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Nibley Fellowship Program

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technology to image ancient manuscripts in order to preserve their contents, improve their legibility, and make them available for study. The Institute's Dead Sea Scrolls CD-ROM database, featuring BYU's WordCruncher software, is now the gateway to scrolls research. Other imaging projects include the Maya murals in Bonampak, Mexico; carbonized manuscripts from ancient Petra (near Amman, Jordan) and Herculaneum (near Naples, Italy), the latter the subject of the *Out of the Ashes* PBS television program; and ancient Syriac texts from the Vatican Apostolic Library's vast archives.

Back in the Americas, the Institute has been asked to digitally image the ancient Maya religious text known as the Popol Vuh. It is also working with the Smithsonian Institution's Freer Gallery on digitally imaging the most important New Testament text in America—the Codex Washingtonianus, or the Freer Manuscript of the Gospels, dating to the fourth or fifth century AD.

Peterson discussed the recent achievements of FARMS research. He noted that recent issues

of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* and the *FARMS Review* feature articles (some are posted on lds.org) by experts who refute charges that DNA science disproves the Book of Mormon. He highlighted other groundbreaking research, such as Royal Skousen's work on the manuscripts of the Book of Mormon that, among other important findings, has uncovered direct translations of Hebraic structures that were edited because they do not work in English; and John Gee's work on the Joseph Smith papyri that details the origin and extent of the papyri, showing that what is now extant is a small percentage of what Joseph had to work with.

President Samuelson wrapped up the presentation with a strong endorsement of the work of the Institute and its role in bringing friends to BYU.

This report is a sampling of the extensive research that FARMS is conducting, much of which can be read about on the newly revamped FARMS Web site. Also, in the next newsletter, read highlights of FARMS's achievements in scripture research during its first 25 years. 📖

Nibley Fellowship Program


Each year at about this time we remind graduate students about the Nibley Fellowship Program and its application deadline. Named in honor of Hugh Nibley, this program provides financial aid to students enrolled in accredited PhD programs in areas of study directly related to the work and mission of the Institute, particularly work done under the name of FARMS—studies of the Book of Mormon, the Book of Abraham, the Old and New Testaments, early Christianity, ancient temples, and related subjects. Applicants cannot be employed at the Institute or be related to an Institute employee.

The Institute awarded Nibley Fellowships to 16 graduate students for the 2003/2004 academic year: **Sharon Mar Adams**, Religious Thought, University of Denver; **Stephen M. Bay**, New Tes-

tament, Early Christianity, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; **Daniel Belnap**, Northwest Semitics, University of Chicago; **Lincoln H. Blumell**, New Testament, Early Christianity,

Those interested in applying for the first time or who wish to renew their fellowships for the 2004/2005 academic year must do so by **30 June 2004**. To obtain guidelines and an application form, contact:

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University of Calgary; **David Calabro**, Hebrew Bible, Ancient Near East, University of Chicago; **Cory Daniel Crawford**, Hebrew Bible, Preexilic History, Harvard University; **Matthew J. Grey**, Archaeology, History of Antiquity, Andrews University; **Taylor Halverson**, Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity, Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible among Second Temple Groups, Indiana University; **Ronan James Head**, Assyriology, Johns Hopkins University; **Joseph Ponczoch**, Classics, Brigham Young University; **Melissa Proctor**, Ancient Judaism, Contemporary Religious Thought, Brown University; **Aaron Pace Schade**, Northwest Semitic Epigraphy, University of Toronto; **Brent James Schmidt**, Early Christianity, Patristics, New Testament, University of Colorado at Boulder; **Thomas Benjamin Spackman**, Comparative Semitics, Arabic, Hebrew Bible, University of Chicago; **Valerie Triplet-Hitoto**, Second Temple Judaism (Bible, Dead Sea Scrolls, Apocrypha), École pratique des hautes études, La Sorbonne, Paris; **Mark Alan Wright**, Mesoamerica, Maya Religion and Epigraphy, University of California, Riverside. 

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant, edited by John Gee and Brian Hauglid, is the third volume in the Book of Abraham Series. It includes papers from a FARMS-sponsored conference on the Book of Abraham and covers such topics as Abraham's vision of the heavens, commonalities between the Book of Abraham and noncanonical ancient texts, and the significance of the Abrahamic covenant. Available summer 2004.

Theodore Abu Qurrah, translated and introduced by John C. Lamoreaux of Southern Methodist University, includes first-ever English translations of most of Theodore Abu Qurrah's writings, which treat such issues as the characteristics of true religion and the nature of free will. Abu Qurrah (fl. AD 810), the bishop of Harran (in modern-day southeast Turkey), was one of the first Christians to write in Arabic and to mount a sustained theological defense of Christianity against Islam. Available fall 2004.

The FARMS Review (vol. 16, no. 1), edited by Daniel C. Peterson, features a look at the mention of secret combinations in legal materials from the early 19th century and a look at trends in Book of Mormon apologetics. Other articles review books on the Mountain Meadows Massacre, violent fundamentalism, baptism for the dead, and Thomas S. Ferguson's search for archaeological evidence supporting the Book of Mormon. Available summer 2004.

Insights

A Window on the Ancient World
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A Publication of the
**Foundation for Ancient Research
and Mormon Studies (FARMS)**

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FARMS is part of Brigham Young University's Institute for the Study and Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts. As such, it encourages and supports research on the Book of Mormon, the Book of Abraham, the Bible, other ancient scripture, and related subjects. Under the FARMS imprint, the Institute publishes and distributes titles in these areas for the benefit of scholars and interested Latter-day Saint readers.

Primary research interests at FARMS 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.

FARMS makes interim and final 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. As a service to teachers and students of the scriptures, research results are distributed in both scholarly and popular formats.

For more information about FARMS
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