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Insights

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Restoring the Original Text of the Book of Mormon

Elegantly produced and weighing in at 652 pages, the first part of volume 4 in Professor Royal Skousen's ongoing Book of Mormon critical text project has just come from the press. Volumes 1 and 2, containing transcripts of the original manuscript and the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon, were published by FARMS in 2001. Volume 3, which will describe the history of the Book of Mormon text from Joseph Smith's original dictation through the current standard editions, will appear after all parts of volume 4 have been published. Volume 3 will include a complete analysis of the grammatical editing of the Book of Mormon.

Entitled *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon*, this fourth volume considers every significant change that has occurred in the English Book of Mormon over the 175 years since Joseph Smith first dictated it to his scribes; it also considers a number of conjectured revisions for specific passages. It draws not only upon the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon and upon the printer's manuscript prepared by Oliver Cowdery and two other scribes but also upon 20 significant printed versions ranging from the 1830 edition to the current standard editions published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Community of Christ (formerly known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints). In certain cases, Professor Skousen, an internationally known professor of linguistics and English language at Brigham Young University who has directed the Book of Mormon critical text project for the past 16 years, carefully analyzes evidence from usage elsewhere in the Book of Mormon to assist in establishing the original reading. Moreover, where applicable, he marshals additional evidence of language usage from dialectal and earlier English, as well as data from the King James Bible and the original

biblical languages, Hebrew and Greek. His purpose throughout is, as precisely as human means permit, to recover the original English-language text of the Book of Mormon. Part 1 of volume 4 commences with the title page and the witness statements and then proceeds from 1 Nephi 1 through 2 Nephi 10. It thus represents approximately one-seventh of the Book of Mormon as we have it. Successive parts of volume 4

[continued on page 6](#)

FARMS Review Offers Wide Coverage, Thoughtful Analysis

At nearly 500 pages, the latest issue of the FARMS Review (vol. 16, no. 1) continues its pattern of offering wide-ranging coverage and in-depth analysis aimed at encouraging reliable scholarship and helping readers make informed judgments about recent publications in the field of Mormon studies.

In the introduction, associate editor George L. Mitton notes the developing trend of "anti-Mormon writings deriving from the secular/agnostic/atheist wing rather than from sectarian sources" and the growing need to respond to those writings. He explains why, when evaluating publications critical of Mormonism, contributors to the *Review* consider not only the work itself but the author's past writings, preparation, and known prejudices and attitudes. From there Mitton reviews early attempts to discredit the Smith family (especially Joseph Jr.) and offers instructive correctives and comments.

Alan Goff responds to three essays in the controversial books *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon* and *American Apocrypha* that rely on the "Mosiah-first" theory of the Book of Mormon composition to support their claim that the book is of modern origin. These critics argue that after losing the 116 pages of manuscript, Joseph Smith wrote the books of Mosiah

[continued on page 7](#)

The Pleading Bar of God

Near the end of his life, the prophet Nephi referred to the day of judgment and declared that we, the readers of the Book of Mormon, will stand face to face with him before the bar of Christ (2 Nephi 33:11). Similarly, the prophets Jacob and Moroni referred to meeting us when we appear before “the pleasing bar” of God to be judged:

Jacob 6:13¹

finally I bid you farewell
 until I shall meet you before **the pleasing bar** of God
 which bar striketh the wicked
 with awful dread and fear

Moroni 10:34

and now I bid unto all farewell.
 I soon go to rest in the paradise of God
 until my spirit and body shall again reunite
 and I am brought forth triumphant through the air
 to meet you before **the pleasing bar**
 of the great Jehovah
 the eternal judge of both quick and dead

For the righteous, the bar of God may well be pleasing, but not for the wicked, as Jacob himself says in Jacob 6:13: “which bar striketh the wicked with awful dread and fear.” Nor do the nine other occurrences of “the bar of God” denote anything necessarily pleasing. In fact, three of them refer to it negatively:

