of Geography at the University of Oregon, is now in India with an assistant searching for sculptured images of sunflowers and other American crop plants. Their earlier studies documented that images of maize from the New World had been carved on temple sculptures in India dating to medieval times, centuries before the Spaniards and Portuguese could have carried the plant to Asia after A.D. 1500, as scholars commonly suppose (Johannessen and Parker, "Maize Ears Sculpted in 12th and 13th Century A.D. India as Indicators of Pre-Columbian Diffusion," *Economic Botany* 43/2 [1989], 164-80; reprint available on the order form).

Sunflowers evolved in what is now Oklahoma and New Mexico, then spread as far as South America in pre-Hispanic times. The earlier research on maize in India revealed the presence also of sunflowers in Hindu art in the period 200 B.C. to A.D. 1250. Some of the stone carvings of sunflowers occur in contexts that relate to sunrise or sunset at calendrically significant days, which may hint at a relationship with similar practices in the New World. For example, at Halebid, Karnataka (A.D. 800-1000), a large sunflower is carved over the ear of a statue located on a platform that is arranged to allow sunlight to shine at dawn on the equinox upon the sacred Shiva Lingam in the innermost sanctum of the main temple. This temple's outer walls also happen to be covered by sculptures of maidens holding ears of American maize.

Johannessen's current work will look at scores of further Hindu and Jain temples to document in photographs and on video the presence and significance of images of sunflowers. At some shrines the sunflower is associated with representations of still other American species, the pineapple and custard apple (*anona*). These too will be documented visually where possible.

If firm evidence can be mustered for the presence of American plants in ancient India, it will demonstrate that voyages across the Pacific took place, probably in both directions. There is already an increasing body of facts demonstrating the falsity of the common assumption by conservative (landlubber) archaeologists that the oceans were impenetrable barriers that kept ancient America "hermetically sealed" from Old World cultural and genetic influences.

A recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* ("Strands of Time: A Geneticist's Work on DNA Bears Fruit for Anthropologists," [10 Nov. 1993], A1) supports the emerging view that ancient voyaging capabilities have been greatly underestimated. It reports on studies by Professor Douglas C. Wallace and colleagues at Emory University tracing descent lines by comparing mitochondrial DNA. (This substance occurs in every human cell; the presence or absence of certain mutations is interpreted as a record of descent lines.)

"To their surprise" these researchers found that a particular pattern of mutations occurs in Southeast Asia and Oceania and also in tropical South America (but not in Siberia). Their only explanation is that "some

6,000 to 12,000 years ago these ancient mariners made it to the Americas," either by crossing the ocean directly or by traveling along the coasts of Asia, Alaska, and Canada. Critics of this idea abound; research continues.

Stephen C. Jett, Professor of Geography at the University of California at Davis, has recently published a related article in *BYU Studies* ("Before Columbus: The Question of Early Transoceanic Interinfluences," 33/2, 245-71; reprint available on the order form). This comprehensive discussion of the scholarly controversy over this question is the best popular-level treatment available. Jett cites an authoritative recent source giving evidence that the Solomon Islands and New Ireland in the southwest Pacific were reached by humans, necessarily by sea voyaging, way back in glacial times. Apparently seafaring is an extremely old skill!

As research continues on this issue, Latter-day Saints will be interested in the sea change in scholarly opinion that seems to be underway about the possibilities for Old World intervention in the New World, as the Book of Mormon reports.

Meanwhile Research Press's publication by John Sorenson and Martin Raish (*Pre-Columbian Contact with the Americas across the Oceans: An Annotated Bibliography*, 1990) has proved vital to ongoing studies of ancient voyaging to and from America (Jett terms it, "a monument and a tremendously valuable research tool"). Only a few sets of the work remain in stock, but Sorenson is at work on an update.

## Former BYU Dean Offers Insights into the Old Testament.

Since we published in last November's *Insights* a list of recommended books to supplement your reading of the Old Testament, an excellent resource has been published by Deseret Book. *A Latter-day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament*, by Ellis Rasmussen, is written from an orthodox LDS perspective to nonscholars, but it incorporates the insights of a scholar who knows the scholarly literature and the Hebrew language.

Its intent is to help beginning readers understand more as they tackle the Old Testament for the first time. It offers the reader insights into the culture, history, and language of the Old Testament—insights that Rasmussen, dean emeritus of Religious Education at BYU, has gained in a lifetime of

study. For example, in the account in Exodus 2 that tells how Moses "slew" the Egyptian who was "smitting" the Hebrew, Rasmussen points out the balance between the two actions by noting that the "same Hebrew verb translated *smitting* in verse 11 is translated *slew* in verse 12; it a verb used to describe what soldiers do in battle. Thus Moses did to the Egyptian what he was doing to the Hebrew. His action destroyed a life but was in defense of a life."

More experienced students will also find much here of value. The commentary will help them discover added meaning, deeper implications, and broader applications of truths taught in the Old Testament.

Copies may be ordered at a discount using the order form.

## Upcoming Events

- *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Era Dawns* will be broadcast on the VISN network March 17 at 9:00 P.M. (all times are EST), March 20 at 7:00 P.M., and March 23 at 1:00 A.M. This video contains highlights of the 1992 conference on the scrolls held at Stanford University that F.A.R.M.S. helped to sponsor. The video is also available on the order form in this issue of *Insights*.
- John L. Sorenson, professor emeritus of Anthropology at BYU and formerly a member of the F.A.R.M.S. board of directors, will

present a fireside in Logan on "Archaeology and the Book of Mormon." The fireside will be held on the evening of April 7 at 7:00 P.M. at The Book Table, 29 South Main St. Sorenson reports that his purpose will be "to lay out and illustrate sound guidelines to an intelligent, productive comparison of 'Archaeology' on the one hand and 'the Book of Mormon' on the other by examining the lessons taught by what has been called 'Biblical Archaeology'."

# INSIGHTS

AN ANCIENT WINDOW

Published by the  
**Foundation for  
 Ancient Research  
 and Mormon Studies**  
 P.O. Box 7113, University Station  
 Provo, UT 84602  
 1-800-327-6715

## Board of Directors

Stephen D. Ricks, Chairman of the Board of Directors  
 Brent Hall, Director of Operations & Development  
 William J. Hamblin  
 Donald W. Parry, Research Manager  
 Daniel C. Peterson  
 Noel B. Reynolds, President  
 Michael D. Rhodes  
 Melvin J. Thorne, Vice President & Executive Editor  
 John W. Welch

## The Purpose of F.A.R.M.S.

The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (F.A.R.M.S.) encourages and supports research about the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ, and other ancient scriptures.

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

The Foundation works to make interim and final reports about this research available widely, promptly, and economically. As a service to teachers and students of the scriptures, research results are distributed both in scholarly and popular formats.

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