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Warfare in the Book of Mormon

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Why Study Warfare in the Book of Mormon?

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The studies on warfare in the Book of Mormon presented at this symposium have been fascinating and enlightening for all involved in the conference and in the F.A.R.M.S. Working Group on Warfare. Much work has been done and has already borne good fruit, but a great deal of thoughtful research and careful evaluation still remains ahead.

People may well ask: Why study warfare in the Book of Mormon? There are many answers, among which are these: to understand better the events in the Book of Mormon, to develop a perspective against which to understand its teachings and messages, to enjoy the interesting lives of a remarkable people, and to aid in assaying the historicity of the book.

It is doubtful that any person can fully understand the entire Book of Mormon without some knowledge of warfare. Wars were important to the people of the Book of Mormon. Not only were armed conflicts matters of life and death, but they were also matters of great political and religious importance. God commanded Nephi to keep not just one, but two sets of records: one of his sacred revelations and ministry, the other (recorded equally by way of commandment) of "the wars and contentions of [his] people" (1 Nephi 9:4).

Nor can we forget that the prophet-warrior Mormon abridged most of the Book of Mormon. Indeed, most Nephite leaders were both religious and military men: King Benjamin was not only a prophet, but also commander-in-chief, himself wielding the sword of Laban in battle. Although we rarely think of him in this way, Alma the Younger, the high priest and chief judge, was the man who went out at the head of the Nephite armies in the civil war against the Amlicites and who did hand-to-hand combat himself (reminiscent of the heroic tradition of contests between such luminaries as Achilles and Hector, or David and Goliath).

Wars and the politics of war were an integral part of history in the Book of Mormon. Alma's concern about the Zoramite defection was one of the main reasons he led a second mission to the land of Antionum. That mission was both religiously and politically based. The treatment and positioning of the Ammonites in the land of Jershon involved strategic considerations and military decisions. The deliverance of Alma the Elder and his people from the land of Helam and of Limhi from the city of Lehi-Nephi were likewise critical episodes in both the religious and military history of these people.

Indeed, most military events in the Book of Mormon have both religious and political importance. The Nephites did not dichotomize their world between church and state as we do. Ancient peoples generally viewed war as a contest between the gods of one people and the gods of another. For the Nephites, however, God's will was often revealed through the ordeal of battle: God scourged and punished his people by the ravages of war, or God blessed his people by marching at the head of their armies and giving them the victory (this was a deeply held religious belief of Captain Moroni, but one scoffed at by his enemy Zerahemnah). To the Nephites, the matters of war were all-important religious affairs and sacred obligations, not the optional exploits of imperialistic monarchs or of mercenary soldiers of fortune.

Points like these suggest that having the Nephite worldview in mind (as one piece of useful equipment) would be helpful as we strive to understand the attitudes, words, teachings, and important lessons God revealed to these people and as we strive to take those lessons and experiences to heart.

The military record is also an interesting history for its own sake. The Book of Mormon reports many wars, recounting memorable events and courageous deeds of men, women, and youth. Each war was different and distinct, although we often tend to blur them in our own minds. For example, in a sense, the Seven Years' War, the Napoleonic Wars, the Franco-Prussian War, World War I, and World War II were primarily the French fighting the Germans, but seeing them all as mere replays one of the other would be wrong. In the same way, the wars in the Book of Mormon were not just a series of reruns, the Nephites against the Lamanites. Each war had different causes, different parties, unique problems, and distinctive consequences. We as a people have not yet come to know the wars of the Book of Mormon as individual conflicts and campaigns (as we know World War II, or the Revolutionary War), but when we come to know each distinctive Book of Mormon war as we know the distinctive wars of the last few centuries, the pages of the book will become more alive to us.

One step in this direction is finding a name for each of the wars in the Book of Mormon. John Sorenson has identified approximately one hundred instances of armed conflict in the Book of Mormon.[1] Below are possible names that might be given to many of the main wars or military campaigns in the Nephite portions of the book, along with brief sociopolitical comments on some of the contributing causes, some of the salient tactics, and some of the resulting consequences that distinguished these conflicts:

1. The Early Tribal Wars

Sources: Jacob 1:10, 14; Enos—Omni.

Dates: 6th-2nd century B.C.

Location: Land of Nephi.

Causes: Popular and fraternal hatred; resentment; bloodthirstiness; desire to destroy the Nephites, their records, and their traditions.

Tactics: Repeated periodic tribal conflicts and contentions.

Results: Nephites did not thrive; left the land of Nephi.

2. The Wars of King Laman's Son

Sources: Mosiah 9-10; Omni 1:24; Words of Mormon 1:13-14.

Dates: About 160-150 B.C. The attack on the land of Zarahemla during King Benjamin's reign probably came around the same time as the second attack on the city of Nephi during the reign of Zeniff or the two attacks during the reign of King Noah, since the Lamanites were otherwise peaceful toward the Zeniffites and Nephites during this period.

Locations: City of Nephi and land of Zarahemla.

Causes: Lamanite fear of growing Nephite strength and Lamanite tradition of teaching hatred, stemming from a belief that Nephi had wronged his elder brothers. The anger was possibly compounded by the fact that the Nephites had again moved the records and government out of Lamanite reach (see Omni 1:14; Mosiah 10:15-16).

Tactics: Offensives against two capitals, Nephi and Zarahemla.

Results: Benjamin's victory unified and established the land of Zarahemla as Nephite territory; Noah's defeat established the land of Nephi as Lamanite territory. After these wars, only two independent kings remained.

3. The War of Amlici

Source: Alma 2-3.

Date: Fifth year Reign of the Judges [R.J.] (87 B.C.).

Locations: Zarahemla, hill Amnihu, and river Sidon.

Causes: Transition from kingship to judgeship. The execution of Nehor five years earlier led to the insurrection of Amlici. At stake was whether judges or kings, and whether Nephites or followers of Nehor, would rule the land of Zarahemla.

Tactics: Civil war. Prearranged open battle at the hill Amnihu: Amlicites joined forces with Lamanites; and Nephites cut them off at the headwaters of the river Sidon, where Alma slew Amlici.

Results: An uneasy peace in Zarahemla under Alma as chief judge. This war proved that Lamanites could be recruited as allies by Nephite dissenters and gave the followers of Nehor a footing among the Lamanites in the land of Nephi.

4. The Destruction of Ammonihah

Sources: Alma 16:1-11; 24:1-25:14.

Date: 11 R.J. (81 B.C.).

Location: City of Ammonihah to the west of Zarahemla.

Causes: Lamanites angry at Nehorites and their allies for causing Lamanites to kill other Lamanites; abominations at Ammonihah had readied the city for destruction.

Tactics: Raid and surprise attack against a single target, followed by Nephite pursuit in the wilderness to rescue captives.

Results: Virtual elimination of Nehorites as a political force; desolation of Nehors.

5. The War of the Ammonite Secession

Source: Alma 28.

Date: 15 R.J. (77 B.C.).

Location: Area in Zarahemla around the land of Jershon.

Causes: Lamanites attacked the Nephites around the land of Jershon, apparently following the Ammonites who had seceded from the Lamanites, possibly to force them back to the land of Nephi.

Tactic: Single major open battle with casualties in the tens of thousands.

Results: Ammonites established in the land of Jershon. This was the last attack begun strictly by Lamanite initiative until the final Nephite battle; the remaining wars were fueled by Zoramite or Gadianton impetus.

6. The Zoramite War

Source: Alma 43-44.

Date: 18 R.J. (74 B.C.).

Location: Between Antionum and Jershon, northeast of Zarahemla.

Causes: After the Zoramites separated from the Nephites, they entered into a correspondence with the Lamanites. War was precipitated after many of the Zoramite working class defected from the city of Antionum, having been converted by Alma and given refuge in Jershon.

Tactics: Buildup of troops on the border between the lands of Antionum and Jershon, followed by Lamanite attempt to flee, Nephite pursuit, and battle at the river Sidon.

Results: Important use of innovative armor; Zoramite men all took an oath of peace never to attack Nephites again.

7. The First Amalickiahite War

Source: Alma 46:1-50:11.

Date: 20 R.J. (72 B.C.).

Locations: Ammonihah, Noah, and the east seacoast near the narrow neck of land.