2 Nephi 33:15

for what I seal on earth shall be brought
 against you at the judgment bar

Jacob 6:9

to stand with shame and awful guilt
 before the bar of God

Alma 5:22

how will any of you feel if ye shall stand
 before the bar of God having your garments stained
 with blood and all manner of filthiness

Christian Gellinek (who studied law at the University of Göttingen in Germany) believes that the textually difficult reading “the pleasing

bar of God” can be readily resolved if we replace the word *pleasing* with *pleading*—in other words, Jacob and Moroni will meet us before “the pleading bar of God” (personal communication, 25 September 2003). Phonetically, the words *pleading* and *pleasing* are nearly identical. What seems to have happened is that Oliver Cowdery, being completely unfamiliar with the legal term *pleading bar*, twice substituted the more familiar word *pleasing* for *pleading*, even though *pleasing* does not make much sense.

There are a number of examples in the original manuscript where Oliver made this kind of mistake—that is, if a word or a phrase was unknown to him, he substituted a more common word or phrase (but with varying degrees of success). In each of these cases, the substitution seems to have occurred in the original manuscript (O) as Oliver took down Joseph Smith’s dictation and later copied it into the printer’s manuscript (P):

weed (O, P) instead of *reed* (1830 edition)

1 Nephi 17:48

and whoso shall lay their hands upon me
 shall wither even as a dried **weed** > **reed**²

bosom (O, P) instead of *besom* ‘broom’ (1830 edition)

2 Nephi 24:23

and I will sweep it
 with the **bosom** > **besom** of destruction

arrest (O, P, 1830) instead of *wrest* (1837 edition)

Alma 13:20

behold the scriptures are before you
 if ye will **arrest** > **wrest** them
 it shall be to your own destruction

Alma 41:1

for behold some have **arrested** > **wrested**
 the scriptures

drugs (O, P) instead of *dregs* (1830 edition)

Alma 40:26

and they drink the **drugs** > **dregs** of a bitter cup

fraction (O, P) instead of *faction* (1830 edition)

Alma 58:36

behold we fear that there is
 some **fraction** > **faction** in the government

The examples of *weed* for *reed* and *fraction* for *faction* are not impossible readings, but given

Oliver's predilection to misinterpret unfamiliar expressions, *weed* and *fraction* are probably errors (see, for instance, the discussion regarding *weed*, in the recently published part 1 of volume 4 of the critical text).³ For each of the five cases listed above, English language usage supports the current reading.

For four of the expressions, the 1830 typesetter figured out the correct interpretation and emended the text appropriately (in the case of *besom*, he seems to have consulted his King James Bible). But the 1830 typesetter, just like Oliver Cowdery, could not figure out the correct reading for two cases—namely, the phrase “wrest the scriptures” and the legal expression “before the pleading bar.” The 1830 typesetter set both as Oliver had written them: “arrest the scriptures” and “before the pleasing bar.” The first of these was later corrected in the 1837 edition of the Book of Mormon, but the other has remained in all printed editions, apparently because no one until recently has recognized *pleasing bar* as a possible error for *pleading bar*.

One might wonder how Oliver Cowdery could have twice misinterpreted *pleading bar* as *pleasing bar*. Moroni 10:34 and Jacob 6:13 are located some distance apart; about 110 manuscript pages of O separates them (under the assumption that the small plates of Nephi were translated last). But one should note that the example of “wrest the scriptures” is also twice misinterpreted as “arrest the scriptures” and the distance between Alma 13:20 and Alma 41:1 is almost 70 manuscript pages of O, also a large amount. It is clearly possible to make the same misinterpretation at different times.

The term *pleading bar* appears to have been used in the English courts of earlier times, according to the following historical information available on the Internet:⁴

“The people who made the film reproduced the court room back at their studio. They had the jury bench, **the pleading bar**, everything, right down to the smallest detail of King Charles II's coat of arms. . . . In real life **the court's pleading bar, where prisoners stood while on trial**, is at the head of the stairs.

