



# BOOK OF MORMON CENTRAL

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# INSIGHTS

A WINDOW ON THE ANCIENT WORLD

April 2000

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

## ***To All the World: A Trove of Book of Mormon Studies***

*To All the World: The Book of Mormon Articles from the Encyclopedia of Mormonism* conveniently gathers 151 informative articles on the Book of Mormon under one cover. This new book from FARMS offers concise, encyclopedic treatments of numerous topics that will enhance understanding and appreciation of the Book of Mormon.

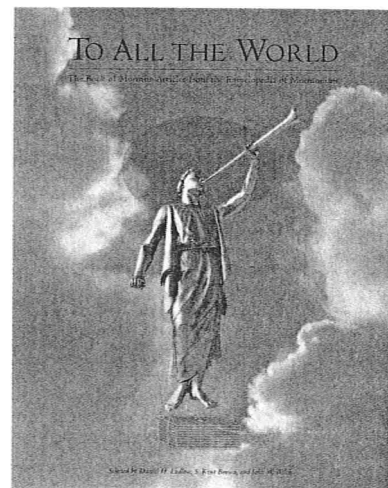
The entries appear alphabetically, and a helpful list organizes them into five categories: People in the Book of Mormon, Books of the Book of Mormon, Studies of the Book of Mormon, Teachings from the Book of Mormon, and the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon.

Specific topics range from religious teachings and practices, economy and government, editions, geography, and biographical sketches to women, warfare, and New Eastern backgrounds in the Book of Mormon. People, places, and events appear in scriptural and historical context, a strategy that helps unify and clarify the Book of Mormon

narrative and increase readers' appreciation of the record as a whole. Many articles offer commentary on Book of Mormon doctrines from both scriptural and prophetic sources.

*To All the World* features 45 illustrative photographs, maps, and charts, as well as expanded bibliographic sources and an extensive index of scriptural passages.

*To All the World* can be ordered by using the enclosed order form or by ordering directly from the catalog section of the FARMS Web site.



## **Evidence Surveyed for Book of Mormon Authenticity, Old World–New World Contacts**

Two recent magazine articles on topics of interest in Book of Mormon studies are available from FARMS as reprints (see the order form).

The first article, "Mounting Evidence for the Book of Mormon," by Daniel C. Peterson, appeared in the January 2000 issue of the *Ensign* magazine. The article explains the role of Book of Mormon

scholarship, notes the tremendous surge in publications of that kind in recent years, and highlights secondary evidence that supports the book's claim to ancient origins and inspired translation.

Peterson points out, for example, that recent studies by several scholars indicate that Joseph Smith could not have written the Book of Mormon. It is simply too complex and rooted in the ancient world for an unlearned farm boy to get all the details right. Such details include chiasmus (a literary technique of inverted parallelism in ancient texts), the mention of a reformed Egyptian script (some

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The Foundation for  
Ancient Research  
and Mormon Studies

# FARMS UPDATE

A Report on Research in Progress

Number 133

## Divine Speech Texts in the Book of Mormon

Readers of the Book of Mormon may be surprised to learn just how much of the text contains words attributed to deity.

In many cases the Book of Mormon writers took special care to state when they were quoting the Lord's words. For example, in Jacob 2 the prophet Jacob introduces the Lord's words by saying, "Hearken to the word of the Lord." Then, in the lengthy quotation that follows, he is careful to insert several attribution markers, such as "thus saith the Lord of Hosts," before closing the direct quotation with the phrase "saith the Lord of Hosts" (see vv. 27-33).

In other cases it is less clear whether the Lord is being quoted or whether his words appear in paraphrased form—in language based on knowledge obtained from God but stated more or less in a prophet's own words. In this study both direct and indirect speech attributed to deity are considered to be divine speech texts.

A helpful resource for delineating the less obvious speakers and boundaries of these passages is the *Book of Mormon Critical Text: A Tool for Scholarly Reference* (FARMS, 1986). For instance, it distinguishes the many shifts between Isaiah's words and the Lord's words in 2 Nephi.

