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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 VOLUME 21 | 2001

Number 3

<http://farms.byu.edu>

## FARMS Becomes Integral Part of New BYU Institute

President Merrill J. Bateman recently announced the creation of the Brigham Young University Institute for the Study and Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts, which embraces BYU's Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) and the work of the former Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts (CPART).

FARMS will be the name under which the Institute undertakes projects, publications, and public relations and transacts business focused on topics and audiences associated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, said Daniel Oswald, executive director of the new Institute. The infrastructure of FARMS—in publications, operations, development, and administration—now provides the supporting infrastructure for the Institute.

“The establishment of this Institute represents BYU's commitment to the preservation and understanding of religious texts,” said President Bateman. “Because of BYU's efforts, people of many religious

traditions now have access to ancient records that were previously unavailable. With this new Institute, our hope is to increase access to many more of these rare documents.”

The production of the Dead Sea Scrolls on CD-ROM, the Islamic Translation Series, and the image-acquisition and electronic publication pioneered by CPART are noteworthy examples of the work being done at BYU, Oswald said. “The Institute will now be the university framework in which these projects find a comfortable and productive home.”

The Institute will direct a number of projects that come under one of two major divisions: (1) the study of ancient scripture and related subjects (e.g., traditional FARMS research on the Book of Mormon, the Book of Abraham, and early Christianity) and (2) the preservation, translation, and dissemination of ancient religious texts (e.g., the Dead Sea Scrolls and other Jewish texts and the Middle Eastern Texts Initiative). 



## Hugh Nibley Audiotope Collection Released

FARMS has released a new audiotape collection of essays by renowned Latter-day Saint scholar Hugh W. Nibley: a two-volume set titled *Preparing for the Millennium*. Read by Lloyd D. Newell, the audiotapes feature seven essays from *Nibley's Approaching Zion* (1998) and one essay from another volume in his collected works, *Brother Brigham Challenges the Saints* (1994).

Volume 1 of *Preparing for the Millennium* contains four essays that explore the character of Latter-

day Saint covenant obligations. In “Gifts” Nibley cautions, “The gifts [of God] do not excuse us from work, they leave us free to do the real work.” “Breakthroughs I Would Like to See” concerns the law of consecration, and “Change out of Control” considers repentance and the commandments of God as the only constants in an ever-changing world. In “Our Glory or Our Condemnation,” Nibley observes, “It is important in building up Zion and preparing for Paradise to keep an eye on Babylon, because the Saints have always had a habit of subsiding into the ways of Babylon.” He points out evidences of Babylon in our midst and challenges us to manage our stewardships responsibly.

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## “From the Foundation of the World”

In a recent *Ensign* article and in his talk at the April 2000 General Conference, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles cited a passage from a fourth-century-A.D. document known as *Discourse on Abbaton*.<sup>1</sup> Written by Timothy, archbishop of Alexandria, Egypt (d. 385), the text contains a passage in which Christ says of his Father the following:

He . . . made Adam according to Our image and likeness, and he left him lying for forty days and forty nights without putting breath into him. And He heaved sighs over him, saying, “If I put breath into this [man], he must suffer many pains.” And I said unto My Father, “Put breath into him; I will be an advocate for him.” And My Father said unto Me, “If I put breath into him, My beloved Son, Thou wilt be obliged to go down into the world, and to suffer many pains for him before Thou shalt have redeemed him, and made him to come back to his primal state.” And I said unto My Father, “Put breath into him; I will be his advocate, and I will go down into the world, and will fulfil Thy command.”<sup>2</sup>

This noncanonical work lends support to information

given to us by Joseph Smith in the Pearl of Great Price, where we read that the premortal Christ accepted the Father’s plan that he come to earth to save mankind (Moses 4:1–3; Abraham 3:22–28).

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The Book of Mormon repeatedly informs us that the atonement of Christ was “prepared from the foundation of the world” (Mosiah 4:6–7; 15:19; 18:13; Alma 12:30; 18:39; 22:13; 42:26; see 1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8). When the premortal Lord appeared to the brother of Jared, He declared: “Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ” (Ether 3:14). The idea that Christ was “prepared from before the foundation of the world” is also found in Moses 5:57 and 7:47.

The Book of Moses also informs us that God sent angels

to Adam and his posterity to teach them of the coming of Christ to save mankind from the fall (Moses 5:6–7, 57–58). A number of early Christian stories of Adam also have angels coming to deliver the same message. Among these are several Armenian texts; *Adam, Eve and the Incarnation* 39–43;

*Adam Story I*;<sup>3</sup> *History of Abel and Cain the Sons of Adam*;<sup>4</sup> and the 10th-century Byzantine scholar George Cedrenus’s *Historiarum Compendium*, 1:17.<sup>5</sup>

In other texts it is the premortal Christ himself who tells Adam and Eve of his future redemption of mankind. Among these texts are the Armenian *Expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden*<sup>6</sup> and the Ethiopic *Conflict of Adam and Eve I*.<sup>7</sup> In still other passages, it is the Father who tells Adam of the forthcoming atonement of Christ. These include the Arabic *Book of the Rolls*, folios 96a, 100b;<sup>8</sup> and the Syriac *Cave of Treasures*, folio 7b, columns 1–2.<sup>9</sup>

It would be impossible in this brief report to describe the full extent to which these early texts confirm the accounts found in the books of Abraham and Moses. That task is being taken up in a forthcoming FARMS book tentatively titled *Joseph Smith and the Ancient World*. But from the examples here, we can see that early Christians in such disparate locations as Armenia, Syria, Egypt, and Ethiopia believed not only that Christ had been designated as Savior prior to Adam's creation, but also that Adam and his immediate posterity were fully aware of God's plan of redemption. 