On the first floor is the Court Room where all criminal cases in Fordwich were tried until 1886. **The accused would stand flanked by the Town Constables, at the “pleading bar” situated at the head of the stairs. (Hence the expression “prisoner at the bar”).** The Judge

or chief magistrate was the Mayor for the time being and he sat in the chair at the north end of the room, flanked by six Jurats on each side, seated on the “bench”.


The term *pleading bar* is now archaic in England. Note that the first Internet citation provides a definition for “the court's pleading bar,” and the second uses quotation marks in referring to the “pleading bar.” The legal language now used in England refers to the defendant as “in the dock” (no longer “standing at the bar”). The *Oxford English Dictionary* lists no citations of the term *pleading bar*, but my colleague Ed Cutler in the English Department at Brigham Young University has found the following two instances of the term on Literature Online; both citations date from the early 1600s (spelling regularized here):

John Harington, *Orlando Furioso* (1607), stanza 46, lines 369–72:

If you deny my claim, here I will prove it,
This field the court, this list my **pleading bar**,
My plea is such, as no writ can remove it,
My judge must be the sequel of the war.

John Webster, *Appius and Virginia* (no later than 1634), act 5, scene 1

Fortune hath lift thee to my Chair,
and thrown me headlong to thy **pleading bar**.

And the actual translator of the Book of Mormon—either the Lord himself or his translation committee—seems to have been familiar with the term! And it provides a vivid picture of how momentous and potentially dreadful the day of judgment will be for us as defendants standing at the pleading bar, with the Lord as judge, twelve apostles as jury (1 Nephi 12:8–10), and Nephi, Jacob, and Moroni as witnesses. 

By Royal Skousen


Notes

1. Scriptural citations are based on the original text. Normally expected capitalization and punctuation are omitted.
2. X > Y means that word X was replaced with word Y.
3. Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part One: Title Page, Witness Statements, 1 Nephi 1 – 2 Nephi 10* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2004).
4. These three citations were accessed on the Internet 23 October 2003 via www.google.com under “pleading bar.”

Herculaneum Papyri Project Catalyzes New Oxford Society

Brigham Young University's Herculaneum papyri project continues to gain support among American and European scholars. The project's director, Roger T. Macfarlane, an associate professor of classics at BYU, was invited to serve on the organizing board of the nascent Herculaneum Society, which was inaugurated in Oxford, England, on 3 July 2004. The society promotes international attention on scholarship and fund-raising related to the ancient town of Herculaneum and its Villa of the Papyri. Together with David Armstrong, a classics professor at the University of Texas at Austin, Macfarlane will direct the North American division of the Herculaneum Society. "There is no secret," he says, "that the society is eager to capitalize on our project's success."

During the society's first year, a DVD copy of the KBYU-TV documentary *Out of the Ashes* is being offered as a perk for all new members. The board feels sure that the documentary's high quality will attract donors to the society's cause. The documentary, which has won two international awards and a prestigious Bronze Telly Award during 2004, tells the history of the Herculaneum papyri as well as the story of how BYU's Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts

(CPART, a sister organization of FARMS) has applied multispectral imaging technology to the scrolls. Information about the documentary is available online at www.byubroadcasting.org/ashes. The Herculaneum Society can be visited at www.herculaneum.ox.ac.uk, and the site contains a link to the inaugural edition of the newsletter *Herculaneum Archaeology*. To stay abreast of BYU's ongoing work on the Herculaneum papyri, visit the CPART Web site at <http://cpart.byu.edu> and select the "Herculaneum" link. 

Newsletter Survey Results

We would like to thank the more than 1,000 of you who participated in our subscriber survey several months ago. We have tallied the results, read your written comments, and considered how we can improve. Some of the results regarding the *Insights* newsletter may be of interest to you: 70% of subscribers are male, 30% female; 54% are over age 60 (26% age 50–59, 11% age 40–49, 5% age 30–39, 3% age 20–29, 1% under age 19); 91% read all or most articles; the favorite features are Scripture Insights (89%) and Updates (83%); 90% rate the quality of the newsletter "very good" or "excellent." Although we are pleased with the results, we are dedicated to improvement and will implement your suggestions for improvement where possible.

