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The Foundation for
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1990, No. 3

INSIGHTS

AN ANCIENT WINDOW

"...by study and also by faith." D&C 88:118

Warfare Volume Sheds Light on Large Sections of the Nephite Record

Published only days ago, *Warfare in the Book of Mormon* is the first of its kind: 534 pages exclusively dedicated to the study of warfare in the Book of Mormon, its ancient Near Eastern backgrounds, and its Mesoamerican settings.

This book is the result of years of work. A select group met for two full days in 1987 to share and critique one another's research. In 1989 their finished results were presented at the F.A.R.M.S. conference on Book of Mormon warfare held at Brigham Young University. This volume, edited by Stephen Ricks and William Hamblin, publishes 22 substantive contributions to this project.

It covers many aspects of ancient war. Captain Moroni's enlistment of soldiers is compared with an ancient Hittite oath of enlistment. The Nephite conduct of military affairs is shown to reflect technical legal requirements of the law of Moses. The role of God and of prophets in Nephite war find parallels in the ancient Israelite ideology of "holy war." Many other details are illuminated.

Social aspects of Nephite war are also examined. How were their armies and captains organized? Does their tribal structure reflect a military caste system? Is Gadiantonism historically realistic?

In addition, virtually all that is said in the Book of Mormon about Nephite war technology

(continued inside)

An LDS Interpretation of Jesus' Most Masterful Sermon

The heart of the Book of Mormon is the Sermon of the resurrected Christ to the Nephites who had assembled at their temple in Bountiful (3 Nephi 11-18). The heart of that Sermon is Jesus' Sermon on the Mount from Palestine (Matthew 5-7), adapted to the Nephite setting.

In *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount*, a new 220-page volume published by F.A.R.M.S. and Deseret Book, John W. Welch discusses the Sermon at the Nephite Temple, element by element, and draws intriguing conclusions about this extraordinary Book of Mormon text.

The Sermon is viewed as a temple text. This produces a key to understanding its meaning. Its covenantal temple setting is clear. Recognizing this provides the basis for a profound new interpretation of Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount.

Questions such as these are addressed:

Is there a coherent unity to the Sermon on the Mount, or is it a random collection of isolated teachings?

Can the Sermon be viewed as a sacred covenantal text?

What did Jesus mean when he told his listeners not to give pearls to swine?

What is intended in the words, "Be ye therefore perfect"?

Why will Jesus turn away even some who have done great works in his name?

(continued inside)

The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies is a nonprofit research and educational organization dedicated to the study of ancient scripture. Your tax-deductible contributions enable F.A.R.M.S. to sponsor and coordinate a wide range of research projects that enhance our understanding of these sacred writings.

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1989 Yields a Healthy Crop of Books on the Book of Mormon

The 1989 *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* has just been published. It is much more than a review. It contains several hundred pages of analysis and reflection on many Book of Mormon topics of most recent interest. It also contains a complete bibliography of everything published in 1989 on the Book of Mormon.

Works reviewed include history and fiction, study aids and polemics, and scholarly and doctrinal books and articles, for all ages and readers.

In 1989, books were published about the Book of Mormon by a wide variety of publishers, including Deseret Book, the BYU Religious Studies Center, the prestigious Catholic Ignatius Press, and many others.

The purpose of the *Review* is to discuss all new publications on the Book of Mormon. This helps readers keep up with a rapidly expanding list of publications.

The *Review* also strives to discuss theoretical issues, methodology, and standards, such as what makes a book about the Book of Mormon worthwhile, informative, useful, or excellent.

The *Review* is now in its second year. Under the editorial guidance of Daniel Peterson, the *Review* has thrived. It is a vibrant, engaging publication. It is the only periodical of its kind—an annual journal devoted exclusively to acknowledging and evaluating publications about the Book of Mormon.

The 1989 *Review* contains the 1989 F.A.R.M.S. Book of Mormon lecture, by Richard Rust, professor of English at the University of North Carolina.

Copies are now available from F.A.R.M.S. and at some LDS book locations. A limited number of last year's 1988 *Review* are still available.

Warfare Volume (Cont.)

(swords, cimeters, bows and arrows, shields and armor, and fortifications) is discussed in detail. Each element is associated with plausible archaeological counterparts. For example, until recently archaeologists insisted that the Mayas were peace-loving people who never fought wars, and accordingly these archaeologists contorted their findings to preserve the fiction that no fortifications were ever built by these people. John Sorenson, however, documents the recent, radical about-face in Mesoamerican archaeology which now sees the Mayas as highly militaristic. No longer is the archaeological view inconsistent with the Book of Mormon report that numerous wars were fought in that area.

Sorenson also points out a remarkable consistency in the Book of Mormon, in that virtually all major military campaigns were fought between the eleventh and second months of their year. This apparently corresponds with the postharvest dry season in Mesoamerica, from November to February, the normal time for Mesoamerican warfare.

