



NEAL A. MAXWELL INSTITUTE
FOR RELIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY • PROVO, UTAH

Title The Editors' Notebook

Author(s) John L. Sorenson

Reference *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8/1 (1999): 3.

ISSN 1065-9366 (print), 2168-3158 (online)

Abstract Introduction to the current issue.

THE EDITORS' NOTEBOOK

From time to time we receive communications that assume the existence of a "FARMS position" on a given Book of Mormon topic and that the *Journal* promotes and publishes only material that supports such a presumed viewpoint. Our readers and contributors may be assured that such an idea is not true.

In this respect the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* is like any other scholarly journal. We subscribe to no predetermined position on any subject that is appropriately addressed by scholars who use methods that are normal in their fields. As editors we operate with assurance from our sponsoring institution, the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, that we are free to conduct the *Journal* in whatever manner we deem appropriate. Nobody dictates what we shall or shall not publish. Nor do we ourselves insist that the editors' views on a subject prevail over an author's differing views. Our prime concern, as outlined in our first issue, is to advance truth by newly illuminating scripture. We seek to do that by inviting contributions from able writers who apply sound methods of scholarship or science to the study of interesting and significant topics.

There are reasons why we do not publish certain things. The *JBMS* is built on the same fundamental beliefs as FARMS: particularly that the Book of Mormon and other scriptures are sacred and are best approached from a perspective of faith in their divine elements. At the same time, we believe that the best methods of scholarship, which we respect and champion, provide a means for discovering new truth and clarifying old ones. FARMS, Brigham Young University, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are to be held innocent of supporting any particular viewpoints that appear within articles we print, for the authors alone bear responsibility for statements they make.

Our decisions about what goes into the *Journal* normally depend on more immediate, operational considerations, not on theological or ethical issues. The editors solicit, choose, or reject material mainly on the basis of whether (1) a proposed piece of writing is cogent, clear, well informed, and novel enough that it brings new light to a large portion of our read-

ership; (2) the topic has been studied by enough capable people that an author's statements about it can enjoy the benefit of informed peer criticism; (3) the subject can be discussed in sufficient depth within the limits of the space available to us and our readers' patience. But in none of those decisions is the question of an established FARMS opinion about the subject matter involved.

Guidelines for Articles for the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*

These are available on the FARMS website (www.farmsresearch.com), by e-mail request to jbms@byu.edu, or by mail from FARMS. In general, completed manuscripts should not be sent in without first submitting a detailed outline or abstract to the editors.