Ancient Exegesis and the Study of Scripture

Attention to exegesis in and of the Hebrew Bible has much to offer Latter-day Saint students of scripture in their efforts to understand the biblical text.* Exegesis is the explanation or interpretation of a text. The word is derived from Greek, meaning literally "to lead out (of)." The general study of biblical exegesis has come to incorporate at least three subdivisions, each having direct relevance for Latter-day Saints: inner-biblical allusion, biblical and postbiblical exegesis, and scribal comments and corrections.

Inner-biblical allusion refers, simply, to the Bible's self-reference. As Michael Fishbane has shown in his standard *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (1985), there is much evidence indicating that biblical authors used traditions found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible to "preserve, render contemporary, or otherwise reinterpret these teachings or traditions for new times and circumstances" (p. 8). An example of this is Jeremiah 2:3, in which Jeremiah adapts a law known from Leviticus 22:14–16 in order to reinforce his teaching of the importance of Israel's relationship with God. Another example is Malachi 1:6–2:9, in which the prophet turns the priestly blessing of Numbers 6:23–27 into a condemnation of priestly practice.

Also in this category is typological adaptation. In this type of allusion, new events are correlated with old ones, revealing, as James Kugel has observed, “unexpected unity in historical experience and providential continuity in its new patterns and shapes.”¹ Fishbane demonstrates that typological thinking prevalent in later Christian interpretation is already found in the Hebrew Bible (pp. 350–51). This type of interpretation is perhaps most common in linking the hope for future deliverance with the exodus from Egypt (see, for example, Hosea 2:16, Micah 7:14, Jeremiah 16:14, and their subsequent contexts).

Inner-biblical exegesis takes allusion a step further. In the context of the Bible, exegesis refers to the resolution of problems in an authoritative tradition or text. Thus it is most visible in exilic and postexilic texts (after the Old Testament had become more fully authoritative) and begins to flourish in the intertestamental period in apocryphal and pseudepigraphical materials. Genesis 15 is a perfect example of a text that needed (and needs) explaining because of several ambiguous references and the poorly understood covenant-making ceremony in the latter verses. In verse 6, for example, the subject of the latter clause is unclear: “And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” Who is doing the counting or reckoning? Ezra, in Nehemiah 9:7–8, clarifies exegetically Genesis 15:6, making these verses an example of inner-biblical exegesis. As Kugel has shown, however, the interpretation found in the latter books of the Old Testament is only the beginning.² First Maccabees 2:52, Romans 4:3, James 2:23, Philemon, and 1 Clement all attest varying exegetical traditions dealing with Genesis 15:6. And this barely scratches the surface of the number of texts that solve problems in Genesis 15, let alone in the Hebrew Bible.

Finally, the study of Old Testament exegesis also examines scribal manipulation of the text. Fishbane outlines four principal situations in which the scribes were wont to tamper with the text: when divine honor was at stake (1 Samuel 3:13), when they perceived pagan elements (Deuteronomy 32:8), when they perceived theologically problematic statements (2 Samuel 8:18), and when they saw a need to cast the king’s religious deportment in a better light (1 Kings 11:31–33). Fishbane remarks

that these “theological changes underscore the fact that those persons most responsible for maintaining the orthography of the texts tampered with their wording so as to preserve the religious dignity of these documents according to contemporary theological tastes” (p. 67).

This brief survey of certain points of biblical exegesis has important implications for Latter-day Saints. Inner-biblical allusion and exegesis show how ancient prophets and authors likened scriptures to themselves, adapting older traditions to new situations. The Book of Mormon provides a rich source for examining exegetical method, as evidenced by the work that has been done on Book of Mormon Isaiah commentaries.³ We have evidence of typological exegesis within the Book of Mormon in Alma 37:38–46, where the Liahona is compared typologically to obedience to the words of Christ, and arrival in the promised land is cast as a type of entrance to eternal life. A more subtle example of biblical allusion in the Book of Mormon is Nephi’s probable reliance upon a tradition similar to Exodus 21:13–14 (which indicates the conditions and consequences of taking a life when the victim was delivered up by God), underlying his account of the killing of Laban (1 Nephi 4:5–18). These prophets manifest an array of exegetical techniques that fit within many of the paradigms outlined by scholars. As John Day has remarked, the Old Testament prophets are rich in inner-biblical interpretation,⁴ and the Book of Mormon prophets are not different in this regard.