The following preliminary list of divine speech texts in the

Book of Mormon has been constructed manually by searching the text for clear indications of the words of deity. Every verse on the list was checked and then further verified by consulting the *Book of Mormon Critical Text*. A statistical analysis of the resulting data (condensed in the chart below) indicates that 751 verses in the Book of Mormon contain distinct instances of divine speech texts. That amounts to 12.6 percent of the Book of Mormon, or, taken as a whole, one verse in every eight. As might be expected, these passages often

record commands, covenants, instruction, or direction given by the Lord to his children.

Because the Book of Mormon contains a significant density of words attributed to the Lord, readers will want to be alert to that authoritative voice. From the directive on Lehi's departure from Jerusalem to Mormon's revelation from Christ rejecting infant baptism, taking special notice of these passages is a springboard to fruitful scripture study.

**Based on research by Wm. Lyle Stamps**

	Verses containing divine speech texts	Total verses	Percentage
1. 1 Nephi	58	618	9.4
2. 2 Nephi	204	779	26.2
3. Jacob	13	203	6.4
4. Enos	6	27	22.2
5. Jarom	1	15	6.7
6. Omni	1	30	3.3
7. Words of Mormon	0	18	0
8. Mosiah	62	785	7.9
9. Alma	41	1947	2.1
10. Helaman	30	497	6.0
11. 3 Nephi	309	678	45.6
12. 4 Nephi	0	49	0
13. Mormon	7	227	3.1
14. Ether	41	433	9.5
15. Moroni	8	163	4.9
Small plates of Nephi	283	1,672	16.9
Large plates (abridged)	468	4,300	10.9
Book of Mormon (total)	751	5,972	12.6

## FARMS Web Site Features Insightful Papers

Under both the Free Services and Members Services sections of the FARMS Web site is a link called Featured Papers, where each month (and sometimes more often) a different FARMS paper is featured. Visitors to the site can read the paper online or print it out. To print the paper in a reader-friendly format, choose the print icon at the top of the displayed paper rather than the print command from your operating system. The regular print command will print the paper but not preserve the formatting.

The currently featured paper, titled "Nephi II," is by Noel B. Reynolds, former president of FARMS and now a member of its board of trustees. The paper is a transcript from a series of

video lectures on the Book of Mormon and focuses on Nephi's teachings on "the doctrine of Christ" (2 Nephi 31:21): repentance, humility, the Holy Ghost, pressing forward along the straight and narrow path, and hope.

In discussing the Holy Ghost, Reynolds says one of its functions "seems to be that of giving a witness to the convert from the Father and the Son. So, just as baptism by water constitutes a witness from the convert to the Father, so the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost is a witness from the Father and Son to the convert. It witnesses of the Father and the Son, thereby fulfilling the promise of the gospel that if you 'enter in by the way,'

ye shall receive (2 Nephi 32:5)."

Reynolds explains that Nephi's teachings about the doctrine, or gospel, of Christ are summarized in 2 Nephi 31. Nephi teaches that the gospel enables all men to be cleansed and to return to the Father, and as Reynolds points out, Nephi's final focus on this gospel is evidence of its importance.

Other papers that can be found on the FARMS Web site include "Leaders to Managers: The Fatal Shift," by Hugh W. Nibley; "The Temple and the Atonement," by Truman G. Madsen; "The Marketplace of Ideas," by Elder Henry B. Eyring; and "Other Voices from the Dust," by Daniel C. Peterson.

## New Edition of *Abraham in Egypt* Released

Eminent LDS scholar Hugh W. Nibley has long been a student and defender of the Book of Abraham. Now released in an enlarged and expanded second edition, Nibley's *Abraham in Egypt* (originally published by Deseret Book in 1981) focuses on the authenticity of the Book of Abraham. The edition includes four new chapters and several new sections within existing chapters. Additionally, more than 100 helpful illustrations enhance the text, and meticulous source checking and a new documentation format make the references easier for the reader to navigate.