Causes: Political ambitions of Amalickiah, a Zoramite in Zarahemla, who dissented from the Nephites. He seized an opportune moment to rebel at the time of Alma's departure and Helaman's succession (see Alma 46:1). Amalickiah defected with a few Nephite leaders and, after becoming king of the Lamanites, recruited large armies from the land of Nephi.

Tactics: Strike against what were thought to be the weakest parts of the land of Zarahemla.

Results: Amalickiah defeated, but he swore to return and kill Moroni. Never was there a happier time than the brief period immediately following the war (see Alma 50:23).

8. The Second Amalickiahite War (Seven Years' War)

Source: Alma 51-62.

Dates: 25-31 R.J. (67-61 B.C.).

Location: Throughout the land of Zarahemla.

Causes: Return of Amalickiah, coinciding with the armed revolt of the king-men and his brother Ammoron's assumption of Lamanite kingship. Initial Lamanite successes in the east and west were partly attributable to the king-men issue at home.

Tactics:Protracted warfare; full-scale attempts to conquer cities and occupy lands surrounding Zarahemla on the west, south, and north; concurrent campaigns on several fronts, including Nephite efforts to control internal insurrection. This time, commanders who personally knew the Nephite lands and cities led the Lamanite forces.

Results:A very costly Nephite victory. These wars were evidently hard on the Nephite rulers, for Helaman, Moroni, Pahoran, Shiblon, Corianton, and others were all dead or gone by Alma 63.

9. Rebellion of Paanchi

Source: Helaman 1:1-13.

Date: 40 R.J. (52 B.C.).

Location: City of Zarahemla.

Cause: Dispute over Pahoran, the son of Pahoran, becoming chief judge.

Tactic: No actual fighting resulted, but Paanchi was about to incite a rebellion.

Results: Paanchi executed, Pahoran assassinated, and faction of secret murderers led by Kishkumen formed.

10. The War of Tubaloth

Source: Helaman 1:14-34.

Date: 41 R.J. (51 B.C.).

Locations: Cities of Zarahemla and Bountiful.

Causes: At the time of turmoil in Nephite government following the deaths of Paanchi and Pahoran, Tubaloth, Ammoron's son, and Coriantumr, a descendant of Zarahemla, who possibly wanted to establish himself as king, sought to capture the land of Zarahemla.

Tactics: Forced march, fall of the city Zarahemla, defense of Bountiful, death of Coriantumr.

Results: Since little is heard again of the descendants of Zarahemla, or the Mulekites, this was apparently the last time a Mulekite tried to regain control of Zarahemla. The obvious vulnerability of the capital city probably contributed to the political unrest, the rise of the Gadianton robbers, and the migrations of Nephites into the lands northward that followed this war.

11. The War of Moronihah

Source: Helaman 4.

Dates: 54, 57-62 R.J. (38, 35-30 B.C.).

Location: Land of Zarahemla.

Causes: Continuing dissension in the church, possibly sparked when Nephi became chief judge.

Tactics: Rebellion of members of the Church.

Results: Some dissenters returned with Lamanite support and occupied half of the Nephite lands. Nephi resigned the judgment seat to devote, along with his brother Lehi, his full time to preaching the word of God (see Helaman 5:1-4).

12. The War of Gadianton and Kishkumen

Source: Helaman 6:15-11:20.

Dates: 66-73 R.J. (26-19 B.C.).

Location: The entire land, but centered in the land of Zarahemla.

Causes: Assassinations of the chief judges Cezoram and his son. Love of riches fueled the growth of Kishkumen and Gadianton's secret band. Gadianton robbers obtained power as judges in Zarahemla.

Tactics: Infiltration of government; marauding raids.

Results: The Lamanites, who had become righteous, hunted and destroyed the band of Gadianton with their lands, but the robbers' influence among the Nephites grew. The war ended when Nephi declared a famine, which built faith among the people in Zarahemla and caused the dissolution of the Gadianton band.

13. *The War of Giddianhi and Zemnarihah*

Source: 3 Nephi 2:11-4:28.

Dates: A.D. 13-22.

Location: From the land of Zarahemla to the land of Bountiful.

Causes: Some twenty-five years earlier, Gadianton robbers had established strongholds in the mountains and had grown steadily in strength and antagonism. They alleged that the Nephites had illegally taken the rights of government away from them. The depletion of their food supplies brought them out into open conflict.

Tactics: Widespread raiding and pillaging that escalated into open warfare when the robbers' demands were rejected. Lamanites and Nephites joined into one body near the narrow neck of land and prepared for a seven-year siege.

Results: An important side effect of this war was

the unification of Lamanites and Nephites against the threat of robbers. The robbers were destroyed once again, and the victors were all reconverted.

14. *Rebellion of Jacob*

Source: 3 Nephi 6:14-7:14.

Date: A.D. 30.

Location: Land of Zarahemla.

Causes: Lachoneus, son of Lachoneus, took office and attempted to try the judges who had exceeded their power. These judges banded together, tried to establish a king, and assassinated Lachoneus.

Tactics: No battle actually resulted, since King Jacob fled to the north.

Results: Collapse of reign of judges; degeneration to tribal society.

15a. The Final Nephite Wars, Phase 1

Source: Mormon 1:6-2:9.

Dates: A.D. 322, 327-28.

Location: Land of Zarahemla and northward.

Causes: Overpopulation; infestations of robbers.

Tactics: Border skirmishes at Zarahemla, followed four years later by a mass Lamanite attack.

Results: Nephites driven from their traditional lands toward the narrow neck of land.

15b. The Final Nephite Wars, Phase 2

Source: Mormon 2:16-3:1.

Dates: A.D. 346-50.

Location: Lands of Zarahemla, Jashon, and Shem.

Causes: Lamanites drove the Nephites northward and attacked the city of Shem.

Tactics: Nephites fortified Shem, stood firm against a larger attacking force, and pursued the Lamanites to recapture the Nephite lands of inheritance.

Results: Nephites entered into a ten-year peace with the Lamanites (A.D. 350-60).

15c. The Final Nephite Wars, Phase 3

Source: Mormon 3:4-6:15.

Dates: A.D. 361-85.

Locations: First, mostly around the narrow neck of land at the cities Desolation and Teancum. Then, all the land from the narrow neck northward, ending at Cumorah.

Causes: Lamanites attacked at the narrow neck, possibly to control travel and commerce to the north through this strategic point. Nephites won and foolishly counterattacked in the south, which led to Lamanite reprisals. Lamanites determined to destroy Nephites. Gross wickedness on both sides was the cause of rampage.

Tactics: Attacks and counterattacks involving two cities, followed by total war and mass movements of the entire Nephite people. Apparently, everyone who could fight was conscripted.

Results: A Nephite victory resulted in the Nephites regaining their two cities and in an uneasy three-year peace. Mormon refused to lead the Nephites anymore, but later resumed leadership when his people faced complete destruction. The Lamanites annihilated the Nephite people.

These wars are remarkable and intriguing. As can be seen from the foregoing summary, each has a life and character of its own, yet, as a group, they are similar enough that we can see that they arose in the same civilization. Viewed as a whole, some interesting patterns emerge. For example, several of the wars arose when one group attempted to separate from another (e.g., when Nephi separated from Laman and Lemuel [1], when the Ammonites left for the land of Zarahemla [5], when the Zoramites split off in the city of Antionum [6], or when Morianton attempted to depart into the lands northward [see Alma 50:26-36]). Obviously, freedom of travel was limited in this civilization; defection, or dissension in one group that opened up possible involvement with another, was viewed as treason and grounds for armed intervention.

Note also that warring parties consistently picked opportune moments to strike. Many of these wars occurred at the time of transitions of political power. Amlici waged his war [3] while the nature of Nephite government—kingship or judgeship —was still in question. The Amalickiahite Wars [7-8] were fought immediately after Alma left and his son Helaman assumed office. The Rebellion of Paanchi [9] and the War of Tubaloth [10] came on the heels of the transfer of power from Pahoran to his successors. Likewise, the Rebellion of Jacob [14] arose when Lachoneus took office and tried to initiate political reforms. Thus, the transfer of political office from one person to the next was obviously a problem in the small Nephite world, as one would expect, since the Nephite rulers came from a minority population group (see Mosiah 25:2). With considerable social, political, and military difficulty, the Nephite ruling families clung tenuously to the leadership of their community.