Regarding postbiblical exegesis, Kugel’s monumental work (including his observation that ancient interpreters saw the scriptural text as cryptic, fundamentally relevant, absolutely consistent, and divinely inspired)⁵ indicates that when we look to apocrypha and pseudepigrapha for evidence of ancient extrabiblical traditions, the utmost care should be taken not to overstate the issue when positing or reconstructing a tradition lost from the biblical text. This is because most of the time the interpreters create or reuse exegetical traditions that stem from a biblical text closely resembling our current version(s).

The study of scribal comments and corrections is interesting to Latter-day Saints because it helps reveal the process whereby the biblical text was

continued on page 6

Ancient Exegesis cont. from p. 5

manipulated and changed. It should be noted, likewise, that the scribes in many cases were probably not guilty of malfeasance but were attempting to make the text relevant to their current situation. In the end, as Fishbane concludes, the Hebrew Bible, “despite its authoritative character, is not a ‘clean’ or ‘corrected’ text-copy, but rather a compound of errors, corrections, and supplements” (p. 38).

The study of inner-biblical allusion and exegesis reveals the need for contemporary students of scripture to be intimately familiar with a broad range of biblical tradition, because often allusion and interpretation are found only with a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament text. As Fishbane notes, “Aside from [a] few instances of *explicit* citation or referral, the vast majority of cases of . . . exegesis in the Hebrew Bible involve *implicit* or virtual

citations” (p. 285). That is, prophets assumed their readers and listeners would have been so familiar with the tradition that a word or two would suffice to indicate to the audience a whole conceptual field.⁶ Thus, if we are to get at the fullest meaning of scripture, we must attempt to approximate the ancient familiarity with texts and traditions. 📖

By Cory Daniel Crawford

Notes

1. “The Bible’s Earliest Interpreters,” *Prooftexts* 7 (1987): 352.
2. *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (1998), 297, 308–11.
3. See, for example, *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon*, ed. Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch (1998).
4. “Prophecy,” in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture*, ed. D. A. Garson and H. G. M. Williamson [1988], 39.
5. See *Traditions of the Bible*, 14–19.
6. See S. Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word* (1996), 9–11.

Original Text cont. from page 1

will be published at the rate of one per year over the next four years until the entire text is analyzed.

Here in part 1 of volume 4, Professor Skousen examines 774 cases of variation or potential variation in his quest to determine the original reading of the Book of Mormon text. In 420 instances, the current standard version varies from his proposed original text, and 157 of these have never appeared in any standard printed edition of the Book of Mormon. Most of the 420 differences involve variation in phraseology, but 75 of them alter the meaning in ways that would affect translation—though never in a manner that changes either doctrinal content or the fundamental meaning of the text.

One of the most important findings of the critical text project, says Professor Skousen, is that “the original text of the Book of Mormon is much more consistent in its usage and phraseology than the current standard text.” Occasional errors of transmission have created what he terms textual “wrinkles,” where novelties have been introduced instead of the words and phrases that are consistently found elsewhere in the text.

For example, in our current version, 1 Nephi 8:31 states that Lehi “saw other multitudes *feeling*

their way” toward the tree of life. However, Professor Skousen observes that the original text is wholly consistent elsewhere in representing people as *pressing*, never *feeling*, their way. As it turns out and just as one might have expected, the original reading of 1 Nephi 8:31 explains that Lehi “saw other multitudes *pressing* their way” toward the tree of life. When Oliver Cowdery was preparing the printer’s manuscript, he misread the handwriting in the original manuscript of the unknown scribe 3, mistaking *pressing* for *feeling*.

