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The Foundation for  
Ancient Research  
& Mormon Studies

# INSIGHTS

AN ANCIENT WINDOW

1994, No. 6

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

November

## Scholarly Review Enlightens and Seriously Entertains

Another lively issue of the *Review* contains articles that examine materials written by Orson Scott Card, Chris Heimerdinger, Robert Millet, Joseph

Fielding McConkie, Neal Lambert, S. Kent Brown, Scott and Maurine Proctor, and others. Also reviewed are the works of some individuals critical of faithful scholarship, including Jerald and Sandra Tanner, George D. Smith, Paul and

Margaret Toscano, and Brent Metcalfe, and others. Fiction, nonfiction, and fiction masquerading as nonfiction—all receive careful yet entertaining treatment. Topics addressed include geography, historicity, tolerance, logic, documentary evidence, plagiarism, Israelite festivals, faith, the atonement, and the contributions of LDS fiction (and many others).

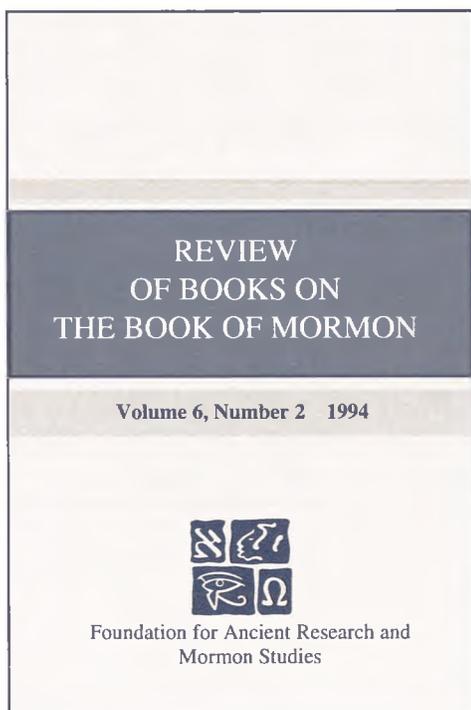
This issue also contains the annual bibliography of materials published on the Book of Mormon. See the order form to obtain your copy.

## Elder Eyring Inspires F.A.R.M.S. Workers and Friends at Annual Banquet

More than 300 people attended this year's F.A.R.M.S. banquet, held on October 13 at BYU. Noel Reynolds, F.A.R.M.S. president, gave a review of the past year and reported on plans for the future, and Kent Wallace received an award as the F.A.R.M.S. volunteer of the year for 1994. The members of the board of directors of the Foundation consider very valuable every opportunity to associate with and learn from some of the many individuals who provide invaluable support to F.A.R.M.S., and this gathering was no exception.

The highlight of the evening was an address by Elder Henry B. Eyring. Elder Eyring reflected on the history of F.A.R.M.S. and, in the form of a report on what he believes we have done well, he challenged us to keep our sights set on some high standards: recognition of the objective nature of truth and of the primacy of a spiritual witness of that truth; modesty and caution in offering evidence to support that spiritual witness and to lead people to seek it; and charity toward those with whom we disagree, knowing "that a spirit of contention will drive away the very influence by which they can know truth. . . . With confidence that there is truth which can edify, with humility which will protect your integrity, and with kindness toward each other and those you hope to invite rather than to vanquish, you will continue to prosper in receiving the help of heaven and you will be an example for good among scholars everywhere."

A video of Elder Eyring's remarks, along with a brief video report of the activities of F.A.R.M.S. during the past year, can be ordered using the enclosed order form. Transcripts of the talk are also available.





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

The Foundation for Ancient Research & Mormon Studies

Number 97

November 1994

## The "Decapitation" of Shiz

**E** THER 15:29-32 DESCRIBES THE gory end of the last Jaredite battle. Exhausted, Coriantumr propped himself up with his own sword, gathered his last ounce of strength, and "smote off the head of Shiz," his arch-rival who had fainted beside him from the loss of blood. The smitten Shiz then "raised upon his hands and fell; and after that he had struggled for breath, he died," and Coriantumr himself collapsed.