There are also many types of wars here: Some were single attacks; others involved protracted sieges, split fronts, announced wars, or surprise attacks. Differing and developing uses of armor, technology, strategy, and weaponry can all be observed in the detailed records of the history of warfare in the Book of Mormon.

These and similar details help in assaying the historicity of this record. The purpose of inquiring into historicity is not to subject revelation to the constraints of reason or scholarship, but rather to use the techniques of scholarship as a limited means to a spiritual end. By thinking carefully, systematically, and acutely about the warfare material in the Book of Mormon, a diligent student will appreciate more fully the truth, miracle, and meaning of this ancient record.

One powerful dimension of historicity of the Book of Mormon is the sheer *complexity* of the record. The amazing achievement of the Book of Mormon is not the fact that it is a big book containing numerous chapters on warfare, but the stark reality that those chapters are complicated and consistent. They present an involved military history that presupposes, reflects, and visualizes an entire civilization and its worldview on warfare. Those like Thomas O'Dea, who see the Book of Mormon as a simple tale of the Good Guys versus the Bad Guys, or who see its wars as one old stereotype being repeated again and again, do not do the book justice. As Hugh Nibley wrote in 1953, "Internal evidence is almost the only type ever used in testing questioned documents; it is rarely necessary to go

any further than the document itself to find enough clues to condemn it, and if the text is a long one, and an historical document in the bargain, the absolute certainty of inner contradictions is enough to assure adequate testing."[2] In the warfare chapters of the Book of Mormon, we have just such a text: lengthy, complicated, and filled with detail and variety. In its complexity, it brilliantly emerges as a clear, coherent, and accurate document.

Another indicator of historicity is *realism*. The human and social events recorded in the Book of Mormon are realistic. They make sense in light of the way people and nations in fact behave. Career soldiers like our late colleague Brent Merrill are in a unique position to appreciate this record from the vantage point of field experience. Few people are aware that Hugh Nibley himself spent three years with the European forces in World War II regularly briefing officers on strategy and intelligence. Drawing upon this background, his analysis of the warfare chapters in the Book of Mormon is particularly vivid and convincing. He finds military history to be an especially rigorous test, as he describes it, for example, in chapter eleven of *Since Cumorah.*

Consider simply the careful timing of attacks in the Book of Mormon: these people were not stupid. Likewise, the book (in a masterfully understated way) indicates realistic conditions that contribute to the outbreak of war. Thus, in Mormon 1, a condition of extreme overpopulation is reported. Overcrowding typically leads to shortages (see v. 7), brigandage (see v. 18), and skirmishes (see v. 11). Such circumstances set the stage so that a single spark, like that of the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand at Sarajevo, can indeed escalate the conflict into horrid, full-scale war.

Third, the study of warfare in the ancient world affords the student an opportunity to check up on some long-forgotten lore. The warfare materials of the Old Testament and ancient Israel form an authentic backdrop for the Nephite wars. For example, as 2 Nephi 5:10 reports, the Nephites observed the law of Moses in all respects, including its requirements and proscriptions regarding the conduct of war. Of course, one should expect to find (and does find) in the world of the Nephites elements both of continuity with its ancient Israelite past and of developmental independence. Through the examination of numerous individual details, as well as overall patterns and concepts, we are finding increasing evidence demonstrating that the writers of the Book of Mormon knew plenty about ancient Israelite warfare.

We have also found that other ancient Near Eastern sources, later Jewish texts, and information about warfare in other pretechnical societies provide additional comparative points of reference. These, however, are obviously of diminishing value as one moves further away from texts or cultures directly related to ancient Israel and further into the world of Lehi and his contemporaries.

The dimension of Mesoamerican archaeology, although still underdeveloped, cannot be ignored, either. Several papers developed for this conference draw upon the current state of archaeological knowledge in the New World. As William Hamblin said in our working sessions, "With such a small portion of Mesoamerican sites having been excavated, there will certainly be many important discoveries in the future that will greatly modify current concepts and theories." This, however, does not absolve us from our duty to try to "come to grips with the Book of Mormon in terms of present understandings of Mesoamerica."

More could be done in examining and comparing nineteenth-century materials. Much, but certainly not all, of what is known today about the ancient Near East was buried silently beneath the sands of Mesopotamia until this century, unavailable to Joseph Smith except through the Old Testament.[3] Comparisons to warfare in Napoleon's day or in the Spaulding Manuscript could be ventured by others. Certain differences vis-ˆ-vis the Book of Mormon in this regard have already been noted.[4]

For the present research, however, we have taken the view, as a working hypothesis, that the Book of Mormon is what it claims to be — an ancient history of events that occurred in the Western hemisphere before A.D. 425, written by the descendants of people who left Jerusalem around 600 B.C. Accordingly, we also assume that the Book of Mormon was first written and edited by ancient prophets (who labored under adverse circumstances and who hoped we would be understanding in our reading of their record despite its weaknesses) and then translated into English by a modern prophet. Furthermore, we are examining the book under the assumption that the text is amenable to historical analysis, like the great military histories of antiquity of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Julius Caesar, or like those parts of the Old Testament dealing with warfare (even though the biblical texts were not intended primarily as a military chronicle). I believe it fair to report that our findings are strongly supportive of these assumptions.

As far as we are aware, the present volume on Nephite warfare in the Book of Mormon is the first devoted entirely to this topic. Some individuals have done work in the past on warfare in the Book of Mormon, but no group has previously undertaken an encyclopedic study of a wide variety of major aspects of ancient Nephite warfare. In this conference, we will not replow old ground, but we hope to build upon past efforts as we venture into new territory.

Some of the previous valuable work on war in the Book of Mormon has been doctrinal or exhortative in nature.[5]

Other studies have focused on the question, Why is there so much war in the Book of Mormon?[6] Actually, when we closely examine the subject, we may all wonder why there isn't *more* war in the Book of Mormon. For many readers, encountering so much war in so sublime and sacred a volume is something of a culture shock. But this is *our* problem, not the book's. On this issue, if we put aside our cultural predilections and attempt to understand the Book of Mormon as a Nephite or a Lamanite might have understood it, then these events play much different, more religious roles in the book, and they become spiritually more meaningful to us.

Some scholarly work has been done in the past on warfare in the Book of Mormon. Most notable are many chapters in the works of Hugh Nibley dealing with the ins and outs of war. Several of his chapters are classics.[7] His work, especially on the very different world of Jaredite warfare, shows again how complex and true to ancient life the Book of Mormon is. While the papers in this conference volume deal primarily with Nephite warfare, a reader can easily contrast these materials with the information Nibley gives about the Jaredites.[8]

Interesting notes on ancient Near Eastern military practices have also appeared in F.A.R.M.S. publications. For example, the F.A.R.M.S. newsletter has commented about the servants of King Lamoni, who took the bloody stumps of the attackers' arms cut off by Ammon to the king "for a testimony of the things which they had done" (Alma 17:39). This practice finds direct analogues in the archaeology of Egypt and Syria.[9] Previous publications have dealt with hand-held weapons like scimitars and swords, projectile weapons like arrows and slings, ancient patterns of international relations, and the phenomenon of survivor witnesses.[10]

A fully integrated, systematic study of warfare and the wars in the Book of Mormon is still to come. This conference, however, is a productive step in that direction. Out of this will emerge, we hope, a better understanding of what the Book of Mormon teaches on war. We need to listen to what the Book of Mormon is saying — not to project onto it what we want it to say. The Ammonites' version of pacifism was surely not the same as those of modern-day conscientious objectors. Moroni's version of a just war was not the same as that of today's Kremlin or Pentagon. The Nephite teachings on war will become apparent only after we understand a great deal about their ideology of war, their theology of war, their fear of war, their technology of war, their philosophy of war, their perceptions of war, their language of war, their laws of war, their conduct of war, and their experiences of

war. With this background, we may better understand what this sacred record teaches us about war in our world today —and in what remains of its future.

Notes

1. John L. Sorenson, Appendix: Annals of the Nephite Wars, in "Seasonality of Warfare in the Book of Mormon and in Mesoamerica," in this volume.

2. Hugh Nibley, "New Approaches to Book of Mormon Study," in *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, vol. 8 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1989), 65.

