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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

A WINDOW ON THE ANCIENT WORLD

May 2000

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

CPART Digitizes Archives in Lebanon and Vatican

In April 1999 *INSIGHTS* reported on negotiations between representatives of the Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts (CPART) at Brigham Young University and officials in Beirut, Lebanon, and at the Vatican Apostolic Library in Rome about digitally imaging ancient Syriac manuscripts for inclusion in CD-ROM databases. Since then agreements have been forged and work is under way.

Archives in Beirut, Lebanon

In March, FARMS executive director Daniel Oswald, traveling in Lebanon and acting on behalf of Brigham Young University and CPART, signed an agreement with Beirut's Notre Dame University that permits CPART to digitally image 350 religious manuscripts written in Syriac, the Christian form of Aramaic.

"This project grew out of a desire to preserve valuable manuscripts, since many of them have been lost or destroyed, even during this century," said Oswald. Another aim in digitizing the archive is to facilitate access to rare documents that are important to those whose cultural and religious heritages they represent and to scholars who are interested in early Christianity.

The Syriac archive contains scriptural texts, lectionaries (books of passages selected for daily scripture reading), histories, commentaries, and grammatical works, among other documents.

Several universities and some 50 monasteries in the Beirut area contain additional archives of rare religious texts written in Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, and Greek. CPART is negotiating agreements with Saint Joseph's University (whose Oriental library contains 1,600 Christian Arabic manuscripts) and



20 March 2000 signing of publishing contract between Vatican Apostolic Library and BYU's CPART. Left to right: Father Don Rafaele Farina, library prefect; Dr. E. Jan Wilson of CPART; Archbishop Jorge Mejía, Vatican archivist; Daniel Oswald of FARMS; Bishop Soro; and Father Johan Bonny of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity.

the Armenian Catholic Monastery at Bzommar (which has 1,800 manuscripts, mostly in Armenian) to digitize their archives. CPART is also exploring the possibility of cooperating with institutions in other Middle Eastern countries to preserve important manuscript collections electronically.

According to E. Jan Wilson, associate director of CPART, the archives that CPART is initially focusing on are but a "drop in the bucket," so vast are the manuscript treasures preserved in Lebanon. And even his team's admirable rate (about 1,000 pages a day) of imaging the small portion of manuscripts allotted to them is a slow pace considering the months of work lying ahead. As a result, CPART director Daniel C. Peterson and Wilson hope to add another imaging team to their crew in order to expedite the project. In addition, they are willing to train people from universities and other institutions in digital imaging techniques so that the load can be shared.

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The Foundation for
Ancient Research
and Mormon Studies

FARMS UPDATE

A Report on Research in Progress

Number 134

Travel across the “Narrow Neck of Land”

In recent years a number of Book of Mormon scholars have associated the “narrow neck of land” mentioned by Mormon with the Mexican Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Mormon states that it was approximately “a day and a half’s journey for a Nephite, on the line Bountiful and the land Desolation, from the east to the west sea” (Alma 22:32). This was the speed “for a Nephite,” and presumably a group of people or even a non-Nephite might take longer. Moreover, since Mormon was speaking of a fortified line of defense along which communication would be desirable, the phrase “for a Nephite” may refer to the time it would take for a messenger or courier.

John L. Sorenson has documented examples of native Mexican runners traveling distances of up to 100 miles in a day.¹ We need not assume, however, that the entire journey was by foot. More than half of this distance could have been traveled by water along the Coatzacoalcos River, speeding up the journey considerably. Mesoamerican historian Ross Hassig notes that in travels by sea from Veracruz to Coatzacoalcos, “canoes were employed to go up the Coatzacoalcos River to Antigua Malpaso, where land transport was employed for the remaining 12 leagues to Tehuantepec. This

route was also employed in traveling between Mexico City and Tehuantepec, [because] water transportation was easier than overland travel.”²

In the mid-19th century, “the products of the Pacific side, destined for the Gulf Coast, [were] first brought down to this place [Antigua Malpaso] for embarkation; and occasional cargoes of goods from Vera Cruz ascend[ed] the river to this point, from whence they [were] carried to the Pacific plains on mules.”³ A similar route used during the same time period followed this route to Suchil at the head of the Coatzacoalcos River and from there down to city of Tehuantepec along the Pacific coast.⁴