At 1 Nephi 10:10, the current text describes John the Baptist as having baptized the Lamb of God, “who should take away the *sins* of the world.” But the original manuscript reads *sin*, in the singular. Elsewhere, the original Book of Mormon text normally speaks of the Savior as taking away the (plural) sins of mankind, but in the two places where it speaks of the atonement in connection with John’s baptism of Jesus (here in 1 Nephi 10:10 and in 2 Nephi 31:4), it uses the singular *sin*—precisely as does John the Baptist himself in the New Testament (see John 1:29).


1 Nephi 12:18 refers, in our current editions, to “the *word* of the justice of the eternal God.” But, in every similar case elsewhere, the Book of Mormon alludes to the *sword*, not the *word*, of God’s justice. And once again, Professor Skousen demon-

strates that Oliver Cowdery miscopied the original manuscript's *sword*, thus creating an inconsistent "wrinkle" in the text.

Other corrections include identifying the devil as the "proprietor" of hell at 1 Nephi 15:35, rather than as its "preparator," and changing the spelling of the name of a nonbiblical Old World prophet from *Zenock* to *Zenoch* (which, incidentally, is more acceptable as a Hebrew name).

An interesting case occurs at 2 Nephi 7:11, where the printer's manuscript has "behold all ye that *kindleth* fire." Professor Skousen argues persuasively that Oliver Cowdery misheard Joseph Smith's dictated "kindle a fire"—which, of course, sounds very similar—and notes it as evidence that the original manu-

script, for which this portion of the text is missing, was, just as Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery always said it was, orally dictated rather than copied.

Professor Skousen's critical text project is a landmark of meticulous, painstaking academic research, representing a high point in the history of Latter-day Saint scholarship. For decades, detractors of the Book of Mormon have pointed to textual changes in the book as evidence of its falsehood. Now, at a level of careful scholarship far beyond anything ever produced on this subject by any critic of the book, Royal Skousen has shown, without having set out to do so, that the text of the Book of Mormon is even more impressive than believers have previously recognized. 

FARMS Review cont. from p. 1

through Moroni and then wrote 1 and 2 Nephi last. The translation sequence is not in question, but the critics' application of it (which spares them the complex work of responsible textual analysis) is. For example, Goff refutes the idea that the Book of Mormon from Mosiah on shows no awareness of Nephi's prophecies of Christ's ministry in the New World because Joseph composed 1 and 2 Nephi last. He does this by demonstrating the integrity of the Book of Mormon's self-reference—its allusions to earlier passages that would have posed a major creative challenge had those subtleties been fabricated with nothing yet to allude to. Goff contends that "the evidence [for the Mosiah-first theory] ought to rely less on the ideological assumptions that there were no gold plates and that Joseph Smith composed a modern novel" and more on tools of textual analysis that revisionists conveniently ignore.

Daniel C. Peterson and Matthew Roper reveal Stan Larson's undersupported arguments regarding Thomas S. Ferguson's ventures in Book of Mormon archaeology. Ferguson was an amateur archaeologist who, critics claim, lost faith in the Book of Mormon after what they characterize as his expert research in the field. Larson's book on Ferguson, *Quest for the Gold Plates: Thomas Stuart Ferguson's Archaeological Search for the Book of Mormon*, is based on that claim. Peterson and Roper show the book to be flawed and inconclusive and its presentation of facts to be

incomplete. For example, Ferguson's family contests the statement that he lost his testimony of the Book of Mormon. Moreover, if it is true that his faith was undermined, it was due to his shallow research and not to a lack of evidence. The reviewers also discuss Larson's choice to ignore the qualified research of Ferguson's contemporaries, the lack of credible proof in Ferguson's own work, and recent extensive research on pre-Columbian Mesoamerica that shows Larson's claims to be largely founded on assumption.