3. For an excellent treatment of war in ancient Israel, see Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 2 vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 1:213-67, and bibliography, 1:xli—xliii. A good measure of the information on biblical warfare available in Joseph Smith's day is the chapter on military affairs in Thomas Upham, tr., *Jahn's Biblical Archaeology* (Andover: Flagg and Gould, 1823), 329-74. This reference work relies almost exclusively on biblical texts to reconstruct a general view of warfare in ancient Israel. Many of its details are accurate, but not all. Some points (like the use of captains of fifty, breastplates, fortifications, towers, swords, stratagems, flags raised on top of long poles to assemble soldiers, and consultation of prophets before going into battle) are present in both the Bible and the Book of Mormon. Many other things mentioned by Jahn, however, are appropriately absent from the New World Book of Mormon (like any approval of plundering, the use of a cavalry, centurions, ceremonies of military review and muster, greaves, catapults, encampments with the tabernacle, and the unfounded idea that a military exemption applied to those who would be likely to discourage others). The simple existence of this book, moreover, does not imply that Joseph Smith knew anything about it.

4. Richard L. Bushman, "The Book of Mormon and the American Revolution," *BYU Studies* 17/1 (Autumn 1976): 3-20, discusses differences between the Book of Mormon and American attitudes toward the Revolutionary War.

5. See, for example, William E. Berrett, "The Book of Mormon Speaks on War," in *A Book of Mormon Treasury* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1959), 275-84; H. George Bickerstaff, "The Nephite Wars," *Instructor* (July 1967): inside back cover; Boyd K. Packer, Conference Report (April 1968): 33-36; Ivan J. Barrett, "A Nation Aroused," *Instructor* (June 1969): 198-99; Edwin B. Firmage, "Violence and the Gospel: The Teachings of the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 25/1 (Winter 1985): 31-53; H. Dean Garrett, "The Book of Mormon on War," in *A Symposium on the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, CES, 1986), 47-53.

6. See, for example, R. Douglas Phillips, "Why is so much of the Book of Mormon given over to military accounts?" in I Have a Question, *Ensign* (January 1978): 17-18, reprinted in this volume; Donald A. Cazier, "Mormon's Message to Modern Militants—Or, Why Is There So Much about War in the Book of Mormon?" *in A Symposium on the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, CES, 1986), 5-11.

7. See Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1988), 205-10 on prisoners, 223-41 regarding wars of extinction, 300-302 and 402-5 regarding chivalry in warfare of the Heroic Age; *An Approach to the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1988), 209-21 on Alma 46, and 416-30 regarding Nephite tactics and final battles; *Since Cumorah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1988), 291-333, mainly on the complexity, strategy, and realism of the accounts in Alma 43-62; *The Prophetic Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1989), 274-

88 on the Bar-Kochba revolt, 328-79 on freemen and king-men, 435-69 on the polarizing effects of war and struggles for power, and 498-532 on warnings for our day. The foregoing books are volumes five, six, seven, and eight in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*.

8. See Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*.

9. "Ammon and Cutting Off the Arms of Enemies," *F.A. R. M. S. Newsletter*, Oct. 1983, and "The Arms of Ammon's Victims," *Insights: An Ancient Window*, Fall 1986. The practice of cutting off the arms of victims is attested in a ninth-century B.C. Assyrian relief illustrated in Yigael Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands*, 2 vols. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1963), 2:399. The practice of cutting off the arms, hands, feet, or other body parts of vanquished enemies served several functions: to obtain an accurate count of the dead, to afford a basis for paying mercenary soldiers, or to identify the casualties.

10. "Conference on Warfare in the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. Update, September 1987; Mark Davis and Brent Israelson, "International Relations and Treaties in the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report, 1982, 27 pp.; "The Destruction of Ammonihah and the Law of Apostate Cities," F.A.R.M.S. Update, July 1987; "Execution of Zemnarihah," F.A.R.M.S. Update, November 1984; William Hamblin, "The Bow and Arrow in the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report, 1987, 37 pp.; and "Handheld Weapons in the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report, 1985, 55 pp. (see William Hamblin s contributions to this volume); Lisa Bolin Hawkins and Gordon C. Thomasson, "I Only Am Escaped Alone to Tell Thee: Survivor-Witnesses in the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report, 1984, 13 pp.; Ray C. Hillam, "The Gadianton Robbers and Protracted War," *BYU Studies* 15/2 (Winter 1975): 215-24; Matthew Hilton, "Preliminary Summary of Nephite Armed Conflict in the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. Working Paper, 1987, 47 pp.; "Iron Sword, Small Silver Scroll from Lehi s Day Discovered," *Insights: An Ancient Window*, Summer 1986; David Palmer, "Warfare and the Development of Nephite Culture in America," F.A.R.M.S. Prelimary Report, 1985, 10 pp.; John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1985), especially pp. 23964 on Nephite-Lamanite wars and the patterns of warfare in Mesoamerica; John W. Welch, "Theft and Robbery in the Book of Mormon and Ancient Near Eastern Law," F.A.R.M.S. Working Paper, 1985, 50 pp.; Yigael Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands*, 2 vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963) for general reference on war in ancient Israel.

Why Is So Much of the Book of Mormon Given Over to Military Accounts?

R. Douglas Phillips

When Mormon set about making his abridgment of the entire course of Nephite history, as contained in the large plates of Nephi, he was (as he repeatedly observed) faced with a mass of materials and sources of every type, both "secular" and "sacred," and a major problem seems to have been deciding what to include in his history and what to leave out (see Helaman 3:13-15; 3 Nephi 5:8-19; 26:6).

If we today feel that Mormon's inclusion of lengthy military accounts is somehow not in keeping with the sacred and religious purpose of the Book of Mormon, then we must remind ourselves that he, unlike most modern historians, had a peculiarly theological or religious concept of history according to which war was not a purely secular phenomenon but an instrument of divine purpose. In his view, war was not to be explained merely in terms of political, economic, or racial causes and effects, but was rooted in moral, spiritual, and social problems and unrighteousness (see Alma 50:21).

Above all, he saw the wars in Nephite history as a verification (to use his own word) of the prophecies of Lehi regarding the terms and conditions for occupying the promised land (see Alma 50:19-20). These wars were often viewed as occasions of divine punishment and retribution on the one hand and of divine deliverance on the other:

> Their abominations … brought upon them their wars and their destructions. And those who were faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord were delivered at all times, whilst thousands of their wicked brethren have been consigned to bondage, or to perish by the sword, or to dwindle in unbelief, and mingle with the Lamanites. (Alma 50:21-22.)

Mormon was also acutely aware that the final Lamanite wars of A.D. 322-85, in which he himself played a leading military role, were the fulfillment of the prophecies of Samuel the Lamanite and a testimony that the principle of divine retribution was in full operation (see Helaman 13:511; Mormon 1:19; 2:10-15).

"Behold, the judgments of God will overtake the wicked; and it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished; for it is the wicked that stir up the hearts of the children of men unto bloodshed" (Mormon 4:5). Such an outlook was due in no small part, of course, to Mormon's personal experience as a military leader. Like the Greek historian Thucydides, he was not only a general, but he was also destined to be the historian who had to account for his nation's defeat in a terrible war. War was a major element in his life, which virtually coincided with the long period of the final Nephite-Lamanite conflict. He saw as one of the main purposes of his life the tragic task of writing the "record concerning the destruction of [his] people, the Nephites" (Mormon 6:1).

But we must be careful not to overstate Mormon's preoccupation with war. Although he frequently mentions its occurrence in the various periods of Nephite history, he judiciously limits himself to recounting in detail only a few of the many accounts that were at his disposal. Except for his rehearsal of the sixty-three years of war in his own lifetime — with the full account of the causes of war, preparations, battles, retreats, and further battles, including the final one at Cumorah with its losses —Mormon devotes most of his interest in military accounts and wars to

the period 75 B.C.–A.D. 25, and in particular to the fourteen years of Lamanite wars at the time of Moroni. His account of that one period fills some seventy pages in the book of Alma.

Inevitably, Mormon should have been attracted to Moroni — the brilliant, energetic, selfless, patriotic, and God-fearing hero who had been instrumental in preserving the Nephite nation. So great was Mormon's admiration for him that he named his son after him. In Mormon's eyes, the peaceful days under Moroni were a golden age in Nephite history (see Alma 50:23). But the military exploits of Moroni seem to have interested Mormon particularly. With great care, he recounted Moroni s courage and patriotism in the desperate military and political state of affairs arising from Lamanite invasion from without and sedition from within, his efforts in mobilization and defense, his own and his lieutenants' brilliant tactics, their sharply fought battles with frightful losses, and their miraculous victories. But throughout his account, we perceive the hand of God making use of devout and just military leaders and statesmen to preserve the righteous and punish the wicked (see Alma 48:11-13, Mormon's eulogy of Moroni).