In the Tehuantepec region, light balsa wood rafts are frequently hewn out of trees and used for transportation along the local water routes. “The dexterity with which the Indians manage these balsas (often heavily laden), in passing over terrible rapids and through narrow passages filled with rugged rocks, where even a canoe could not possibly live, is truly surprising.”⁵ Kamar Al-Shimas notes that various kinds of canoes are also used in this region: “When ascending the river the boat is kept within arm’s length of the bank, and fifteen miles with a heavily loaded canoe or *thirty*

miles with a light traveling-canoe is accounted a good day’s work. In descending the stream, paddles are used, the canoe is kept to the center of the stream to take advantage of the current, and *fifty miles* is *easily* accomplished between daylight and set of the sun.”⁶

While it was a day and a half journey on the defensive line “from the east to the west sea” (Alma 22:32), it was apparently only a day’s journey “from the west sea unto the east” (Helaman 3:7). Although other interpretations are possible, these two passages would make sense if part of that journey was by water, since those traveling eastward would be going downstream and could presumably move much faster with the current than would those journeying upstream.

By Matthew Roper

Notes

1. See John L. Sorenson, *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book*, 1992, 393–94.
2. Ross Hassig, *Trade, Tribute, and Transportation: The Sixteenth Century Political Economy of the Valley of Mexico*, 1985, 175–76 (map included).
3. J. J. Williams, *The Isthmus of Tehuantepec*, 1852, 239–40.
4. See Miguel Covarrubias, *Mexico South: The Isthmus of Tehuantepec*, 1947, 168.
5. Williams, *Isthmus of Tehuantepec*, 247.
6. Kamar Al-Shimas, *The Mexican Southland*, 1922, 149; emphasis added.

New FARMS publications

Honorary Volume Focuses on Church History and Doctrine

Richard Lloyd Anderson—known as a devoted teacher, careful writer, and perfect gentleman—has had a great impact on the study of LDS Church history. In *The Disciple as Witness: Essays on Latter-day Saint History and Doctrine in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson*, one of two Festschrift volumes published in recognition of his work, friends and colleagues have written 18 scholarly studies in his honor. Several of these papers were presented on 8 March 1997 at a conference titled “Pioneers of the Restoration.”

In his introduction to *The Disciple as Witness*, Andrew H. Hedges (who edited the books along with Stephen D. Ricks and Donald W. Parry) reminds us of Anderson’s notable contribution to the study of LDS Church history: “Trained as both a historian and lawyer, the cautious, probing, analytical approach he brought to the field more than forty years ago revolutionized the way scholars have researched and written about Joseph Smith and the church he restored. Taking nothing for granted, Anderson reexamined the sources we thought we all knew, asked questions we never considered, and mined archives we never knew existed. The result was nothing short of spectacular, as the publications resulting from these efforts have largely rewritten our understanding of many of the seminal experiences of the early church and her founding prophet.”

Anderson’s legacy in the field of LDS Church history extends beyond his groundbreaking books and articles. Hedges suggests that Anderson “has interjected a much-needed professionalism and dignity into a field plagued with scathing accusa-

tions, rancorous debates, and emotional responses. Eager to collaborate and ever willing to share, he has influenced many who have come under his tutelage toward a career in church history and education, at the same time building bridges of

FARMS online



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WEB PAGE UPDATE

FARMS would like to bring your attention to four lectures located in the Member Services section of the FARMS Web site (<http://farms.byu.edu>). The lectures are prepared in video format, and you can view them just as if you were watching them on your television. To view the videos, first log in to FARMS Member Services. Click on the Book of Mormon Lecture Series icon. You will then see the following pictures and descriptions:



The Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon

Stephen D. Ricks



Lessons We Have Yet to Learn from the Book of Mormon

John W. Welch



The Atonement in the Book of Mormon

Robert L. Millet



Zion and the Spirit of At-One-Ment

M. Catherine Thomas

The lectures can be viewed on both IBM and Macintosh computers using the Windows Media Player. If you do not already have the Media Player on your system, it can be downloaded for free from the current page. After downloading the Media Player, simply click the Play Video button below the lecture you want to hear.

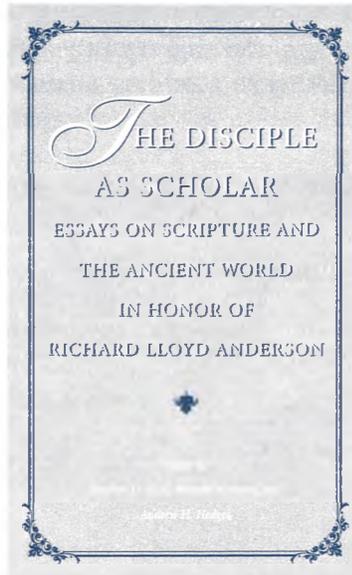
trust and respect with many whose personal beliefs about Joseph Smith and the restoration differ markedly from his own."