In another review, M. Gerald Bradford appraises *From the Last Supper through the Resurrection*, a book edited by BYU religion professors Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment. The book details new insights into key events of the last two days of the Savior's mortal ministry. Bradford notes the sometimes complex but always rewarding nature of the studies and then explains how the various contributors achieve a good representation of the diverse opinions on the subject matter while expressing their testimonies of the Savior. He concludes that this anthology will be valuable within and outside the Latter-day Saint faith because of its scholarship and unique perspective.

Two other reviews treat topics of unique interest. In his review of Gavin Menzies's book *1421, the Year China Discovered America*, John A. Tvedtnes outlines current evidence for an early Chinese presence in the Americas and explains how those findings might contribute to Book of Mormon research.

continued on page 8

FARMS Review cont. from p. 7

Gaye Strathearn reviews Jeffrey A. Trumbower's *Rescue for the Dead: The Posthumous Salvation of Non-Christians in Early Christianity*, a volume from a non-Latter-day Saint writer documenting evidence of baptism and prayer for the dead in the early Christian church. Strathearn discusses and commends both Trumbower's research and his notes on the Latter-day Saint practices concerning salvation for the dead.

In addition to its 13 book reviews, this issue of the *Review* includes 6 essays of related interest, 15 book notes, the editor's rating of recent books, and an index to the 2003 issues. The freestanding essays deal with such topics as recent trends in Book of Mormon apologetics, secret combinations, and the New World Archaeological Foundation. To purchase a copy of the *FARMS Review*, use the enclosed mail-order form or visit the FARMS section (under "BYU Publications") of byubookstore.com. 

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

Journal of Book of Mormon Studies (vol. 13, nos. 1–2), edited by S. Kent Brown, is a special double issue devoted to the Hill Cumorah. Studies include the geologic history and archaeology of the area, early accounts of a cave in the hill, the Hill Cumorah Pageant (its history, music, and costuming), Latter-day Saint poetry, the Hill Cumorah Monument, a linguistic analysis of the name *Cumorah*, and the earliest photographs of the hill. Available late fall 2004.

Apostles and Bishops in Early Christianity, edited by John Hall and John W. Welch, represents an edited, expanded version of Hugh Nibley's lecture notes from a class he taught in 1954. This volume explores the offices of apostle and bishop, the priesthood authority associated with them, and questions of succession in the early church and in Rome. Copublished with Deseret Book, it will appear as volume 15 in the Collected Works of Hugh Nibley. Available late fall 2004.

Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant, edited by John Gee and Brian Hauglid, is the third volume in the Book of Abraham Series. It includes papers from a FARMS-sponsored conference on the Book of Abraham and covers such topics as Abraham's vision of the heavens, commonalities between the Book of Abraham and noncanonical ancient texts, and the significance of the Abraham covenant. Available early 2005.

Forthcoming METI Publications

Theodore Abu Qurrah, translated and introduced by John C. Lamoreaux of Southern Methodist University, includes first-ever English translations of a substantial portion of Theodore Abu Qurrah's writings, which treat such issues as the characteristics of true religion and the nature of free will. Abu Qurrah (fl. AD 810), the bishop of Harran (in modern-day southern Turkey), was one of the first Christians to write in Arabic and to mount a sustained theological defense of Christianity against Islam. Available late 2004.

Insights

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FARMS is part of Brigham Young University's Institute for the Study and Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts. As such, it encourages and supports research on the Book of Mormon, the Book of Abraham, the Bible, other ancient scripture, and related subjects. Under the FARMS imprint, the Institute publishes and distributes titles in these areas for the benefit of scholars and interested Latter-day Saint readers.

Primary research interests at FARMS include the history, language, literature, culture, geography, politics, and law relevant to ancient scripture. Although such subjects are of secondary importance when compared with the spiritual and eternal messages of scripture, solid research and academic perspectives can supply certain kinds of useful information, even if only tentatively, concerning many significant and interesting questions about scripture.

FARMS makes interim and final reports about this research available widely, promptly, and economically. These publications are peer reviewed to ensure that scholarly standards are met. The proceeds from the sale of these materials are used to support further research and publications. As a service to teachers and students of the scriptures, research results are distributed in both scholarly and popular formats.

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