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Peterson Participates in World Parliament

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Valuable Research Tool Available Soon

By the end of this year, “Nineteenth-Century Publications about the Book of Mormon (1829–1844)” will be made available as one of the Harold B. Lee Library’s digital collections.

Building on the work of previous generations of researchers, Matthew Roper, research scholar with the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, has collected digital facsimiles and electronic transcriptions of as many of these early publications as could be found.

Roper and editorial staff members of the Maxwell Institute, especially Sandra Thorne and Larry Morris, with the assistance of the librarians at the Harold B. Lee Library, have combined these digital files into a searchable online collection and are making this important collection of early publications relating to the Book of Mormon accessible to researchers and others interested in Mormon history.

One of the best historical windows for understanding how the Book of Mormon was interpreted and understood by early readers is through the literature relating to that book published during Joseph Smith’s lifetime. Publications from this period enrich our perspective on early Latter-day Saint history, as the Book of Mormon was cast in a variety of roles by both Latter-day Saint and non-Latter-day Saint readers. This collection represents an effort to gather together that body of literature and make it available to those interested in the origins of the Book of Mormon. Researchers will be able to view the original documents, typed transcriptions, or both. The electronic database will also be periodically updated.

“Nineteenth-Century Publications about the Book of Mormon (1829–1844)” will be included in the collections found online at www.lib.byu.edu/online.html. The Maxwell Institute will announce the full posting at maxwellinstitute.byu.edu, as well as in a later issue of this newsletter. ♦

Peterson Participates in World Parliament

Daniel C. Peterson, professor of Islamic studies and Arabic and editor in chief of the Middle Eastern Texts Initiative, will chair a plenary session at the Parliament of the World’s Religions held December 3–9, 2009, in Melbourne, Australia.

Entitled “Islam and the West: Creating an Accord of Civilisations,” the panel discussion will center on understanding Islam. Peterson’s involvement illustrates METI’s engagement with scholars worldwide.

The Parliament of the World’s Religions, first held in 1893, brings together the world’s religious and spiritual communities to discuss and explore interreligious understanding and cooperation.

Others who will participate in this session include Tariq Ramadan, professor of contemporary Islamic studies at Oxford University and senior research fellow at Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan; Chandra Muzaffar, political scientist and founding president of the International Movement for a Just World (JUST), Malaysia; and Feisal Abdul Rauf, chairman of the Cordoba Initiative, a multinational, multireligious project that works to improve relations between the Muslim world and the West. ♦

INSIGHTS

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A Publication of the

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The Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship encourages and supports research on the Book of Mormon, the Book of Abraham, the Bible, other ancient scripture, and related subjects. The Maxwell Institute publishes and distributes titles in these areas for the benefit of scholars and interested Latter-day Saint readers.

Primary research interests at the Maxwell Institute 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.

The Maxwell Institute makes 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.