Each contributor to this volume has been touched by Anderson's kindness and the caliber of his work. The breadth of topics these studies cover and the quality of their research and writing reflect Anderson's own work.

An essay by Davis Bitton, "The Ram and the Lion: Lyman Wight and Brigham Young," chronicles apostle Lyman Wight's disaffection with and ultimate excommunication from the church following Joseph Smith's martyrdom. Fiercely loyal to the Prophet, and having missed out—as a result of circumstances beyond his control—on opportunities to develop a close relationship with Brigham Young and others of the Twelve during the Missouri exodus and the British mission, Wight was unable to support Brigham after Joseph's death and find his niche in the postmartyrdom church. Bitton's subsequent insights and conclusions are based on several years' study of Wight and constitute a significant addition to the literature on this challenging period in church history.

In another article, "The Role of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible in the Restoration of Doctrine," Robert J. Matthews considers a topic he has spent a lifetime studying. Discussing the importance of the JST, Matthews notes how changes in the Bible over the centuries have reduced its clarity and points out the problems that face scholars who try to recover the original text and meaning. Still, the need to restore the original biblical message is pressing. "I do not think it sufficient for the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price alone to restore the missing doctrinal truth," Matthews writes. "Justice requires that the Bible itself be restored as an expert witness."

Matthews invites all scholars to consider the JST with deeper respect and urges them to recognize its distinctive contributions to biblical studies and the restoration of gospel doctrines.



Correlations between the dates of JST manuscripts and the timing of revelations now included in the Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price lead Matthews to conclude that much of the doctrinal development of the restored church occurred as Joseph Smith made inspired corrections to the Bible.

"The Return of Oliver Cowdery," by Scott H. Faulring, chronicles the gradual reconciliation of Mormonism's "second elder" with LDS Church leaders. Faulring observes that Oliver Cowdery evidently retained amicable feelings toward the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Twelve, and the church in general while he was estranged from them following his excommunication in 1838. Using previously unavailable sources, Faulring illuminates the ideological and practical complications that prolonged Cowdery's separation from the church and notes the eagerness of church leaders and Cowdery himself to bring about his rebaptism and reordination in 1848. Faulring's study builds on Richard Anderson's own work on Cowdery and adds considerably to our understanding of the character and struggles of this pivotal figure in the restoration.

The Disciple as Witness features further essays on Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, LDS museums, the *Lectures on Faith*, the printing of the Book of Mormon, the Kirtland Revelation Book, LDS missionary efforts (Anderson developed an early prototype of the missionary lessons used by LDS missionaries in their teaching), and early LDS Church history from scholars such as James B. Allen, Susan Easton Black, Glen M. Leonard, and Royal Skousen. Also included are topical and chronological bibliographies of Anderson's work compiled by David J. Whittaker.

The companion volume, titled *The Disciple as Scholar: Essays on Scripture and the Ancient World in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson*, is devoted to studies of ancient history, the Book of Mormon, and the Old and New Testaments (see the April issue of *INSIGHTS* for details). For purchasing information, see the order form or visit the FARMS Web site.



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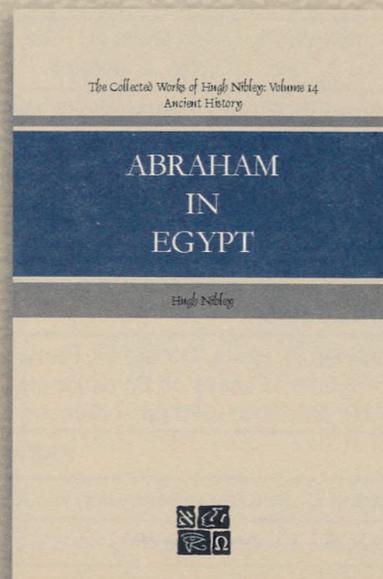
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ABRAHAM IN EGYPT

THE LATEST FROM HUGH NIBLEY!