People have long wondered how Shiz could raise himself up, fall, and gasp for breath if his head had been cut off. Dr. Gary M. Hadfield, M.D., professor of pathology (neuropathology) at the Medical College of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University, in Richmond, Virginia, has recently published in *BYU Studies*, 33 (1993): 324-25, the following diagnosis:

Shiz's death struggle illustrates the classic reflex posture that occurs in both humans and animals when the upper brain stem (midbrain/mesencephalon) is disconnected from the brain. The extensor muscles of the arms and legs contract, and this reflex action could cause Shiz to raise up on his hands.<sup>1</sup> . . . In many patients, it is the sparing of vital respiratory and blood pressure centers in the central (pons) and lower (medulla) brain stem that permits survival.<sup>2</sup> . . .

The brain stem is located inside the base of the skull and is relatively small. It connects the brain proper, or cerebrum, with the spinal cord in the neck. Coriantumr was obviously too exhausted to do a clean job. His stroke evidently strayed a little too high. He must have cut off Shiz's head through the base of the skull, at the level of the midbrain, instead of lower through the cervical spine in the curvature of the neck. . . . Significantly, this nervous system phenomenon (decerebrate rigidity) was first reported in 1898, long after the Book of Mormon was published.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the account of the staggering death of Shiz is not a figment of dramatic imagination, but the Book of Mormon account is plausibly consistent with medical science.

Moreover, linguistic analysis sustains the foregoing clinical analysis by confirming that the words *smote off* need not mean that Shiz's head was completely severed by Coriantumr. In Judges 5, an equally gruesome account is given of Sisera's death at the hands of Jael, the wife of Heber. The English translation of the relevant verses reads:

She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she

had pierced and stricken through his temples. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead. (Judges 5:26-27)

This text shows that the English words *smote off* need not refer to a total decapitation, for surely Jael did not cleanly chop off Sisera's head using a hammer. Instead, the English words *smote off* here simply mean that Jael struck Sisera extremely hard. Indeed, both the Hebrew and Greek words translated as *smote off* mean "to hammer" or "to strike down with a hammer or stamp," but not generally to smite off, and accordingly the New English Bible reads, "with the hammer she struck Sisera, she crushed his head." No more necessarily does Joseph Smith's translation in Ether 15:30 need to mean that Shiz's head was completely cut off. Fifty or sixty percent off would easily have been enough to get the job done, leaving Shiz to reflex and die.

### Notes

1. A. B. Baker and L. H. Baker, *Clinical Neurology*, 3 vols. (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 1:40, 65.
2. J. Adams and L. W. Duchon, *Greenfield's Neuropathology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 195-200.
3. C. S. Sherrington, "Decerebrate Rigidity, and Reflex Coordination of Movements," *Journal of Psychology* 22 (1898): 319.

Based on research by Gary M. Hadfield and John W. Welch

## New Contributions Extend the Book of Mormon Lecture Series

Filming and production continue on the F.A.R.M.S. Book of Mormon Lecture Series. This outstanding series is being used in an increasing number of classrooms and homes and is being broadcast on public and cable TV as more and more students and teachers of the scriptures come to value the insights expressed in the lectures. Four additional lectures are now available on the order form that accompanies this issue of *Insights*. Each lecture is offered in three formats: video, audiotape, and printed transcript.

In "The Atonement as Taught in the Book of Mormon," Robert L. Millet discusses the centrality of Christ's atonement in the Book of Mormon. Millet, Dean of Religious Education at BYU, illuminates the "good news" of the gospel—the hope of redemption through Christ. He teaches that "the atonement is meant to do more than just set justice straight. It isn't just a matter of fixing the books. The purpose of the atonement is to make us into creatures who are capable of being in Celestial Presence. . . . It's not just a matter of balancing justice and mercy. It's the renovation of the human personality that Christ came to do. And, unless we repent and take advantage of that saving grace through him, that will never take place." Using examples of Nephite prophets, he shows how the Book of Mormon both gives an invitation to come unto Christ and also teaches how to come unto him.

In another lecture, Richard L. Anderson, professor of Ancient Scripture at BYU, discusses the "Book of Mormon Witnesses." In light of recent publications questioning the historicity of the Book of Mormon, Anderson's reminder

that we have contemporary witnesses that support Joseph Smith's testimony of the book is timely and invaluable. He examines original materials on each of the eleven witnesses and concludes that they never wavered in their testimonies of the Book of Mormon, that their lives support their printed testimonies, and that, therefore, their testimonies as witnesses must be taken at face value.