Warfare in the Book of Mormon will help all readers understand why so much of the Book of Mormon deals with war. By the time a reader is through with these studies, the great religious, social, and historical importance of war in ancient Israel and in the Book of Mormon will be much better understood.

Participants include Hugh Nibley, John Sorenson, John Welch, Stephen Ricks, William Hamblin, Douglas Phillips, Richard Rust, Terry Szink, John Tvedtnes, Daniel Peterson, Bruce Warren, Matthew Hilton, Neil Flinders, Brent Merrill, and Paul Hoskisson.

Sermon at the Temple (Cont.)

Do the differences between Matthew 5-7 and 3 Nephi 12-14 make sense?

What do Aramaic studies, Greek manuscripts, and the Sermon at the Temple tell us about the nature of Joseph Smith's translation of the Book of Mormon?

From their Israelite background, would the Nephites have understood what Jesus was talking about?

Is the Mount, after all, a temple mount?

This book speaks to the heart as well as the mind, and enlightens the spirit as well as stimulates the intellect. From the top of the temple mount, some things will never look the same again.

Archaeological Findings Discussed

In a January presentation co-sponsored by F.A.R.M.S., explorer Gene Savoy reported some of his latest archaeological findings to a large audience at BYU. He has discovered 43 "lost cities" in the jungle and mountains of South America. His latest discovery, the Gran Vilaya, is said to cover approximately 100 square miles and is found some 400 miles north of Lima, Peru, in virtually unexplored tropical mountains that scholars had thought supported only small villages of agriculturalists.

At the Gran Vilaya he discovered carved stone stelae inscribed with what may prove to be the only known example of pre-Columbian linear writing found *in situ* in South America. Savoy offered some theories to explain the nature of this writing, but so far it defies classification.

Savoy's discoveries seem to open new areas of potential research, according to Dr. Ray Matheny, his host in Provo. While much remains to be done to verify his findings and determine their significance, he deserves credit for efforts in a geographic area that others shun because of the physical difficulty of doing research there.

Special offer: All who return the order form in this Newsletter and purchase both *Warfare in the Book of Mormon* and *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount* will receive a free copy of the 1989 *Review*.

Research Update

Beginning with this issue, a new regular feature is added to the F.A.R.M.S. Newsletter. In the past, research updates have been published separately so that they could be issued more quickly and more often. Now that we are able to publish this Newsletter 5 or 6 times each year, the delay is not as significant. By including these reports here, all of our supporters will receive them as they are published, rather than waiting to obtain them as a collection at the end of the year.

Another feature that will be added from time to time is the "Scholarly Watch" that will report recent books and articles published by Latter-day Saint scholars on topics related to ancient studies. We invite all readers to keep us posted on any such publications, especially those appearing in places where most Latter-day Saint readers would not usually find them.

Colophons in the Book of Mormon

At the start of 1 Nephi a heading, not marked with verse numbers, begins, "An account of Lehi and his wife Sariah, and his four sons" and ends, "I, Nephi, wrote this record." Dozens of these editorial entries or colophons (a form well known in nonscriptural documents from antiquity, as Nibley pointed out years ago) are found in the Book of Mormon. Together they instruct us about how the volume as we have it was assembled. The fact that these colophons have been handled differently in modern translations and printings obscures their nature.

Nephi, of course, set the pattern. All we have from him was written at one time, some 30 years after he left Jerusalem (2 Nephi 5:28-33). He might have kept some sort of journal through the years, but the book as he carefully phrased it on his plates was a single, planned work, through which he felt he needed to guide the reader's steps.

After his orientation beginning 1 Nephi, we encounter in 1 Nephi 9 a long discussion (the entire chapter) by him about what chapters 1-8 have been about, plus a statement of what will follow. The *amen* at the end of this chapter subtly signals that he has finished his editorial aside. Again in 1 Nephi 14 he summarizes and again concludes with *amen* (see also 15:36),

and many more of his colophons could be mentioned.

Mormon followed Nephi's lead. He provided prefaces for each of the books he abridged (except Mosiah, for which the Words of Mormon is an expanded prologue). In addition, he wrote introductions to chunks of original material he incorporated unchanged into his ongoing abridgment of the plates of Nephi. Among the most obvious such spots are his comments preceding the record of the Zeniff colony (before Mosiah 9) and before Alma's account, which starts with Mosiah 23. Finally, Mormon lets us know at Mosiah 29:47 that the book of Mosiah is done and that the orientation of the record is shifting.

The book of Alma begins with a 68 word preface and ends with a summary in the last verse. In between are other guides provided by Mormon. At the beginning of Alma 5, a preface starts, "The words which Alma . . . delivered," and concludes at Alma 6:8 with an editorial guideline complete with *amen*. A preface before Alma 17 starts the mission record of the sons of Mosiah (extending through chapter 26). Bracketing statements for the record of Shiblön are in Alma 63:1 and 11.