This revised and polished edition of *Abraham in Egypt* combines Hugh Nibley's greatest lectures on Abraham with several new chapters that originally appeared in the *Improvement Era* from 1968 to 1970 as the series "A Look at the Pearl of Great Price." In this volume Nibley counters the attacks of critics and demonstrates how the Book of Abraham is just what Joseph Smith claimed it to be.

\$34.95 \$28.00 N-14



*FARMS project reports***Iron Ore Occurrences in Oman**

On 5 April 2000 three BYU geology professors and a professional geologist reported on their work of evaluating the presence of iron ore in southern Oman. Titled "Nephi's Tools: An Overview of Iron Ore Occurrences in Oman," the session featured reports by Ronald A. Harris, Eugene E. Clark, Jeffrey D. Keith, and W. Revell Phillips. Their recent work in Oman is part of the university's larger effort to learn more about the history and culture of ancient southern Arabia.

Harris, a professor of geology at BYU, discussed the tectonic setting of ore deposits in Oman. He explained that mineral deposits are not randomly distributed, but are concentrated by thermal and stress gradients along the edges of the earth's crustal plates. Oman has occupied the northeastern edge of the African plate for much of geologic time and therefore has an abundance of ore deposits. However, most of these deposits are buried beneath a thick cover of sedimentary rocks. The Dhofar region is one of the few places throughout the Arabian Peninsula where the ore deposits are exposed. The isolated occurrences of these deposits, as well as the lush vegetation of the Dhofar region made possible by high coastal mountains that induce precipitation, is due to geologically recent uplift of the edge of Arabia as it separated from East Africa to form the Gulf of Aden.

Formerly employed by Exxon and Standard Oil, Clark is familiar with the geological features of the Dhofar region of Oman. He pointed out that although there are some 230 springs or seeps in the region, only a dozen or so flow year-round. Investigators who see springs and farming areas and assume those areas have always been fertile are often mistaken, Clark said, because those areas are relatively new, made fertile with the advent of electricity for pumping water from distant areas. On the other hand, some of the dry wadis used to carry water have recently been capped in order for the water to be transported to the towns. He said that most of the soils in the area are quite poor but that the best soils are found in the Salalah area.

Keith, a BYU geology professor, reported on iron ore discoveries in the Dhofar region. The team found deposits of iron-rich carbonate, goethite, and hematite, which can be crushed, mixed together, and

heated to make a very usable form of iron ore. These deposits occur in two areas along the southern Omani coast in concentrations sufficient to have enabled Nephi to make tools for building his ship, Keith said. The team extracted some of this ore material, brought it back to BYU, and made iron out of it.

Phillips, a BYU emeritus professor of geology specializing in minerals, discussed metal technology in ancient times. He said that iron was abundant in all levels of society during the time of Nephi, who well could have used a pit furnace and bellows to make iron tools at relatively low temperatures. Inland from the Omani coast are copper deposits that were mined thousands of years ago and from which Nephi could have made bronze tools to build his ship if he did not use iron, Phillips said. He went on to explain that although bronze is not mentioned in the Book of Mormon, brass (an alloy of copper) is. Critics fault the Book of Mormon for its mention of brass, which was not invented until Roman times. However, Phillips noted that the term *brass*, as used during the period when the King James Version of the Bible was being translated (the Book of Mormon followed that same usage), referred to all forms of copper alloys, including bronze, and that the term *bronze* was not introduced into English until the 18th century.

The session was moderated by S. Kent Brown, a BYU professor of Ancient Scripture who is directing the parent project, referred to as "The End of Lehi's Trail." Under way for two years, the long-term project has several components, including fieldwork in the areas of botany, archaeology, mineralogy, geology, and DNA research. "We believe that field studies in these disciplines will tell us much that is relevant to our objectives," Brown stated in an interview. He explained further: "The frankincense that grows in southern Oman gave rise to one of the most important economic highways in the ancient world. That incense trail has drawn our attention. Hence, our research efforts focus on learning about the world in which the frankincense trade flourished as well as the ancient inhabitants who have given to Oman much of its distinctive character and history. The region locally called Dhofar is also the likely place of Lehi's Bountiful. It is the only area along the southern

coast of the Arabian Peninsula that fits Nephi's description of where the party of Lehi and Sariah emerged from the desert. Thus, our second purpose connects with Lehi's Bountiful, that is, to learn as much as we can about that area as it was in the first millennium B.C."