James E. Faulconer of the BYU Philosophy Department recently served as a Presiding Bishopric missionary with an assignment to help the Church Translation Department prepare materials to guide translators of the Book of Mormon. In "How to Study the Book of Mormon" he shares insights gained from the intense study of the Book of Mormon required to fulfill the assignment, including his strengthened testimony that the book is exactly what Joseph Smith said it is and that Joseph could not have produced it except through the gift and power of God.

In "The Book of Mormon in Ancient America," John L. Sorenson, professor emeritus of Anthropology at BYU, draws on his lifetime of study as an archaeologist and student of the scriptures. He discusses

the two-edged nature of evidences for the Book of Mormon: how they can be helpful and how they might be harmful.

He also makes a case for the importance of understanding the history contained in the book in order to understand its teachings, concluding that "only when we understand the history, the scenery, the events, the contexts, the settings, the motives, and the cultural background will we be as clear as we can about why Nephi said what he said at a given moment, . . . why Mormon chose to incorporate what he did choose to incorporate in his book at the end of the Nephite era."

### Call for Papers

Paul Y. Hoskisson is soliciting articles to be included in a monograph entitled *Historicity and Latter-day Saint Scripture*. The papers should discuss the theoretical and practical historicity of the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Bible. Please send manuscripts by 1 July 1995 to Paul Y. Hoskisson, JSB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602-5601.

### Board Chairman Recuperating

Stephen D. Ricks, chairman of the F.A.R.M.S. board of directors, is recovering nicely after undergoing brain surgery in Vienna to remove blood clots that had caused a stroke. The clots apparently originated in some deep bruising in his shoulder he

received in a car accident. We appreciate the many expressions of concern and the prayer and fasting in Stephen's behalf, and we join with you in seeking the Lord's blessings for a complete and speedy recovery.

## Your Contributions to F.A.R.M.S. Are Necessary and Very Much Appreciated

As you consider your charitable giving for the end of the year and make plans for 1995, please remember F.A.R.M.S. We thank you for your tremendous support of research and publishing on the Book of Mormon and ancient scriptures, and we encourage you to continue giving to Foundation projects. Because F.A.R.M.S. qualifies with the IRS as a non-profit, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, your contributions are deductible on your personal and corporate tax returns.

Many employers will match your contributions. In addition to direct contributions, other ways to give include purchasing an insurance policy listing F.A.R.M.S. as the beneficiary, including F.A.R.M.S. in your estate planning, and giving stocks or other assets as "in-kind" donations. For additional information, or to discuss any ideas you might have, call the F.A.R.M.S. office toll free at 1-800-327-6715 or check the box on the order form indicating that you would like us to call you.

## Transcript of Madsen Fireside Available

In September, Truman G. Madsen, professor emeritus of Philosophy at BYU, spoke at a F.A.R.M.S.-sponsored fireside in the San Francisco area. More than a thousand people attended, including long-time friends of the Foundation and many who had never encountered F.A.R.M.S. before. We wish to thank Doctor Madsen for participating in this and other F.A.R.M.S. events as part of our effort to spread word of Book of Mormon research and the work of the Foundation. We also thank all who helped to make this and other recent firesides so successful. We are interested in holding additional firesides as interest and travel allow. If you would like to help arrange such an event, please call the F.A.R.M.S. office at 1-800-327-6715.

Brother Madsen addressed the topic "The Temple and the Atonement." Going beyond his

essay in *Temples of the Ancient World*, he considered why the early Saints in this dispensation were willing to suffer so much to build temples: the time and energy, the financial cost, the persecution, and the disappointment. From a worldly point of view, these temple-building efforts would have to be considered failures, so why did the people seek to build temples so earnestly?

In answer, Madsen discussed the role of the temple in Heavenly Father's plan and described the blessings of the temple that the early Saints desired and that should inspire us today. He discussed the way that its symbolism, teachings, and covenants help the faithful to understand better and participate more fully in the atonement of Jesus Christ.

Copies of this inspiring and informative address can be obtained using the order form accompanying this issue of *Insights*.

# INSIGHTS

AN ANCIENT WINDOW

Published by the  
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### 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.

## FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

# New Testament Book Sale

For a limited time, F.A.R.M.S. offers selected books at a 20% discount for both the student and teacher of the New Testament. These fascinating books can help all readers enjoy and understand the times in which the Savior and his apostles lived and provide new insights into their works and teachings.