#### Notes

1. See Russell M. Nelson, "Jesus the Christ, Our Master and More," *Ensign*, April 2000, 13. Elder Nelson first referred to the passage in a fire-side address on 2 February 1992 at BYU. See "Jesus the Christ—Our Master and More," in *1991–92 Devotional and Fireside Speeches* (1992), 63–64.
2. *Discourse on Abbaton*, folios 11b–12a, in Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms* (1914), 482.
3. See Michael E. Stone, *Armenian Apocrypha Relating to Adam and Eve*, 55–59, 106.
4. See W. Lowndes Lipscomb, *The Armenian Apocryphal Adam Literature* (1990), 157.
5. See Stephen E. Robinson, *The Testament of Adam: An Examination of the Syriac and Greek Traditions* (1982), 13, 129; Robinson, "The Testament of Adam: An Updated Arbeitsbericht," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 5 (1989): 95.
6. See Lipscomb, *Armenian Apocryphal Adam Literature*, 138–41, 268–69.
7. See S. C. Malan, *The Book of Adam and Eve, also called The Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* (1882), 3–5, 17, 22–25, 45, 54, 81–84.
8. See Margaret Dunlop Gibson, *Apocrypha Arabica* (1901), 10, 16.
9. See Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Cave of Treasures* (1927), 67–68.

**By John A. Tvedtnes and Matthew P. Roper**

#### BROWN BAG REPORT

### Geometry and City Planning in Ancient America

John Clark, a professor of anthropology at BYU and a member of the FARMS Board of Trustees, gave a brown bag lecture on 6 December about geometry and city planning in ancient America. Using slides, Clark explained his theory that organized, planned cities had begun in Mesoamerica by about 850 B.C. He showed that several early cities had common plans and standards of measurement and orientation.

Clark used his findings, which challenge the conventional views in the field, to make seven points: (1) the earliest Olmec cities were built with the same plan, with a strict north-south orientation; (2) the cities all had the same geometric specifications and size; (3) each city had the same proportions, conforming to a specific rectangular grid; (4) the proportions of the cities matched the proportions of the human figurines and artwork

from the same time period; (5) the Olmecs used measurement units that relate to the body (i.e., arm span, arm length, forearm length) to lay out the cities; (6) the spatial configurations of the cities relate to ancient ritual numbers (e.g., 52, 260, 365); and (7) the original city was not only a sacred space but a map of time, both a calendar and a clock.

Showing slides of cities in Mesoamerica and North and South America, along with pictures of figurines and other artwork, Clark emphasized that the standards of measurement and ritual geometry were well known to the ancient inhabitants of the Americas. Concluding, Clark said that while much more research is needed to understand fully the geometry of ancient America, there are too many similarities in the cities he has studied to have come about by pure chance. Rather, these similarities indicate an extended period of contact among the peoples of the Americas. 

BYU's Department of Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature will host the annual meetings of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South at BYU and at the Provo Marriott on 19–21 April 2001. BYU professors John F. Hall and Roger Macfarlane are the co-chairs of the local committee.

On 19 April, Macfarlane will chair a double session titled "The Application of Multispectral Images of the Herculaneum Papyri." Presenters include David Armstrong, Catherine Atherton, David L. Blank, Steven W. Booras, Jeffrey B. Fish, Richard C. M. Janko, and Roger Macfarlane. A related lecture will be held that evening. Ludwig Koenen, emeritus professor of Greek at the University of Michigan, will speak on "Phoenix from the Ashes: the Carbonized Petra Papyri and their Secrets."

On 20 April, Hall will chair a special panel at BYU titled "Early Christianity in the Roman Empire." This session features papers by S. Kent Brown ("Land and Obedience in Luke/Acts"), John Gee ("New Light on Third-Century Theban Christianity"), John F. Hall ("Feeding Christians to the Lions: Persecution and Propaganda in Early Christianity"), Noel B. Reynolds ("History and Nature in Early Christian Thought"), and John W. Welch ("*Maleficium*, Fear, and *Maiestas* in the Trial of Jesus").

For information, including program, registration, and cost, visit the Classical Association's Web site at <http://www.rmc.edu/~gdaugher/ut01/index.html>. 

## Nibley Tapes continued from page 1

In "Zeal without Knowledge," in volume 2, Nibley urges us to earnestly seek wisdom and knowledge of the things that matter most. He asks pointedly, "Are we here to seek knowledge or seek the credits that will get us ahead in the world?" In "How Firm a Foundation! What Makes It So," Nibley discusses foundational aspects of the restored gospel, such as testimony and prophecy, and focuses on the law of consecration. "What Is Zion? A Distant View" considers the nature of Zion and identifies obstacles to its realization. "The instant one realizes that Zion is a possibility," Nibley contends, "one has no choice but to identify himself with the program that will bring about the quickest possible realization of its perfection." Also related to the theme of preparing for the Millennium is the essay "Man's Dominion, or Subduing the Earth," which discusses man's dominion over the animal kingdom in terms of lordship and service.

See the enclosed order form or visit the FARMS Web site for purchasing information. 



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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.

The Foundation works to make interim and final reports about this research available widely, promptly, and economically. These publications are peer reviewed to ensure scholarly standards are met. The proceeds from the sale of these publications, including most royalties, are used to support further research and publications on the scriptures. As a service to teachers and students of the scriptures, research results are distributed in both 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.

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