Originally part of a series that appeared in the *Improvement*

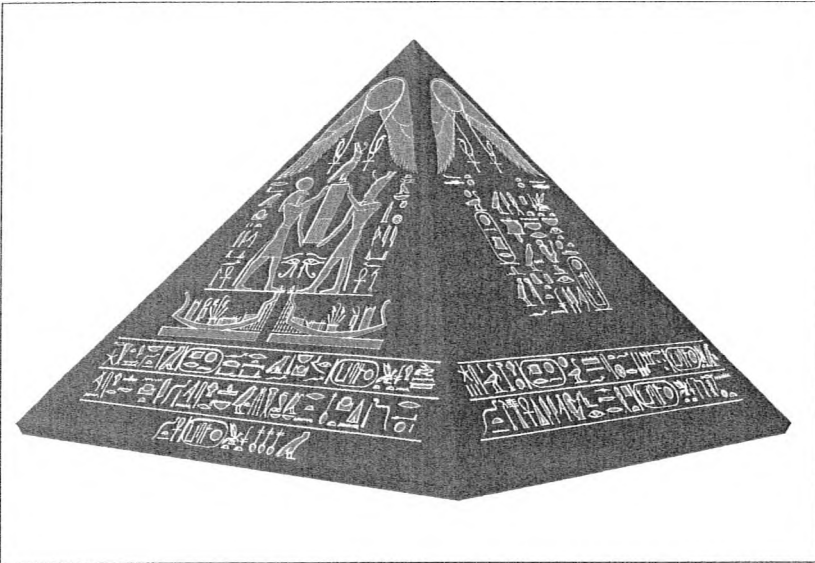
*Era* between 1968 and 1970, the new chapters treat the topics "Joseph Smith and the Critics," "Setting the Stage—the World of Abraham," "The Sacrifice of Isaac," and "The Sacrifice of Sarah." The book also includes new material on the apocalypse of Abraham and Reverend Franklin Spencer Spalding's attack on Mormonism.

In addition to addressing the authenticity of the Book of Abraham and the validity of its teachings, Nibley discusses the character of Abraham. As he points out, "Abraham was in the world, a wicked world very much like our own. From childhood to the grave, he was a stranger in his society because

he insisted on living by the principles of the gospel and preaching them to others wherever he went, even if it meant getting into trouble. . . . His object? Not to conquer or impress, but to bless all with whom he comes into contact, ultimately shedding the blessing that God gave to him on the whole human race."

Nibley also comments on the relevance of the Book of Abraham today. *Abraham in Egypt* counters criticisms leveled against the Book of Abraham and shows how the gap between Egyptian religion and early Christianity is narrowing. As Nibley concludes, "The argument against the Book of Abraham on which eminent

## Abraham in Egypt (continued from page 3)



Made of polished black granite, this surviving pyramid capstone from Egypt's Middle Kingdom belonged to Pharaoh Khendjer (c. 1750 B.C.). Drawing by Michael Lyon from new edition of *Abraham in Egypt*.

Egyptologists were most insistent was that the Egyptians were pagan, worlds removed from the religion of the Hebrews. But for some time now, every year has seen the narrowing of the gap as a steady and growing flow of discoveries and studies brings Egypt, Israel, and early Christianity ever closer and closer together. Even so, what is the religious message? What has the Book of Abraham to teach the modern world in general, and the Church in particular? That is, of course, the message of Abraham, for we are commanded to do the works of Abraham, and told that there is no other way for us to go."

*Abraham in Egypt* can be ordered by using the enclosed order form or by ordering directly from the FARMS Web site.

### Publicly speaking

## Lecture Series Continues to Inform, Advance Research

The noontime lecture series sponsored by FARMS continues to keep the BYU campus community and other interested persons abreast of current research on scripture-related topics. Since the beginning of the year, several researchers have reported on their work in order to share their findings, answer questions and receive constructive comment, and stimulate further research. Three lectures are reported below (next month's newsletter will continue the report).

### Divine Embodiment

On 11 January David Paulsen reported on his work on a project that is tracing through the history of Christianity the understanding that God has a corporeal body. Paulsen, a BYU professor of philosophy, discussed a few of his publications on the subject and the published responses from non-LDS scholars, both those opposed to the idea of divine embodiment and those sympathetic to it. Paulsen argues that belief in the corporeality of God must have been prevalent among early Christians because such writers as Augustine and Origin spent so much energy arguing against the idea.

Paulsen also outlined future plans for studying the history of this idea in earliest Mormon thought and elsewhere. Two assistants in this project reported briefly on their efforts: Roger Cook is examining the Pseudepigrapha, and Carl Griffin is focusing on the New Testament and the writings of early church fathers and Augustine.