The project is sponsored by several BYU entities: the Religious Studies Center, Ancient Studies, FARMS, the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies, Near Eastern Studies, and the Department of Geology. "I anticipate that other sponsors will join in assisting the projects as we

continue our work," Brown said. Initial work in examining the plant life and mineralogical deposits in the region has already been completed, and DNA analysis with a view to learning about the origins of tribes and clans there has also begun. Archaeological excavations are being planned for December 2000.

This multipronged investigation in southern Arabia is expected to generate detailed studies that will be published in professional journals and elsewhere, including the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*.

Publicly speaking

Brown Bag Wrap-Up

Structure of Enoch's Vision

On 23 February Terry Szink, an instructor in BYU's Department of Ancient Scripture, analyzed the structure of Enoch's vision recorded in Moses 7-8 and discussed how understanding that structure reveals insights about the meaning of the vision. The vision covers three general time periods (the time of the Flood, the meridian of time, the last days) and uses similar terms to express parallel meanings about all three.

For example, Szink noted that scripture describes each period as a time of wickedness, and the Lord's attitude toward the majority of the people during these times is similarly described—as the "fire of his indignation" at the time of the Flood and as "vengeance" during the other two periods. Scripture also refers to the protection of the righteous during each period: at the time of the Flood Zion is removed, in the meridian of time the righteous are resurrected, and in the last days the Lord will preserve his people. Moreover, each period involves similar natural phenomena, such as seismic activity.

Book of Enoch

On 15 March George Nickelsburg, the Daniel J. Krumm Distinguished Professor of New Testament and Reformation Studies at the University of Iowa, discussed his recent completion of the first volume of an extensive commentary on *1 Enoch*, a pseudepigraphic work fully extant only in Ethiopic. He noted that his commentary devotes significant attention to the reception of *1 Enoch* in early

Christendom and to its position in the Jewish and Ethiopic traditions. For example, the church fathers Origen and Tertullian liked the text; but even though it provided a major paradigm used in the second and third centuries A.D. to explain the problem of evil in the world, the book fell into disuse after Augustine rejected it.

Later that day Nickelsburg, in addressing an audience gathered in the auditorium of BYU's Harold B. Lee Library, lectured on the book of Enoch and compared its worldview with that of the Dead Sea Scrolls community of Qumran. He explained that the corpus of the book of Enoch is ascribed to a sage who brought from heaven revelations on how to set the world straight. Similarly, the people of Qumran had a Teacher of Righteousness to guide them, God's chosen people, in the way of truth and righteous living before God. Nickelsburg discussed several scroll texts that reflect an apocalyptic world view, recounted the demise of the Qumran people, related aspects of their worldview to modern society, and concluded with a general call for humanity to avoid mistakes by learning the lessons of history.

Hellenization and the Early Christian Church

On 22 March Noel Reynolds, a professor of political science and former FARMS president now serving as a BYU associate vice president, examined the influence of Hellenization on the early Christian church in the context of the apostasy. He began by reporting on a new initiative that is re-considering the causes of the apostasy. Whereas the usual LDS approach to explaining the apostasy has

emphasized early Christianity's adoption of Greek philosophy and the resulting loss of vital gospel doctrines and ordinances, a developing view is that the apostasy was under way much earlier, well before the end of the first century A.D. Reynolds believes that the apostasy likely began soon after the death of the apostles (perhaps even during the lifetimes of the last surviving apostles), when the church lost its ability to speak with authority and maintain unity as its branches repudiated the Apostle Paul's authority and slipped into sin and error.

Reynolds considered the question of whether Greek philosophy of the second and third centuries A.D. was fundamentally incompatible with the prophetic perspective of the Bible or whether it was essentially salvational, enabling the church to pull together over the next century and to deal with heresy and persecution. He discussed points on both sides but indicated that much work remains to be done before conclusions can be drawn.

The Binding of Isaac

On 24 March David Bokovoy, a graduate student at Brandeis University and a Nibley Fellow, discussed literary, historical, and doctrinal aspects of the binding of Isaac, recorded in Genesis 22. He began by pointing out that early Rabbis were concerned about the difficult theological implications of Genesis 22, issues greatly clarified by additional information in the Book of Mormon (see Jacob 4:5) and the Book of Abraham. Bokovoy then highlighted

scriptural passages dealing with the altar as a place of refuge and deliverance and with the "Abraham cycle" (a literary pattern of promise, frustration, and renewal of the promise or covenant).

