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INSIGHTS

The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

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A Chat with the New Editors of the Maxwell Institute Journals

Accompanying this issue of Insights is volume 17 (combining numbers one and two) of the Journal of Book of Mormon Studies; however, readers will note that the Journal now carries a new name, the Journal of the Book of Mormon and Restoration Scripture. In connection with this change, the Institute asked Andrew H. Hedges, an associate professor of Church History and Doctrine at BYU, to become the new editor, replacing Professor S. Kent Brown, who served as editor and associate editor for many years, and who recently retired from the university. The new associate editors are Grant Hardy, professor of history, University of North Carolina at Asheville; Steven C. Harper, assistant professor of Church History and Doctrine, BYU; Jennifer Lane, assistant professor of religion, BYU-Hawaii; and Kerry Muhlestein, assistant professor of Ancient Scripture, BYU.

For a number of years, the Institute published an annual devoted to a variety of subjects. Recently, the Institute elected to make the Bible and the ancient biblical world the focus of this periodical. It was given a new title, Studies in the Bible and Antiquity, and Brian M. Hauglid, associate professor of Ancient Scripture at BYU, was asked to be the editor, with Carl Griffin, senior research scholar with the Maxwell Institute, as the associate editor. We anticipate the first issue of Studies in the Bible and Antiquity will be published sometime in 2009.

The editors of Insights recently sat down with Hedges and Hauglid and asked them about their plans for these two publications.

Insights: Studies in the Bible and Antiquity is new to the Maxwell Institute. Why was it created?

Hauglid: Well, the concept of having a periodical that deals with the Bible and antiquity is not really new. I mean others have been talking about this for some time now. But it was under Andy Skinner that it was brought to fruition. Andy Skinner asked Larry Morris, Carl Griffin, and me to meet together and write up a formal proposal for a new publication. We did this and came up with what we felt was a good publication idea, one that would fill a certain niche that other periodicals would not, or could not, focus on. For example, the *Religious Educator*, published by the Religious Studies Center, deals with pedagogical issues and general articles on various topics; the renamed *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Restoration Scripture* focuses primarily on scripture studies; and *BYU Studies* publishes articles dealing mostly with topics in LDS church history and other related subjects. Although these other periodicals could publish something on the Bible or the ancient world, we felt like there needed to be another periodical devoted specifically to these topics. Like the other LDS periodicals mentioned, *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* will be directed to the Saints. It will be published annually.

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From Elder Neal A. Maxwell

Ultimate hope and daily grumpiness are not reconcilable. It is ungraceful, unjustified, and unbecoming of us as committed Church members to be constantly grumpy or of woeful countenance. Do we have some moments of misery or some down days? Yes! But the prom-

ise is that Christ will “lift thee up” (Moroni 9:25). The disciple can note the depressing signs of the times without being depressed. He can be disappointed in people without being offended at life. Thus it is that ultimate hope, if it does not finally dissolve our daily disappointments, at least puts them in perspective. (Salt Lake City area Thanksgiving speech [untitled], November 26, 1980, as quoted in *The Neal A. Maxwell Quote Book*, ed. Cory H. Maxwell [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 164.)



Insights: The *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* now incorporates *Restoration Scripture* into its title. What is the concept behind this change?

Hedges: Largely the same thing that Brian is mentioning—there was a niche. Up to now the *Journal* has been available to publish articles on the Book of Mormon, but there has not been a regular venue for scholarly papers on the Doctrine and Covenants or the Pearl of Great Price. It is anticipated that the Joseph Smith Papers project will uncover important information about the context and textual history of the D&C and other restoration scriptures. The new expanded *Journal* will be an excellent venue for discussing these finds.

Insights: So does that include Pearl of Great Price? Or where does that fall?

Hedges: The Book of Abraham is something that the Maxwell Institute has been working on for a long time. Brian and I have agreed that all articles focusing on material in the Pearl of Great Price (Book of Moses, Book of Abraham, etc.) will go to the expanded *Journal*.

Hauglid: Any article focused on other parts of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible will be considered for *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity*.

Hedges: There will clearly be some overlap with existing journals and venues, such as *BYU Studies*, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. With multiple publication outlets available to authors, there's less chance that something significant might be crowded out, postponed, or even shelved for some reason.