### Proposed Site for Old World Bountiful

On 25 January George Potter, a Latter-day Saint management consultant working in Saudi Arabia, shared his research on ancient Omani shipbuilding and gave reasons for proposing Khor Rori as the site of Old World Bountiful. The ancient seaport of Khor Rori is located at the end of the frankincense trail in modern Oman, in the southeastern part of the Arabian Peninsula. Potter summarized his research in a videotape presentation that included shots of a stretch of coastal plain made surprisingly verdant by annual monsoon rains. He identified features in the area that appear to match certain requirements for Bountiful gleaned from his study of the Book of Mormon. A self-described amateur, Potter acknowledged that Khor Rori is one of

*continued on page 7*



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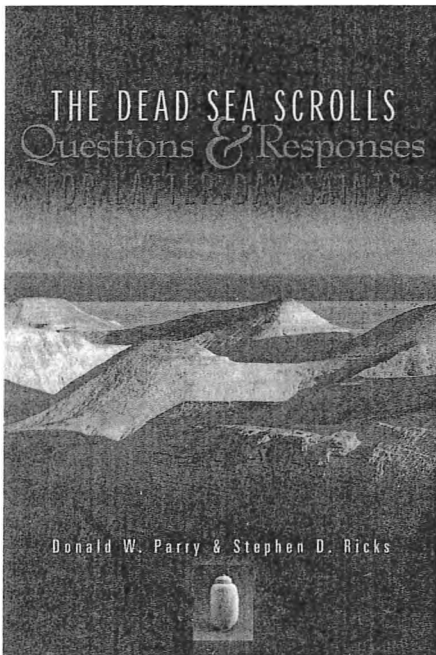
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# RECENT FARMS BOOKS ON THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS



## The Dead Sea Scrolls: Questions and Responses for Latter-day Saints

Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks

Since their initial discovery in 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls have stirred public curiosity. For Latter-day Saints, who believe in the coming forth of sacred records in the last days, the scrolls give rise to such questions as Are there references to Christ or Christianity in the scrolls? Is the plan of salvation attested in the scrolls? Do the scrolls refer to Joseph Smith or other latter-day figures? This short book succinctly deals with these and other questions on topics of particular interest to LDS readers.

Softbound, \$9.95 \$8.00

P&R-00

## LDS Perspectives on the Dead Sea Scrolls

Donald W. Parry and Dana M. Pike, editors

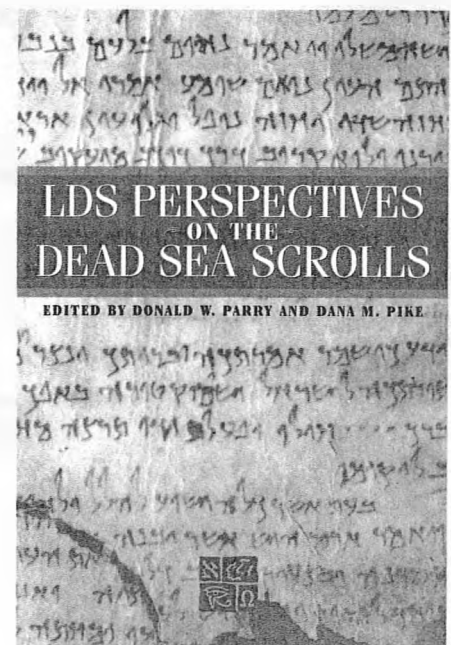
Many Latter-day Saints are fascinated by the Dead Sea Scrolls. The scrolls help answer questions related to the gospel, such as How has the Bible been transmitted to our day? What did the Jews believe in the years between the end of the Old Testament and the time of Christ? How much of the full gospel was known by these people before the coming of Christ?

The detailed essays in this book give an overview of the history of the scrolls, compare the scrolls and their writers to the Book of Mormon and its authors, and discuss what the scrolls teach about several gospel topics.

The book also includes a description of how high technology is aiding in all aspects of the translation of the scrolls.

Softbound, \$12.95 \$10.50

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## Lecture Series (continued from page 4)

several other sites along the Arabian coast that are potential candidates for ancient Bountiful. He favors Khor Rori largely because of its fertile land and ancient shipbuilding industry, which he believes Nephi must have relied on to some extent to build his ship and learn to sail it.