If, in his account of Moroni, Mormon saw war as a means of divine deliverance for the Nephites, he shows us that the final war fulfilled prophecies of destruction of the nation. With terrifying clarity, we witness with Mormon the tragedy of a people who had passed the point of no return spiritually, who were bent irreversibly on their own destruction.

The implications of Mormon's accounts of war are clear: the people who occupy those lands today are under the same conditions as the earlier inhabitants; they are subject to the same principles of divine retribution, either deliverance or destruction by war. But his son Moroni is the one who, even before he had placed in his father's record the grim account of the Jaredite destruction (following his father's example of selecting and reinforcing his theme of war as a manifestation of God's governance in the affairs of men), warned the inhabitants of America today against placing themselves in the precarious position of the ancient Nephites (see Ether 2:11-12) and warned them to accept with gratitude the lessons of an earlier destruction: "Give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been" (Mormon 9:31).

Purpose of the War Chapters in the Book of Mormon

Richard Dilworth Rust

"We are as the army of Helaman … "

Why does the Book of Mormon, especially the book of Alma, contain so many accounts of war, and what use are they for us? An initial response to this is that what we sometimes call the "war chapters" have much less to do with war than with deliverance from war or with destruction. Indeed, if we think of the Book of Mormon as containing military history, it is the strangest military history ever written: The largest battle in the first 570 years is covered in a couple of sentences, while conflicts in which no Nephites lost their lives are given pages (see, for example, the sentence-length account in Helaman 4:5 of the Lamanites obtaining possession of all the Nephite lands up to the land Bountiful; see also Alma 62:38, which dismisses a great battle in one sentence).

If we understand that the Book of Mormon was written for our day, then we realize that the material in it regarding war is also for our day. From this perspective, we understand why certain things are emphasized and why some are not (such as the extensive battles mentioned above). Knowing that the book was designed for us, we are challenged to see why the Lord inspired Mormon to include the "war chapters" as essential to our survival in the world today.

Looking through time to our day, the prophet Nephi wrote concerning a war, possibly physical but even more so spiritual, facing saints in the latter days: "I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were *few*; … [and] the great mother of abominations did gather together *multitudes* upon the face of all the earth, among all the nations of the Gentiles, to fight against the Lamb of God…. And [the saints] were *armed with righteousness and with the power of God* in great glory" (1 Nephi 14:1214).[1] He also quotes Isaiah: "All the nations that fight against Zion, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision" (2 Nephi 27:3).

Speaking recently about this same war, President Benson declared:

> I testify that as the forces of evil increase under Lucifer's leadership and as the forces of good increase under the leadership of Jesus Christ, there will be growing battles between the two until the final confrontation. As the issues become clearer and more obvious, all mankind will eventually be required to align themselves either for the kingdom of God or for the kingdom of the devil. As these conflicts rage, either secretly or openly, the righteous will be tested. God's wrath will soon shake the nations of the earth and will be poured out on the wicked without measure…. But God will provide strength for the righteous and the means of escape; and eventually and finally truth will triumph.[2]

If the Book of Mormon is a guide to help us in this conflict, what does it tell us?

While it does not tell us much about matters such as kinds of warriors and battle lines, it does give us, in considerable detail, accounts of the exercise of faith — with the story of the sons of Helaman being a primary example of this. It shows inspired stratagems, the Lord's protection, and the great warrior-prophets' direction. At least on three occasions, the Nephites won when someone (or a whole army) went over the wall of a Lamanite-held city. Each time, it is understood, as in Alma 62:50, that "the Lord had delivered them out of the hands of their enemies." It demonstrates how the Lord protected or helped the few in the face of the enemy's much greater numbers. In the conflict in which the Amlicites joined the Lamanites, emphasis is on them "being as numerous

almost, as it were, as the sands of the sea." Nevertheless, we are told *"the Nephites being strengthened by the hand of the Lord*, having prayed mightily to him that he would deliver them out of the hands of their enemies, therefore the Lord did hear their cries, and did strengthen them, and the Lamanites and the Amlicites did fall before them" (Alma 2:27-28). This pattern of a small group of Nephites overcoming or escaping from an innumerable host is found throughout the book.

For the Lamanites especially, it shows the folly of war and even more the need to leave behind wicked leaders. The pattern is found in Alma 62:29: "All the prisoners of the Lamanites did join the people of Ammon, and did begin to labor exceedingly, tilling the ground, raising all manner of grain, and flocks and herds of every kind."

On the other hand, Alma sees iniquity bringing on the destruction of the people (see, e.g., Alma 4:11). Shown time and again is the relationship between the degree of spiritual righteousness and the vulnerability of the people to warfare. Indeed, in several places success or failure in battle is directly attributed to righteousness or wickedness. In this respect, the promise/curse of the Book of Mormon, which every major prophet in the book repeats, is given special relevance to the audience Moroni is addressing: "This is a land which is choice above all other lands; wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God or shall be swept off; for it is the everlasting decree of God. And it is not until the fulness of iniquity among the children of the land, that they are swept off" (Ether 2:10).

In an imperiled world, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is designed to prepare God's people for the second coming of the Savior and to warn the rest of the world to repent and to come unto Christ. The Book of Mormon is a distinctive witness to this. So what is the nature of the circumstances prior to the Second Coming? At that day Satan will "rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good" (2 Nephi 28:20). The Lord God shall cause a great division among the people comparable to the later division between the Nephites and the Lamanites in which "the true worshipers of Christ ... were called Nephites ... [and] they who rejected the gospel were called Lamanites" (4 Nephi 1:37-38). "The wicked will he destroy; and he will spare his people, yea, even if it so be that he must destroy the wicked by fire" (2 Nephi 30:10).

Who will fight the battles for the "true worshipers of Christ"? Ultimately, God: "I will show unto them that fight against my word *and against my people*, who are of the house of Israel, that I am God, and that I covenanted with Abraham that I would remember his seed forever" (2 Nephi 29:14).

What, then, does the Book of Mormon do concerning this latter-day warfare? It shows the fundamental nature of the battle and gives hope to the Lord's people. With accounts of the victories of small minorities against overwhelming odds (often with no lives of the righteous being lost) or of escapes from their enemies (as with the people of Lehi, Nephi, Mosiah, Alma the elder, and Limhi), it confirms the truth of President Benson's words to us, "God will provide strength for the righteous and the means of escape."

Notes

1. Italics have been added to scriptures quoted in this chapter.

2. Ezra Taft Benson, "I Testify," *Ensign* (November 1988): 87.

An Oath of Allegiance in the Book of Mormon

Terrence L. Szink

An important element in any military endeavor is the loyalty of the soldiers. Obviously, even the most brilliant military tactics will fail if the troops are unfaithful in fulfilling their duty. Often, to instill this loyalty, an oath of allegiance is administered to recruits. The well-known titleof-liberty episode in Alma 46 of the Book of Mormon includes an interesting example of just such an oath. This paper will examine that oath, drawing upon parallels from the ancient Near East for comparison.

Moroni's Call for Liberty

Amalickiah, "the man who would be king," had drawn a considerable portion of the Nephite population after him. Moroni, chief captain of the Nephite army, perceived the danger and realized that he needed the support of the people. He rent his coat and used it as a banner to rally the people. After a fervent prayer and a speech,

> the people came running together with their armor girded about their loins, rending their garments in token, or as a covenant, that they would not forsake the Lord their God; or, in other words, if they should transgress the commandments of God, or fall into transgression, and be ashamed to take upon them the name of Christ, the Lord should rend them even as they had rent their garments. Now this was the covenant which they made, and they cast their garments at the feet of Moroni, saying: We covenant with our God, that we shall be destroyed, even as our brethren in the land northward, if we shall fall into transgression; yea, he may cast us at the feet of our enemies, even as we have cast our garments at thy feet to be trodden under foot, if we shall fall into transgression. (Alma 46:21-22.)