Insights: How do you envision these two publications working together to inform readers?

Hauglid: I see a very healthy relationship developing between these two periodicals. The renamed *Journal* will continue to do a terrific job for its readers with the now added bonus of expanding to include restoration scripture. The new *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* will follow suit, so to speak, and provide the same excellent service to readers interested in articles on the Bible and the Old World. So the Maxwell Institute is making it possible for subscribers to get their hands on solid academic articles on all four of the standard works.

Insights: You're each busy professors in Religious Education at BYU. What drew you to your roles as editors?

Hedges: We're busy, that's true, but over the years I've seen where there seems to be kind of a vacuum around Book of Mormon and other restoration scripture studies—not that nothing has been done, but I think there is a lot more to be done out there. One of the things that attracted me to this journal was the opportunity it affords to look at old assumptions and conclusions in light of new information that has come forth to test them and prod them and see if they will stand up to rigorous scrutiny. I think there are a lot of topics, not only dealing with the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price, but also other related writings that really could use a fresh look.

Hauglid: From the beginning I did not go into this thinking I would be the editor. As I mentioned earlier, over the past five or six years I noticed it was becoming more difficult to find a publishing venue for biblical studies. I noted that other publications such as the *Religious Educator*, *BYU Studies*, and the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* take shape and narrow their focus on areas outside the biblical text and the Old World. And the *Ensign*, which was for many years a viable option for printing scholarship on the biblical world, decided to limit its scope to other areas as well. So, with this realization, I became more and more vested in seeing this publication through to its fruition and was subsequently asked to be the editor. I have a real passion for helping it succeed as a respected journal, which will someday hold a prominent place for LDS scholars to publish solid contributions on the Bible and the Old World addressed to Latter-day Saints.

Insights: Professor Hedges, you mentioned the Joseph Smith Papers project. What other topics do you each foresee these periodicals exploring?

Hedges: The expanded *Journal* won't be exploring the Joseph Smith Papers per se, but there's information that will be contained in these forthcoming volumes that I think scholars will want to use as they study the text and context of the scriptures that were revealed or restored through Joseph Smith. Topics might include the textual and publication history of these scriptures, Book of Mormon geography, archaeological findings related to the

Book of Mormon or the Book of Abraham, editing procedures, the use of these scriptures in church history, modern translations, literary treatment of them, and the historical contexts of their genesis.

Hauglid: *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* will publish articles dealing with the Old Testament, the New Testament, and other ancient religious texts that illuminate our understanding of the Bible and the Old World especially for an LDS audience but for other interested readers as well. Topics may include temple studies, early Christian texts, ancient symbolism, warfare, customs, weights and measures, clothing, law, and historical people, places, or events. Articles will examine topics from archaeological, philological, historical, linguistic, or religious perspectives. Of course with biblical studies, you have a host of ancient languages such as Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, etc., from which you can offer many insights on the biblical texts and various topics related to the Old World.

Hedges: The ancient world is a complex place. If you think you've got a handle on it because you know Hebrew, you're mistaken.

Hauglid: And I'm very encouraged by the crop of LDS scholars of the Bible and the Old World we see coming into the picture here . . .

Hedges: You didn't see this 10–15 years ago: the PhDs, where they're coming from, their preparation, whom they've been working with . . .

Hauglid: We need to be ready for them with these periodicals, because, I believe, they're going to start to produce some very good stuff.

Insights: How do you determine the content for these publications? Will articles be solicited?

Hauglid: Content for *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* can be determined in several ways. The most common way is to let scholars know it exists and then wait for submissions. When the submissions begin coming in then they can be sent off to reviewers. Hopefully enough will pass peer review so that an issue will have about six solid contributions. Inevitably, however, waiting for submissions is unpredictable. We never know how many really good articles we're going to receive. Because of this, Carl and I plan on actively soliciting material. We envision *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* to be a good venue for thematic issues and perhaps a collection of papers from faculty seminars. So, on

the one hand, unsolicited material is welcomed, but, on the other hand, reality dictates that submissions will be solicited in various ways.

Hedges: The articles that are going in this first issue of the *Journal* were unsolicited.

Hauglid: But there are scholars with papers on their desks, wondering what to do with them.