### Role of Women in Ancient Israel

On 9 February Daniel Belnap, a graduate student at BYU, considered the supposed subservient role of women in the religious system of ancient Israel in light of the terms *gebirah* and *amah* in the Hebrew Bible. The former term often refers to royalty and queens, and all usages of the term, even

when they seem to suggest a lesser role, reflect a predominant interest in the covenant, he said. Belnap argued that Sarai was not simply jealous when Hagar conceived a child; rather, Sarai took the matter to the Lord because she was concerned about keeping the family's covenant relationships in order. He said that many scriptural instances of the term *amah* do not connote the usual meaning of "handmaid" or "servant" but refer to a woman in more exalted terms, such as her role as a wife of a king or as mother of a chosen child. Belnap concluded that women in ancient Israel were accorded a much greater role in the normative religious system of the time than many have thought.

## Dead Sea Scrolls Traveling Exhibit Update

As reported in last month's issue of *INSIGHTS*, a free exhibit featuring Dead Sea Scroll replicas and artifacts is touring the Midwest until 15 August 2000. The LDS Church, BYU, and FARMS organized the traveling exhibit, which has drawn large, appreciative crowds at its various stops at LDS stake centers.

Following is a schedule of the remaining locations and dates of the exhibit. For the latest information about specific times and locations, contact an area stake center or visit the FARMS Web site.

May 2-3	Milwaukee, Wis.
May 5-6	Milwaukee, Wis.
May 11-13	Madison, Wis.
May 16-17	Minneapolis, Minn.
May 19-20	Minneapolis, Minn.
May 23-24	Minneapolis, Minn.
May 26-27	Minneapolis, Minn.
May 27-28	Dr. David Seely lectures on the Dead Sea Scrolls
June 1-3	Des Moines, Iowa
June 7-10	Independence/Kansas City, Mo.
June 13-14	St. Louis, Mo.
June 16-17	St. Louis, Mo.
June 22-Aug. 15	Nauvoo, Ill.

## New Festschrift Explores Scripture and Ancient World

When Richard L. Anderson retired from the Religious Education faculty at Brigham Young University in 1996, the Department of Religious Education and FARMS agreed to sponsor a Festschrift (a compilation of essays written in honor of an individual) that would commemorate his distinguished academic career. The positive response from Anderson's friends and colleagues who wished to contribute to the publication has resulted in two volumes of scholarly articles.

The first volume, *The Disciple as Scholar: Essays on Scripture and the Ancient World in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson*, features 18 articles grouped into three sections: "Book of Mormon Studies," "Old Testament Studies and Ancient History," and "New Testament Studies and Early Christian History." The soon-to-be-released companion volume is titled *The Disciple as Witness: Essays on Latter-day Saint History and Doctrine in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson* (see the May issue of *INSIGHTS* for full coverage).

In the introduction to *The Disciple as Scholar*, Stephen D. Ricks (who shared the editing responsibilities with Donald W. Parry and Andrew H. Hedges) gives insight into Anderson's academic preparation and accomplishments: "His passion for history has profoundly influenced his scholarly

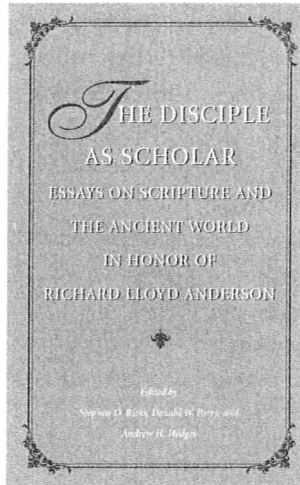


## Festschrift Explores Scripture (continued from page 7)

career; his passion for order and system has shaped his missionary work and directed him into studying law; and his love for Brigham Young University and loyalty to its mission and destiny have, in sometimes unusual ways, guided his academic path."