In recent years, many scholarly books have been written about the religious and cultural backgrounds of the New Testament. The following selections from a variety of publishers are general resources that can help any reader. If in your reading of the New Testament in 1995 you plan to use any supplementary materials, you should consider these titles. They are recommended for the factual information they contain, from which readers are invited to draw their own conclusions.

Tyndale, *New Bible Dictionary*. Tyndale, second edition, cloth  
retail ~~\$27.99~~ \$22.50    Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

C. K. Barrett, *New Testament Background: Selected Documents*. Harper Collins, paper.  
retail ~~\$16.00~~ \$14.50    Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

F. F. Bruce, *A New Testament History*. Doubleday, paper.  
retail ~~\$12.95~~ \$10.35    Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. Fortress, paper.  
retail ~~\$14.00~~ \$11.20    Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

John Welch, *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount*. Deseret Book, cloth.  
retail ~~\$13.95~~ \$11.15    Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

Hugh W. Nibley, *The World and the Prophets*. Deseret Book, cloth.  
retail ~~\$15.95~~ \$12.75    Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

Hugh W. Nibley, *Mormonism and Early Christianity*. Deseret Book, cloth.  
retail ~~\$23.95~~ \$19.15    Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

Richard Anderson, *Understanding Paul*. Deseret Book, cloth.  
retail ~~\$15.95~~ \$12.75    Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*. Eerdmans, cloth.  
retail ~~\$34.99~~ \$27.95    Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet, *The Gospels*. Deseret Book, cloth.  
retail ~~\$15.95~~ \$12.75    Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the New Testament: The Four Gospels*. Deseret Book, cloth.  
retail ~~\$13.95~~ \$11.15    Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

Richard D. Draper, *Opening the Seven Seals*. Deseret Book, cloth.  
retail ~~\$12.95~~ \$10.35    Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

Steven J. Hite and Julie M. Hite, *The New Testament with the Joseph Smith Translation* (also contains a gospel harmony). Paper  
retail ~~\$19.95~~ \$15.95    Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

D. Kelly Ogden, *Where Jesus Walked*. Deseret Book, cloth.  
retail ~~\$16.95~~ \$13.50    Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

In addition, volumes of the Anchor Bible series (\$14.00 to \$40.00) are also available. This series give thorough analysis of textual, linguistic, structural, historical, and theological aspects of individual books of the New Testament. Please write or call for details.

## Great Gifts for Christmas

Looking for a Christmas gift idea? What better gift than books that will help people better understand and appreciate their study of the New Testament next year?

Catalog Number	Titles	Qty.	Unit Price	Total Price
REV-94	Daniel C. Peterson, ed., <i>Review of Books on the Book of Mormon</i> , vol. 6, no. 2, 350 pp.		\$8.95	
AND-V1 AND-T1 AND-VT1	Richard Anderson, "Book of Mormon Witnesses," video audiotape transcript		\$7.95 \$5.95 \$1.50	
FAU-V1 FAU-T1 FAU-VT1	James E. Faulconer, "How to Study the Book of Mormon," video audiotape transcript		\$7.95 \$5.95 \$1.50	
MIL-V4 MIL-T4 MIL-VT4	Robert L. Millet, "The Atonement in the Book of Mormon," video audiotape transcript		\$7.95 \$5.95 \$1.50	
SOR-V1 SOR-T1 SOR-VT1	John L. Sorenson, "The Book of Mormon in Ancient America," video audiotape transcript		\$7.95 \$5.95 \$1.50	
BAN-V94	Highlights, 1994 F.A.R.M.S. banquet, including Elder Eyring's address, video, 42 min.		\$7.95	
EYR-94	Elder Henry B. Eyring, "The Marketplace of Ideas," address, F.A.R.M.S. banquet, 13 pp.		\$1.50	
MAD-94	Truman G. Madsen, "The Temple and the Atonement," fireside transcript, 35 pp.		\$3.00	
AST-94	Warren and Michaela Aston, <i>In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi's Journey across Arabia to Bountiful</i> . Deseret Book, 93 pp., retail \$15.95. <b>Special price, 25% off.</b>		\$12.00	
HOL-94	Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, Address at 1994 CES symposium. 24 pp.		\$2.25	
N-V4d	Semester 4, <i>Hugh Nibley Book of Mormon Class on Video</i> , 14 tapes and transcripts.		\$100.00	
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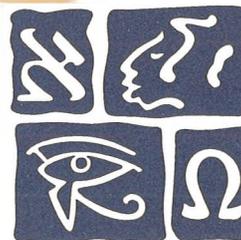
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