We can tell in some cases that at least sections of ancient documents in Mormon's possession were entered verbatim. Zeniff, for example, wrote in the first person. Helaman 7-12 has a

formal title: "The prophecy of Nephi, the son of Helaman." At least a part of Helaman 13-15, headed "The prophecy of Samuel, the Lamanite, to the Nephites," is quoted from a document rather than being Mormon's paraphrase. Meanwhile, the colophon at the beginning of 3 Nephi (which introduces what follows as the "Book of Nephi") provides genealogical information nowhere else incorporated.

Were these colophons consistently and clearly presented in our printed editions, this feature showing the remarkable complexity of the Book of Mormon and the intricate editing process by which the text was produced would be made clearer.

Based on research by John A. Tvedtnes, to be presented at greater length in a forthcoming F.A.R.M.S. volume.

Mormon's Agenda

Again and again Mormon reminds us that he is drastically selecting and condensing as he constructs the Book of Mormon. We can learn much about the man by examining his choices of what to include and what to leave out.

His editing may be responsible for some of the puzzling features in the scripture, such as its emphasis on warfare (Mormon was a military man) and its omission of details about the law of Moses (he was a Christian, perhaps little interested in the ancient ways).

But the choices he made are perhaps most revealing when his editing shows him to be a real human being trying to draw uplifting lessons from mean and ugly events. This is manifest in two approaches: (1) a spiritual interpretation of political events, and (2) drastic simplification that highlights the distinction between the obedient and disobedient.

For an example of the first point, consider the single thing Mormon chooses to tell us out of Alma's exhortation (which probably lasted for hours) to the people of Limhi in Zarahemla after their arrival there. He fea-

(continued on back page)

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F.A.R.M.S. Undertakes New Publishing Venture

We are pleased to announce the formation of FARMS Press, an educational publishing arm of the Foundation intended to help publish deserving scholarly books that cannot be published as well or at all elsewhere. Many valuable works on the Book of Mormon and related topics are too scholarly for commercial publishers or are too oriented to LDS concerns to be published or promoted well by scholarly publishers. F.A.R.M.S. has tried to fill that gap in the past for research papers, and now we will work to do the same for books.

The Foundation has enjoyed a successful relationship with the Deseret Book company for 5 years, which has resulted in the publication of 9 volumes in the *Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* and 5 other works of serious scholarship, including 2 new books featured in this issue. Some of these have been best sellers for Deseret Book, holding a spot on their best seller list for months. We applaud Deseret Book's commitment to publish such books and are pleased to work with them in that endeavor. We will continue our co-publishing relationship with them for our books that they wish to publish and market to the LDS audience.

However, some important books of research on the Book of Mormon and related topics will not appeal to Deseret Book's primary audience. With support from dues and donations, F.A.R.M.S. can independently publish these books.

We will of necessity start small. We have faith that many people who care about the Book of Mormon and wish to see its message better understood and communicated will support this effort with purchases and donations.

First to be published will be volume 1 of the *New World Figurines Project*, edited by Terry Stocker. It contains essays by professional anthropologists about thousands of clay human figurines found in the Americas—the first collection of its kind ever published. None of the essays directly mention the

Book of Mormon, but all increase our knowledge about the cultures that inhabited parts of the world related to the Book of Mormon. We intend to publish several volumes in this figurines project soon.

Other books being considered for publication by FARMS Press include original research and analysis, bibliographies, and reprints of important books that are out of print.

As in all that we do, your support is crucial—not only financial support, but moral and intellectual support as well. We hope to receive your donations and your suggestions and criticisms. We do not wish to overlook books that should be published or reprinted, and we hope that you will help us identify the ones that you believe deserve to be published. Volunteers willing to share information about the publishing and distribution of scholarly books could also help us a great deal.

The Original Bountiful Found?

Many F.A.R.M.S. members have read about research done by Australians Warren and Michaela Aston (see AST-88) on the area at the southern extremity of the Arabian peninsula. The Astons have examined several possible sites for Bountiful, where Nephi and others in Lehi's party constructed the ship which they sailed to the New World. A new visit last year, partially funded by F.A.R.M.S., gathered further data.

The Astons visited four zones on the coast (including Salalah, first described and illustrated in 1976 by the Hiltons and G. Silver). The Wadi Sayq, an area near the border between Oman and South Yemen, meets the Book of Mormon criteria for the original land of Bountiful in striking ways that other candidate spots do not, including having truly "bountiful" vegetation and fruit. No new report will be made public, however, pending further study. A 1990 visit is planned, to be followed by research involving an international panel of experts in several disciplines.