This oath is similar to a number of Near Eastern oaths that have two characteristics. First, they are self-execrative in nature: the party making the covenant or treaty takes upon himself a conditional curse, swearing that, if he fails to fulfill his part of the agreement, he is willing to endure a specified punishment. Second, they are accompanied by various rites that in some way symbolized the punishment to be inflicted. I have employed the term "simile oath" to refer to oaths of this type.[1]

The Hittite Soldiers' Oath

Simile oaths occur throughout the ancient Near East. They are most generally used to strengthen the validity of treaties between states, the stronger of the two states forcing the weaker to swear the oath. There are instances, however, in which simile oaths were used to gather troops or insure their fidelity. The clearest example of this is the so-called Hittite Soldiers' Oath uncovered at Boghazköy in present-day Turkey.[2] The tablet dates roughly to the middle of the second millennium B.C. and is designated as the second in a series entitled "When they lead the troops to the oath." It contains a series of rituals in which an officer (presumably a priest) presents the participants with an object that, either through its destruction or by its very nature, represents the punishment for breaking the oath or for showing disrespect to the king. Two sections will be cited:

> Then he places wax and mutton fat in their hands. He throws them on a flame and says: "Just as this wax melts, and just as the mutton fat dissolves, whoever breaks these oaths [shows disrespect to the king] of the Hatti [land], let [him] melt lik[e wax], let him dissolve like [mutton fat]!" [The me]n declare: "So be it!"[3]

As in the Book of Mormon, an object is "likened" to the participants in the ritual. In this case, wax and mutton fat are used instead of a piece of clothing.[4] Should the soldiers break their oath, they would suffer the fate of the object.

The second section is strikingly similar to the Book of Mormon passage. Here the two are placed in parallel columns:

> He [the priest] presents to them [a …]. Before their eyes he [throws] it on the ground; they trample it under foot and he speaks as follows: "Whoever breaks these oaths, even so let the Hatti people come and trample that man's town under foot."[5]

> Now this was the covenant which they made, and they cast their garments at the feet of Moroni, saying: We covenant with our God, that we shall be destroyed, even as our brethren in the land northward, if we shall fall into transgression; yea, he may cast us at the feet of our enemies, even as we have cast our garments at thy feet to be trodden under foot, if we shall fall into transgression (Alma 46:22).

Unfortunately the tablet is unreadable at the spot where the object in the Hittite ritual is mentioned. Norbert Oettinger has suggested that a figurine (*Figur*) was used.[6] His suggestion seems to be based on the fact that a figurine is used in the previous section. If the object were indeed a figurine, it would be the only instance in which the same object is used in more than one section of the ritual. Regardless of what the object was, the act of throwing it on the ground and trampling it underfoot is identical to the Book of Mormon rite.

One way in which the two rituals differ is that in the Hittite Soldiers' Oath, the official does all of the speaking. The soldiers only respond "So be it!" once the object has been presented and the conditional curse pronounced. In the Book of Mormon, the people have the object already in hand when they approach Moroni and they swear the entire oath rather than just utter a response to a prompt. This difference may be due to the types of documents we are dealing with. The Soldiers' Oath is a description of a ritual. As such, it carefully records every detail (Hittite ritual is in fact known for its richness in detail). The Book of Mormon, on the other hand, is a narrative; its purpose is to tell a story. Specific details are of secondary consideration.

Note that before Moroni went out among the people he used the word "trodden" in the following statement: "Surely God shall not suffer that we, who are despised because we take upon us the name of Christ, shall be trodden down and destroyed, until we bring it upon us by our own transgressions" (Alma 46:18). Furthermore, the title of liberty was made of Moroni's rent coat. These two actions—rending and treading upon — are repeated in the people's oath.

It may be reasonable to assume that the people, seeing Moroni's rent coat, used the rending of their own garments as a symbol of punishment in their simile oath. The same assumption cannot be made for the treading of their garments. They could not have known that Moroni used such a phrase unless he himself had told them. There are at least four possible ways to explain the treading of the garments:

(1) The author of the narrative gave us only part of a planned, more elaborate ceremony, in which Moroni, like the official in the Hittite oath, told the people to rend and tread their garments. (2) The rending and trampling of garments was a common form of simile oath already in use among the Nephites at this time. In Mosiah 12, Abinadi prophesies the death of King Noah. Among a series of images depicting the king's death is the following: "It shall come to pass that the life of king Noah shall be valued even as a garment in a hot furnace; for he shall know that I am the Lord" (Mosiah 12:3). This is another instance in the Book of Mormon when a garment symbolized the fate of an individual. Note also that Noah did indeed suffer death by fire. (3) When Moroni prayed, named the land, and spoke of being trodden down (see Alma 46:16-18), some of his officers or men may have been with him, hearing what he said and seeing what he did. They could have instigated the symbolic simile responses among the people at large. (4) The author of this section of the narrative (Mormon, or possibly an eyewitness of the event whose writing Mormon used in his compilation) was influenced by the words of the oath, and he wrote the reference to "treading" into Moroni's statement.[7]

A Mesopotamian Call to Arms

A letter from the archive at Mari describes a call to arms perhaps involving an oath:

> Tell my lord: your servant Bandi-Lim sends the following message: I have been waiting now for five days for the Hanean [a nomadic tribe in ancient Syria] auxiliaries at the place agreed upon, but the soldiers are not assembling around me. The Hanean auxiliaries did come out of the open country but they are now staying in their own encampments. I sent messages into these encampments once or twice to call them up, but they did not assemble; in fact, it is three days now and they still are not assembling.
>
> Now then, if this meets with the approval of my lord, one should execute some criminal kept in the prison, cut off his head, and send it around outside the encampments as far away as Hutnim and Appan, so the soldiers will become afraid and will assemble here quickly.[8]

The problem here was the same as in the aforementioned calls to arms: how to get the troops to assemble. The solution was similar in that it involved the death and dismemberment of a victim. The sender of the letter mentions a "place agreed upon," but it is not clear whether the agreement had been made with the Haneans. Assuming that it had been made with them, the killing of the criminal might have been intended to represent those who would not assemble, thus violating the agreement. On the other hand, the action might rather have been a simple threat.

A Mutual Protection Covenant in the Old Testament

The final example for comparison to the Book of Mormon is from the Old Testament, the product of a culture that is more directly related to that of the Book of Mormon. This example differs from the record of the Hittite ritual in that it is not a verbatim quote of a simile oath. Rather, it is a pair of incidents demonstrating that such an oath had been sworn in ancient Israel.

The first incident, recorded in Judges 19-21, is the tale of a man and his concubine who, while traveling, stop for the night at the city of Gibeah. In a manner reminiscent of Lot's experience at Sodom and Gomorrah, men from the city accosted the man. He eventually sent his concubine out to the men, who "abused" her to death during the night. In the morning, the man found his concubine's body at the door of the house where he had been staying. He took the body and returned home. "And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his

concubine, and divided her, together with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel" (Judges 19:29).

When the Israelites had received the pieces, they came out "as one man" to Mizpeh and heard the man tell his story (Judges 20:1-7). A large group of men was chosen to go to Gibeah and demand that the culprits be turned over. Gibeah was within the territory of the tribe of Benjamin. The Benjaminites, rather than comply with this request, decided to defend the city and its criminals. A series of horrific battles ensued, and nearly the entire tribe of Benjamin was destroyed (see Judges 20:8-48). Afterwards, "the children of Israel said, Who is there among all the tribes of Israel that came not up with the congregation unto the Lord? For they had made a great oath concerning him that came not up to the Lord to Mizpeh, saying, He shall surely be put to death" (Judges 21:5). They discovered that the city of Jabesh-gilead had not sent anyone. "And the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and commanded them, saying, Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead with the edge of the sword" (Judges 21:10).

The second incident is reported in 1 Samuel 11. In this story, Jabesh-gilead, the same city that had earlier been destroyed for not complying with the oath requiring all Israel to send representatives to Mizpeh in time of need, was saved by an army gathered by that same oath. Amorites had attacked the city, and the Gileadites sent messengers to inform Saul of the situation. Upon hearing of Jabesh's plight, Saul "took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out with one consent" (1 Samuel 11:7). P. Kyle McCarter has suggested that in the original text the people themselves, not just their oxen, were to be the recipients of the potential punishment.[9] Whatever the punishment, the Israelites gathered in great numbers and delivered Jabesh from the Amorites.