John L. Sorenson's contribution to the volume, "Religious Groups and Movements among the Nephites, 200–1 B.C.," examines the conflicting religious interactions of what Sorenson calls the "multicultural, multiethnic" peoples of the Book of Mormon. For example, many of the people embraced the Mosaic code, gathering together to worship and sacrifice in the manner of ancient Israel in a temple-centered religion established early on by Nephi. However, many others joined the ranks of Nephite religions based on the pattern of the dissenter Nehor. Members of the prophet Lehi's family or original "Mulekites" could have—and likely did—bring pagan ideas and practices to the New World; it is one of these cults, Sorenson suspects, that led Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah away for a time. Moreover, various unofficial cults mentioned in the Book of Mormon may have been passed down from Jaredite times, and religion among groups such as the Zoramites, Zeniffites, and Lamanites influenced Nephite religious life and politics. Sorenson notes that it is in this context that Alma, Alma the Younger, Helaman, the sons of Mosiah, Captain Moroni, and others sought to preserve the blessings of religious liberty and establish the church of God.

Understanding the growth and development of the religious movements in the Book of Mormon illuminates the challenges of Book of Mormon leaders, the real issues they addressed, and the doctrines they taught. Sorenson insists that "it is not enough—indeed it is misleading—to suppose, as is often done now, that 'understanding' religion in the Book of Mormon consists of taking doctrinal statements from the book and relating them to teachings of today's restored gospel. Proper Book of Mormon scholarship must go beyond those mere comparisons to shed light on the thought world of the Nephites and Lamanites as such."



Andrew C. Skinner, in his article "Savior, Satan, and Serpent: The Duality of a Symbol in the Scriptures," analyzes the religious and symbolic significance of the snake in the scriptures in light of its manifestations in ancient cultures. The snake as an ancient symbol took two forms. The first form is a personification of resurrection and healing, typified by the Egyptian god Amun-Re, the Greek god Asclepius (from whom is taken the symbol of the medical profession, the caduceus), the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl, and ultimately the Savior. Early in Israelite history, Moses placed on a pole a brazen serpent that healed those who looked at it (see Numbers 21:5–9). Jesus made it clear that this serpent

represented him (see John 3:14–15). "The righteous peoples of the Book of Mormon understood the symbol of the serpent in exactly [this] way," Skinner notes, citing Helaman 8:13–15.

The second form the snake takes is exactly the opposite. It represents a leader of evil spirits and dissident forces in the councils of heaven and is personified by the Egyptian demon god Apophis, the snake of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, and Satan. Skinner proposes that "the ancient serpent myths of the Fertile Crescent and Mediterranean-based cultures are echoes of original divine truth." "The symbol of the serpent," he writes, "was usurped by Satan, and then, over time, its true meaning [as a symbol of the Savior, who would be lifted up] became corrupted and diffused through many cultures over the ages."

One article that is sure to become a classic is Daniel C. Peterson's "'Ye Are Gods': Psalm 82 and John 10 as Witnesses to the Divine Nature of Humankind." Latter-day Saints often use John 10:34 and Psalm 82:6 to support their doctrine of eternal progression, and Peterson responds to critics of the restored gospel who often contend that such arguments misrepresent the original context of the two texts. He considers "whether the Latter-day Saint understanding of the passages fits their apparent original sense and whether it does so as well as, or even better than, rival understandings." At the end of his careful, detailed discussion, Peterson concludes that "the Latter-day Saints are

in a uniquely strong position to reconcile the original sense of Psalm 82 with the Savior's use of it in John 10," meaning that humans do share a divine nature with God and are capable of becoming gods.

Other contributions include a discussion of the last days by Hugh W. Nibley and an exquisitely il-

lustrated presentation on inscribed plates in the Far East (with extrapolations to the restored gospel) by David B. Honey and Michael P. Lyon. To obtain a copy of this book, use the enclosed order form or order directly from the catalog section of the FARMS Web site.

## Evidence Surveyed (continued from page 1)

ancient texts that have come to light were written in that manner), and distinct writing styles (word-print studies of the Book of Mormon confirm its multiple authorship).

In addition, Peterson notes that modern discoveries have shown that the Book of Mormon names Nephi, Alma, and Sariah were in use in the Near East of Lehi's time. He also explains that Nephite monetary customs, the oath taken by Nephite soldiers in Alma 46:21-22, and rituals associated with King Benjamin's last speech reveal the book's origins in the ancient Near East. Peterson concludes, "While we will never 'prove' the Book of Mormon true, the trajectory of the evidence strongly suggests that it is exactly what it claims to be, a book worthy of our deep study, reflection, and serious personal prayer. . . . Much modern evidence supports the more powerful witness of the Holy Ghost that the Book of Mormon is true."