Hedges: Yes, we received one in that way. But I would also like to reach a point where the *Journal* has enough of a readership and enough scholarly credibility that good people will, on their own, think of publishing with us as one of the first places that comes to mind.

Hauglid: I would like to see that happen with the Maxwell Institute publications, period—across the board.

Insights: Are you going to continue using artwork in the expanded *Journal*?

Hedges: Yes, and that's more of an Institute mandate, largely. So that will continue. We have had some complaints about the smaller font used in the citations, so we have decided to use endnotes right after the article in a larger type, which will be more scholar-friendly.

Insights: What about the *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity*? What will be the format?

Hauglid: There may be some graphs and charts and that kind of thing. Any illustrations will likely be in black and white because I think we're looking at more of an academic audience out there, and we'll be a little more geared to that. So we're not going to have a high-gloss look. It will be a small, 6 x 9-inch size.

Insights: Do you think these periodicals are complementary—together do they explore the standard works?

Hedges: We finally now have a mandate where the Institute is covering all the standard works.

Hauglid: It's a much more comprehensive agenda.

Hedges: We've never had that before.

Hauglid: It's the dawning of a new day. We are charting new territory here, and I think it's going to prove to be a blessing for all of the Institute's subscribers, for its many readers who access this material online, and for its many supporters. ♦

Maxwell Institute Well Represented at FAIR Conference

Several scholars associated with the Maxwell Institute spoke at the FAIR conference held in Sandy, Utah, in August. As explained on its Web site (www.fairlds.org), FAIR (the Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research) is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to providing well-documented answers to criticisms of Latter-day Saint doctrine, belief, and practice.

Daniel C. Peterson, editor in chief of the Maxwell Institute's Middle Eastern Texts Initiative (METI) and professor of Islamic Studies and Arabic at Brigham Young University, was the concluding speaker at the meeting, which was FAIR's tenth annual conference. A popular speaker known for his wit, Peterson entitled his presentation "Humble Apologetics" and announced, "I am offering myself as the model of that," a comment that brought laughter from the audience of about three hundred people.

Peterson noted a key reference to humility in 1 Nephi 11, where an angel asks Nephi, "Knowest thou the condescension of God?" Nephi replied, "I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things" (vv. 16–17). "I am struck by the modesty of Nephi's claim," said Brother Peterson. "As apologists, we need to remember the constraints and the limitations of the knowledge we have." He added that most things cannot be proven. "The best that apologists can do sometimes is just to suggest things, give alternative interpretations, or show how some things might make sense." In terms of our own faith, we should remember that "testimony doesn't come on our schedule. The proper response is to trust in the Lord."

Striking a similar chord, Brian Hauglid, associate professor of ancient scripture at BYU, emphasized a kinder approach to defending the gospel. Referring specifically to those with queries about the Book of Abraham, Hauglid recommended that apologists—

- Treat the person with respect. This is easier to do in face-to-face settings than it is on anonymous message boards. As the scripture states, "As all have not faith . . . teach one another words of wisdom" (Doctrine and Covenants 88: 118).
- Treat questions seriously. Responses like "That's a dumb question," or "Oh, that old thing?" can be

quite disheartening to sincere questioners. Also, sometimes we *do* need to say, "I don't know."

- Acknowledge that the critics are sometimes right. With the Book of Abraham, for example, "the papyrus attached to Facsimile 1 does not contain the Book of Abraham—we all know that." In such cases, we can say, "Let's talk about what that might mean and how we can explore that."
- Focus on the content of the Book of Abraham, not just on how we got it. Scholars have found at least thirty-five themes in the Book of Abraham that are also found in other ancient sources but not in Genesis. Sections on foreordination, priesthood, and the premortal existence also support the book's claim to be an ancient document.

"Personal experience shows that face-to-face conversations are the best way to help seekers," concluded Hauglid. "We need to treat those individuals with respect and take them seriously."

Other speakers included Michael R. Ash, Matthew Brown, James Faulconer, Craig Foster, Brant Gardner, Blake Ostler, and Larry Poulsen, all of whom have published with the Maxwell Institute. ♦

INSIGHTS

Paula W. Hicken, Jacob D. Rawlins, *Editors*

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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.