These two incidents can be best understood when viewed together. The fact that the same city plays a part in both stories strengthens this notion. The common elements in these stories are the almost ritualistic hewing into pieces of the concubine in the first instance and of the pair of oxen in the second and the sending out of pieces as a sign to indicate the need to gather a military force. In the first narrative, the need was to administer internal justice; and in the second, it was to protect against incursions by outside forces. The writer of Judges mentions that a "great oath" had been sworn, the violation of which meant death to the oath taker (Judges 21:5). The message Saul sent indicates that the bloody pieces were both a call to arms and a representation of the punishment that would befall any who did not participate. Judges 20-21 reports an actual case of nonparticipation and its consequences. The destruction of the Benjaminites provides ample testimony of the seriousness of the oath.

On the basis of these two stories, we can reasonably assume that the oath referred to was a simile oath and that the ritual symbolizing the punishment for the oath breaker was an animal sacrifice.[10] The oath and ritual might have gone something like the following: An animal was sacrificed, and all Israel swore "May the Lord do to us as we have done to this animal if we should fail to live up to the terms of the covenant," which most likely included a mutual protection clause. The abundant use of animal sacrifice in simile oaths in Syria and Mesopotamia supports this notion.[11]

In some respects, the Book of Mormon oath resembles the biblical example more closely than the Hittite one, even though one section in the Hittite ritual has a very close parallel to the Book of Mormon oath. The Hittite oath includes a variety of rituals. In this regard, it is similar to the ceremony that accompanied Neo-Assyrian treaties, some of which are quite complex. In one section the troops are shown a distaff and mirror and are told that they will be turned into women should they be untrue to their oath. This threat can either be taken literally, in which

case supernatural intervention is needed for realization, or may refer to a symbolic insult or legal transformation. The Book of Mormon and biblical oaths on the other hand are much simpler, involving just a few actions rather than a whole series of rites. Furthermore, the biblical and Near Eastern curses are brutally realistic, as evidenced by the objects used to symbolize the punishment and its infliction in the incident of the murdered concubine.

Returning to the Book of Mormon, we see a pattern similar to the biblical examples: "Now it came to pass that when Moroni had said these words he went forth, and also *sent forth in all the parts of the land* where there were dissensions, and *gathered together all the people* who were desirous to maintain their liberty, to stand against Amalickiah and those who had dissented, who were called Amalickiahites" (Alma 46:28; italics added). Just as in the Old Testament, there are two aspects: (1) a sending forth to all parts of the land and (2) a gathering together of armed people. "Moroni thought it was expedient that he should take his armies, who had gathered themselves together, and armed themselves, and entered into a covenant to keep the peace" (Alma 46:31).

That this oath was taken just as seriously as the biblical one is demonstrated in the following verse: "Whomsoever of the Amalickiahites that would not enter into a covenant to support the cause of freedom, that they might maintain a free government, he [Moroni] caused to be put to death; and there were but few who denied the covenant of freedom" (Alma 46:35).

It is impossible to tell to what degree, if any, the Old Testament example influenced Moroni in establishing the oath of liberty. His use of the story of Joseph to inspire the people is evidence that he had access to and knowledge of the writings contained upon the plates of brass. To say anything more than this would be pure speculation.

A word or two should be said about the title of liberty that Moroni caused "to be hoisted upon every tower which was in all the land, which was possessed by the Nephites; and thus Moroni planted the standard of liberty among the Nephites" (Alma 46:36). The wonderful thing about symbols is that they can stand for any number of things. To the Nephite who saw the title of liberty, thoughts of Joseph's coat rent by his brethren probably came to mind because of Moroni's talk. Perhaps it also symbolized for him a garment that he himself had rent, which in turn represented his own person, which he swore would be rent if he should "fall into transgression."

As stated previously, no provable direct genetic links exist between the Book of Mormon oath and those of the Bible and the Near East. However, Moroni's simile oath fits the mold cast by such oaths in the Bible and the ancient Near East, both in its form — a simple graphic action representing the punishment — and in its specific use — the gathering of a military force and the insuring of its loyalty. There is evidence of a similar mind set — a fascination with the use of symbols and the importance given to the oath. In all cases, the simile oath seems to have been an effective means both of assembling and enlisting troops and of guaranteeing their loyalty once gathered.

Notes

[1.] I hope in the future to publish a paper treating simile oaths in Latter-day Saint scripture and in ancient Near Eastern texts in general. The interested reader can find information on these types of oaths in the following: J. M. Munn-Rankin, "Diplomacy in Western Asia in the Early Second Millennium B.C.," *Iraq* 18 (1956): 68110; Robert Polzin, "HWQY' and Covenantal Institutions in Early Israel," *Harvard Theological Review* 62 (1969): 227-40; Angel Gonzalez- Nunez, "El Rito de la Alianza," *Estudios Biblicos* 24 (1965): 217-38; P. J. Henninger, "Was bedeutet die rituelle Teilung eines Tieres in zwei Hälften?" *Biblica* 34 (1953): 344-53; Gerhard Wallis, "Eine Par- allele zu Richter 19:29 ff. and 1. Sam. 11:5 ff. aus dem Briefarchiv von Man," *Zeitschrift für die alttestatnentliche Wissenschaft* 64 (1952): 57-61. See also Mark Morrise, "Simile Curses in the Ancient Near East, Old Testament, and Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report, 1982.

[2.] The most readily available English translation of this text, and the one used here, is Albrecht Goetze, "Hittite Rituals, Incantations, and Festivals," in James Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: University of Princeton, 1955), 353-54. More recent is Norbert Oettinger, *Die militärischen Eide der Hethiter* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1976).

[3.] Goetze, "Hittite Rituals," 353.

[4.] Wax is often used in such oaths. See, for example, the treaty of Esarhaddon, in Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 540; also Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Aratnaic Inscriptions of Sefire* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967), 15.

[5.] Goetze, "Hittite Rituals," 354.

[6.] Oettinger, *Die militärischen Eide der Hethiter*, 13.

[7.] Before shifting focus to another Near Eastern oath, I should state that I do not believe that there is any *direct genetic link* between the Book of Mormon and the Hittite rituals. The spatial and temporal distances between them preclude such a possibility.

[8.] Charles François, *Archives royales de Mari II, Lettres diverses, transcrites et traduites* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1950), text 48.

[9.] P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., 1 *Satnuel*, Anchor Bible (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1980), 203.

[10.] Ibid.

[11.] Donald J. Wiseman, "Abban and Alalah," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 12 (1958): 129. Oddly enough, the military use of sacrifice is not entirely dead. In 1986, after America had attacked Libya, Khadafi gave an inflammatory speech to a group of 3,000 Libyan soldiers. "Afterward, the youths dragged a struggling cow with the name Reagan painted on its side into the square outside the barracks and cut its throat. They thrust their hands into the wound and raised blood-covered fists into the air as they chanted 'Down, Down, USA!' and called for a *jihad* (holy war) against America." (Michael Ross, "Kadafi Calls U. S. 'Great Liar,' " *Los Angeles Times*, Saturday, 29 March 1986, part 1, p. 14.) Although here the sacrifice was more of a threat than any kind of an oath, it was used to stir up feelings and eventually to gather a militia.

Law and War in the Book of Mormon

John W. Welch

At first, law and war appear to be opposites. Especially in the modern experience, wars are thought to be basically extralegal. They break out when law and order break down; rules and conventions can become next to meaningless in the heat and rage of war. On closer examination, however, even war cannot be conducted successfully in a total state of anarchy or chaos. To a greater or lesser extent, all civilizations accept and employ certain laws, rules, customs, rituals, and conventional practices in times of war. In ancient Israel and in the Book of Mormon, this was certainly also the case.

Although no code of martial law as such has survived from the ancient Near East—and indeed it is doubtful that such a code in the modern sense of the term ever existed in the ancient world — the texts that have survived show that laws and social rules regulated both domestic and international aspects of war in ancient Israel and in ancient Mesopotamia.[1] The main sources regarding martial law under the law of Moses are found in Deuteronomy (see especially 13:12-16; 20:10-14, 19-20; 21:10-14; 23:1-14; and 24:5).[2] One may also extract from the normative and narrative texts in the Old Testament certain rules and principles that evidently regulated conduct during times of war.[3] One may further examine how war influenced the administration of justice or the enforcement of social obligations among the Israelites and the people they came in contact with.