Egyptian *Ba*-Sending Texts

On 12 April John Gee, an assistant research professor at FARMS, discussed some of his research on Egyptian religion that he had previously presented at the Eighth International Congress of Egyptologists in Cairo, Egypt. He discussed a category of ancient Egyptian texts that dealt with sending or summoning the *ba* (a type of Egyptian spirit often translated as "soul") to appear in various places. Texts explicitly dealing with this sending or summoning the *ba* appear first in the Middle Kingdom (about 2000 B.C.) and can be found as late as Roman times (A.D. 300). Archaeological evidence corresponding to this rite has been found from the Old Kingdom (about 2500 B.C.) through Roman times (about A.D. 400). Discussions of the practice also appear in many Egyptian literary works and are even mentioned in early Christian literature. A summoned *ba* can serve as an attendant and help or hinder other people, and even deliver messages. *Ba*-sending texts have certain implications for the classification of spirits in ancient Egyptian religion and for certain literary works, and Gee spent much of the time discussing the various categories of *ba* from his research. His work will be published in the proceedings volume from the Cairo conference.

Lebanon and Vatican (continued from page 1)

Unlike FARMS's fully searchable and cross-linked Dead Sea Scrolls database, the Syriac database has been designed to simply store and display the digitized texts. Users will be able to view the pages onscreen and move through the material much as they would turn the pages of a book.

"There are tantalizing rumors of documents dating to the first century A.D.," Wilson said, "and we would like to be involved in helping bring them to the public." Christian-related texts of such early date are extremely rare because so very few biblical texts have survived to this day that date before A.D. 300, when Christian books were burned during the reign of Diocletian.

Archives in the Vatican Apostolic Library

Following negotiations begun in 1998, officials of the Vatican Apostolic Library met at the Vatican

City with Oswald and Wilson, who had traveled to Rome to finalize and sign a contract on 20 March 2000. The agreement, signed by Oswald on behalf of BYU, authorizes CPART to digitize 28 ancient Syriac documents from the library's excellent collections. The digitized material will be included in a CD-ROM database that will be of particular interest to Syriac-speaking Christians and scholars studying the history of Christianity.

Because the Vatican previously had no formal relations with CPART, FARMS, or Brigham Young University, it had no protocol for dealing with Latter-day Saint scholars. However, scholars from the Pontifical Biblical Institute and Pontifical Oriental Institute were familiar with Latter-day Saint contributions to Dead Sea Scrolls research, and the proposed project was further endorsed by

the Pontifical Council on Christian Unity. In addition, His Grace Bawai Soro, Bishop of the Assyrian Church of the East, helped open a dialogue between the CPART team and ecclesiastical authorities overseeing the Vatican archives.

Wilson made several trips to the Vatican to discuss the project with Father Don Rafaele Farina, prefect of the library, and with Bishop Soro and in order to select texts that will appeal to Syriac-speaking Christians from both Eastern and Western traditions, whose language and heritage are being lost because their communities are scattered.

Because different Syriac Christian communities already share a standard Bible (the Peshitta), the material selected for imaging does not include Bible texts. Rather, the texts consist of homilies, scriptural commentaries, and historical documents dealing with religious figures.

"This will be the first time that LDS scholars have participated in publishing manuscripts from the Vatican," said Oswald. "I am hopeful that our work on this project we will lead to further opportunities to do projects with the Vatican."

The CD-ROM will be copublished by CPART and the Vatican Apostolic Library and will be similar to the powerful electronic Dead Sea Scrolls database produced by CPART and FARMS.

Upcoming events

The free exhibit featuring Dead Sea Scroll replicas and artifacts continues to tour the Midwest until 30 August 2000. For the latest information about specific times and locations regarding the following schedule, contact an area stake center or visit the FARMS Web site (from the Free Services or the Member Services page, go to "Dead Sea Scrolls," found under "Links of Interest," and then to "Dead Sea Scrolls Traveling Exhibit").

- 11–13 May Madison, Wisconsin
- 16–17 May Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 19–20 May Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 23–24 May Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 26–27 May Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 27–28 May Dr. David Seely lectures on Dead Sea Scrolls
- 1–3 June Des Moines, Iowa
- 7–10 June Independence/Kansas City, Missouri
- 13–14 June St. Louis, Missouri
- 16–17 June St. Louis, Missouri
- 22 June–30 Aug. Nauvoo, Illinois

INSIGHTS

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The Purpose of FARMS

The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) encourages and supports research about the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ and other ancient scriptures. It also works to preserve ancient religious documents.

FARMS is a nonprofit educational foundation at Brigham Young University. 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.

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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.

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