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## Lehi's Trek DVD Reissued to Target Broader Audience

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# Insights

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## Latest Findings in the Book of Mormon Critical Text Project

These are the best of times for Book of Mormon studies. Since 2001, FARMS (now part of the Maxwell Institute) has been publishing the long-anticipated findings of Professor Royal Skousen's Book of Mormon Critical Text Project. Each massive volume in this landmark study, appearing on a yearly basis, averages nearly 670 oversize pages of research and analysis that reward careful examination with expanded views of the founding text of Mormonism.

In seeking to recover the original English-language text (i.e., precisely as the Prophet Joseph Smith received it), this ambitious project is identifying many variant readings and yielding paradigm-changing insights into the translation process and the systematic nature of the text. These findings will keep serious students of the Book of Mormon profitably engaged in assessing the ramifications for many

years to come. As an essential scholarly tool, the critical text promises to boost the professional rigor and overall quality of Book of Mormon scholarship to a new level.

The most recent publication by Skousen, an internationally known professor of linguistics and English language at Brigham Young University, is part 3 of volume 4 of *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon*, covering Mosiah 17 through Alma 20. Like its predecessors, this installment sheds light on numerous variant readings that have entered the text through scribal, typesetting, and editing errors and inconsistencies. Before Skousen began publishing his findings, readers of the Book of Mormon naturally assumed that unfamiliar or awkward phraseology in the text was due to a strictly literal translation from the ancient source language or to Joseph Smith's language habits and idiosyncrasies. Part 3 of Skousen's *Analysis of Textual Variants* continues to illuminate such questions. Although

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## Lehi's Trek DVD Reissued to Target Broader Audience

*Journey of Faith*, a FARMS documentary about Lehi's travels through ancient Arabia, has been well received and has generated considerable interest since its release last summer (see report in *Insights* 25/3). Now steps are under way to produce a reissue of the DVD, this time with translations of the commentary into Spanish and Portuguese with English closed-captioning.

The translation and recording is under the direction of seasoned foreign language producer Omar Canals, who recently prepared the language versions for the Church's film *Joseph Smith: The Prophet of the Restoration*. A team of experienced

translators prepared the foreign language scripts and checked them multiple times for accuracy. The voices of the narrators and interviewed scholars are being recorded in Colombia and São Paulo.

"The enthusiastic reaction to *Journey of Faith* has been truly gratifying," says Peter Johnson, director of the film. "It has been a way to take the research of scholars to an even broader audience, and that audience has been moved and inspired by their insights." Filmed in the lands that Lehi and his family are believed to have journeyed across, the documentary is a visual experience that brings to life Nephi's narrative in the Book of Mormon.

This documentary will also be published in book form in late August (stay tuned for a report in the next *Insights* newsletter). 