The second article, "The Diffusionists Have Landed," by Marc K. Stengel (*Atlantic Monthly*, January 2000), reviews the status of the debate over possible transoceanic contact with peoples of the Western Hemisphere in pre-Columbian times.

The conventional position of many historians, anthropologists, and geographers is that New World civilizations before the time of Columbus developed essentially free of contact with cultures from the Old World. On the other hand, diffusionists believe that ample field evidence supports the idea of transoceanic cultural contact during the "prehistory" of the Americas.

Stengel discusses the possible influences of Norse, Chinese, and Phoenician culture on New World peoples. He includes a fair assessment of the diffusionist studies of Barry Fell, a Harvard biologist and epigrapher whose work has largely fallen into disrepute. Stengel also reviews John Sorenson and Martin Raish's two-volume work *Pre-Columbian Contact with the Americas across the Oceans: An*

*Annotated Bibliography* (Provo, Utah: Research Press, rev. ed. 1996). Sorenson is an emeritus professor of anthropology at Brigham Young University and FARMS scholar, and Raish is an art historian and instructional librarian at BYU. Citing the

*continued on page 10*

## Journal Devoted to Questions of Ancient Transoceanic Contacts

Academia has often ignored controversial evidence of early cultural contact between the Old and New Worlds. *Pre-Columbiana: A Journal of Long-Distance Contacts* brings attention to rigorous scholarship supporting diffusionist claims while meeting the demands of scholarly and scientific objectivity. Developed by Stephen C. Jett, a geography professor at the University of California, Davis, the interdisciplinary journal offers studies that have been reviewed by a panel of scholars that includes John L. Sorenson, a BYU emeritus professor of anthropology and FARMS associate who has published widely on the subject.

The first issue of *Pre-Columbiana* (June/December 1998) features articles on "Early Watercraft and Navigation in the Pacific," "American Crop Plants in Asia before A.D. 1500," "China and Pacific Basin Art and Architectural Styles," and "Linguistic Similarities between Austronesian and South American Indian Languages," among others. It also includes research reports, book reviews, and an annotated bibliography. To obtain a copy of this inaugural issue or to subscribe, contact the Early Sites Research Society West at P.O. Box 4175, Independence, MO 64050.

## Evidence Surveyed

(continued from page 9)

authors' "laborious research" in the "herculean task of collating, summarizing, and indexing diffusion-related texts," Stengel concludes that the bibliography "represents . . . a dispassionate and comprehensive summary of the most serious diffusionist research and commentary to date." However, he notes that establishment scholars question the bibliography's objectivity, since "anything that connects ancient Mesoamerica with biblical-era Palestine lends that much more credence to the Book of Mormon" (yet he does not suggest even the slightest hint of any way that this agenda has affected the quality of the compilers' annotations).

Stengel goes on to discuss Kennewick Man, an ancient skeleton found in Washington state in 1996 whose alleged "Caucasoid" features are causing a heated dispute among archaeologists, the federal government, and Native Americans. The government has disallowed DNA tests of the skeleton because area tribes consider the tests intrusive, sacrilegious, and racist. The tribes resent the implication that, contrary to their oral history, the first inhabitants of the land may not have been their ancestors but a people who migrated from Siberia, Japan, or elsewhere.

After summarizing the main arguments and players in the diffusionist arena, Stengel concludes with the observation that the Western Hemisphere is unique because its history before the time of Columbus "is for the most part a mute record, consisting overwhelmingly of pottery shards, pointed flints, traces of dwellings, monuments, rock drawings—in short, of virtually every product of human imagination except alphabetic writing." Yet, Stengel notes, that silence is being broken by "the diffusionists' curious lettered stones and tablets, . . . inciting noisy protest from the curators of America's past even as they suggest that ancient Americans may have enjoyed the occasional conversation with visitors from afar."

LDS readers should enjoy seeing diffusionist claims given such credence in a national magazine like the *Atlantic Monthly*. Whether such attention will help change the conventional wisdom remains to be seen.

# INSIGHTS

A WINDOW ON THE ANCIENT WORLD

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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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