Nibley Lecture Series on Facsimile #2

F.A.R.M.S. is sponsoring a new lecture series by Hugh Nibley on Facsimile #2 from the Pearl of Great Price. Beginning June 27 and continuing every Wednesday evening (except July 4) until he is finished, approximately 12 weeks, Nibley will discuss the ancient background of the facsimile and the ways that new interpretations in Egyptian studies help us understand its meaning. The lectures, which will be illustrated with slides, will be held at 7:00 P.M. in room 321 of the Maeser Building on the BYU campus and are open to the public without charge.

Facsimile #2 is an Egyptian "hypocephalus" (which means "under the head," referring to the fact that such documents anciently were placed under the head of the deceased person before burial). This facsimile from the Pearl of Great Price was the first hypocephalus ever published. Brother Nibley will discuss "what the Egyptians themselves said about the hypocephalus, then tell what Joseph Smith said about it."

Brother Nibley has recently devoted several years to the study of the facsimile. He owns copies of 125 hypocephali and has examined many others. He is excited about the new discoveries that his study of these documents has produced. "I never knew anything like that existed. It is just astonishing!" he reports. "Each hypocephalus has a definite message and each follows a consistent pattern," as he will discuss in his lectures.

Nibley emphasized that in the last 10 to 15 years there has been "a total revolution in Egyptian studies." Because of the work of a "whole new flock of scholars, the interpretation of the Egyptian language has totally, drastically changed." These new findings shed light on the Pearl of Great Price facsimile, as Nibley proposes to demonstrate.

We hope that you will join us for several evenings of stimulating and enlightening discussion.

tures Alma's statement that they "should remember that it was the Lord" that delivered them (Mosiah 25:16). When we read the account of Limhi's escape (Mosiah 22), we see that freedom came through a cunning scheme by which they got the Lamanite guards drunk. Yet Mormon provides a spiritual interpretation of this escape to emphasize that, despite what may seem to be men's own cleverness, planning, and apparent luck, God is really the one making things happen. Mormon's frequent "and thus we see" comments reveal this view.

Mormon's other editorial approach is simplification. The people whose history he is presenting actually exist as diverse groups: the people of Zarahemla, Nephi's own descendents, the people of Ammon, Ishmaelites, Zoramites, Zeniffites, Amulonites, and so forth. Yet Mormon boils these down to just two "sides," the Nephites and the Lamanites. Why does he simplify this way? Because otherwise we might fail to draw the lesson from his record that he considers vital. His aim is not to sketch Nephite society but to turn his readers' hearts to God. That requires selection and arrangement of facts out of the hundreds or thousands of possibilities he could have presented.

Another example of his simplification for a purpose is his report in Alma 16 of the surprise Lamanite attack that destroyed Ammonihah. Mormon emphasizes God's hand behind this

political-historical event. His editorial commentary (Alma 16:9-10) teaches us that "their great city [was destroyed], which they said God could not destroy. . . . But behold in one day it was left desolate." Actually, as Alma 25 makes clear, the Lamanite attack on Ammonihah was triggered by events starting years before. The great Nephite missionaries converted thousands of the Lamanites (the Anti-Nephi-Lehies) to the gospel. This angered other Lamanites, and they were stirred up further by Nephite dissenters. Finally in Alma 27:16 we learn that those frustrated Lamanites were the ones who launched the attack that struck Ammonihah without warning. The historical events leading to the destruction of Ammonihah had been very complex.

In all these matters Mormon is not ignorant of the complexity—he knew it far better than we now can know it, for his historical resources were vastly greater than ours are. He is just taking an editor's prerogative in putting things into a perspective chosen by him with a prophetic eye to the future as well as an editor's command of his subject matter. We would do well to recognize the subtlety with which he has produced his volume to match his announced intent on the title page.

Based on research by Grant Hardy, to be presented at greater length in a forthcoming F.A.R.M.S. volume.

Scholarly Watch

A notice has appeared for Wilfred C. Griggs' book, *Early Egyptian Christianity*. This book is being published by E. J. Brill (1990), priced at Gld. 140, US\$ 70.

Religion and Law has been published by Eisenbrauns, P.O. Box 275, Winona Lake, IN 46590, at \$37.50. This volume contains twenty scholarly papers presented at a symposium at the law schools of Brigham Young University and the University of Utah by many internationally renowned scholars. It was edited by Utah-based professors Edwin Firmage, Bernard Weiss, and John Welch, and contains significant studies on the Ten Commandments, governmental power, covenant, and connections between biblical religion and law, from ancient times to the present.

John W. Welch's article, "Chiasmus in Biblical Law," was published in *Jewish Law Association Studies IV* (1990), pp. 5-22, the proceedings of a Conference of the JLA in Boston. This volume is available from Scholars Press, Atlanta, GA. In addition to discussing the chiasmic structure of passages in the Torah, it draws comparisons to Alma 41:13-15.

We welcome news of other such publications.



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