The present study explores internally and comparatively several points of interaction between law and war in the Book of Mormon. Within the Book of Mormon, one can observe the effects of war on the normal affairs of Nephite government, the nature of their laws and norms pertaining to the conduct of war itself, and the use of armed forces in maintaining domestic order. One may also compare and contrast the Nephite experience with that of their Israelite relatives.

Like the Jews at Jerusalem, the Nephites up to the coming of Christ followed the law of Moses in basically all its civil, public, private, and ritual dimensions (see 2 Nephi 5:10; Alma 30:3). Accordingly, I assume that the martial laws of ancient Israel were significant in the regulation of military force in the Book of Mormon. While it is not possible, of course, to know exactly what laws were current in the ancient Near East around the time of Lehi, many rules and principles are reflected in biblical sources, primarily in Deuteronomy, a text that received particular emphasis under the reforms of Josiah in the decades just before Lehi's departure from Jerusalem. In addition, the likely existence of other laws and customs in preexilic Israel can be cautiously extrapolated from contemporaneous bodies of Mesopotamian law and from later rabbinic and other Jewish law books that, over the years, have consistently reflected stable oral traditions and interpretations relevant to biblical precedents.[4]

In the study of biblical law, one must deliberately evaluate the relevance of all these various materials, especially those coming from more recent sources. If they are sufficiently linked to specific provisions of biblical Hebrew law, several of these later sources can add data pertinent to our understanding of the likely state of Israelite law in Lehi's day. I strive in this paper to proceed according to this methodology.

Careful historical investigation of the Nephite record also must be attentive, not only to lines of continuity between the ancient traditions of Israel and those of the Nephites, but also to the possibility of distinctive developments within the Nephite and Lamanite cultures in the New World. In the case of the regulation and

conduct of war, however, the legacy of ancient Israelite martial attitudes and the spirit of customary Jewish law seem to have remained strong among the Book of Mormon populations.

General Effects of War on Nephite Law: The Tightening of Governmental Controls

In all societies, governmental powers increase during times of war. Governments often impose curfews and curtail liberties as they focus the country's resources on military objectives and as political and military leaders take charge of emergency affairs. Such increased governmental power necessarily occurs at the expense of individual freedoms: acts permissible during peacetime may become crimes against the state during wartime; and martial rule may suspend or abrogate procedures that society would normally observe.[5] Such effects of increased governmental control can be illustrated in several ways from the Book of Mormon.

1. Suspension or Interruption of Judicial Processes

War in the Book of Mormon disrupted the normal administration of justice in many ways. Even in times of peace, only a small body of leaders spent their time resolving legal disputes and ruling the Nephite people. War taxed this little group heavily. Thus, during the darkest days of the campaigns of Ammoron, when Zarahemla fell and a dissenting king held it for a time (see Alma 61:8), the Nephite judicial system apparently could not operate. During those extreme months of political crisis, all matters of legal concern must have seemed far less important than the issues of national survival at hand.

After the war, the Nephite system for administering justice had to be reconstituted, demonstrating how thoroughly disrupted the judicial system was during this time. As the record indicates, soon after the recapture of Zarahemla, "Pahoran did return to his judgment-seat" (Alma 62:44), and new "regulations were made concerning the law. And their judges, and their chief judges were chosen" (Alma 62:47). Evidently, defending the nation had involved everyone. Even Helaman, the high priest over the church, had temporarily set aside his ecclesiastical responsibilities to lead a regiment. After the war, he too found that "a regulation should be made again in the church." He and his brothers "did establish again the church of God, throughout all the land" (Alma 62:44, 46). During this particular time of extreme national crisis, most social institutions — including the judicial system and the church organization — were effectively placed on hold until victory was won. In most other times of war, however, the Nephites apparently were able to maintain their judicial system and religious organization.

The response of the Nephites to this perilous condition in Zarahemla during the Amalickiahite War was not only natural, but also in keeping with the spirit of Jewish law. Talmudic law distinguishes between a permissive war *(milhemet reshut)* that seeks to expand the borders of Israel and a war of obligation *(milhemet mitzvah)*, such as a war of self-defense or of national survival.[6] In the case of a war of national survival, the conduct of war was not optional for the people. In such a situation, scarcely any man would be justified in placing any other interest of church or state or personal convenience ahead of winning the war. Indeed, even women were not exempt from military service in a war of obligation: "All go forth, even a bridegroom from his bridal chamber, and a bride from under her canopy."[7] So it was, with his back against the wall, that Captain Moroni even threatened to put women and children under arms against Ammoron (see Alma 54:12; 55:17), corroborating the idea that Moroni treated this campaign as a war of obligation and making his bloodless capture of the city of Gid all the more relieving.

2. Transfer of Legal Authority to the Chief Captain in Cases Involving Military Affairs

Times of war may require a transfer of legal authority to military leaders, especially in cases involving military personnel or national security. The care with which such powers were conferred upon the Nephite chief captain, even in extenuating circumstances of armed conflict, shows how deeply the fundamental principles of legal order rested at the heart of this society.

Two well-documented instances of this come again from the record of the extraordinary Amalickiahite War. In the first, Captain Moroni exercised legal authority over the dissenters who had taken up arms and left with Amalickiah to join the Lamanites but who were soon captured (see Alma 46:29-35). Though no trials were held for these king-men dissenters, Moroni was not usurping legal authority in acting as he did. The record is careful to state that the chief judges and the voice of the people had expressly given Moroni plenary power "to exercise authority over [the armies of the Nephites]" (Alma 46:34). The dissenting soldiers were clearly guilty of disloyalty or treason against the state. The chief captain's handling of the matter was expedient, simple, fair, and within his jurisdiction. He gave the rebel soldiers the choice of either entering "into a covenant to support the cause of freedom" or of being put to death (Alma 46:35). The rebel leaders, however, escaped (see Alma 46:33).

Five years later, Moroni needed to deal a second time with the king-men. Again endorsed by the voice of the people, Moroni sent a petition to the governor asking that he give Moroni "power to compel those dissenters to defend their country or to put them to death" (Alma 51:15). This request was granted, and with this legal authority, Moroni and his men acted quickly to remove a seditious element from within the city of Zarahemla. Any king-men who lifted weapons of war to fight against the men of Moroni "were hewn down and leveled to the earth" (Alma 51:18). Captured soldiers, as before, were given the opportunity to "[yield] to the standard of liberty … and to take up arms in defence of their country" (Alma 51:20), but the surviving leaders of the insurrection were "taken and cast into prison" (Alma 51:19). Apparently Moroni and his men did not give the leaders the opportunity to swear the oath of allegiance, but rather he held them for trial.

Normally, trials in the ancient world were conducted without much delay, especially when all of the witnesses were immediately available, as they would have been for the trials of these king-men nobles. But in this case, trials were not promptly commenced. The justification given for this delay was that "there was no time for their trials at this period" (Alma 51:19), but the situation also involved political expediency, for six years passed before these prisoners received a trial, at which they were simply sentenced and "executed according to the law" (Alma 62:9). Of course, these political prisoners had no constitutional right under Nephite law to a speedy trial or to a writ of habeas corpus. Moroni and the other Nephite leaders were probably quite satisfied to silence these political activists by holding them in prison. The Nephite leaders were possibly also reluctant to execute the king-men leaders too quickly for fear of antagonizing their former followers.

These cases show that the Nephites exercised considerable caution in extending powers of martial law to Moroni. His jurisdiction extended only over soldiers: he was empowered only to deal "according to his will *with the armies* of the Nephites" (Alma 46:34; italics added), and he imprisoned only those who committed the overt act of "lift[ing] their weapons *of war* to fight" (Alma 51:18; italics added). Thus, there is no evidence that Moroni had any authority over civil affairs in the land of Zarahemla, and the problems he faced in trying to get reinforcements and assistance from Pahoran (see Alma 59-60) indicate that his powers did not supplant those of the skeletal civil government.

Moreover, his powers were created in a manner consistent with, but not explicitly covered by, the checks required under the law of Mosiah. Under that legal system, a higher judge could judge lower judges (see Mosiah 29:28), and later Nephite law reflects a requirement that the governor had to sign any death sentence (see 3 Nephi 6:22). In Moroni's case, these judicial safeguards were dropped. Instead, the chief judges or the governor sanctioned

Moroni's conduct in advance, and apparently because such grants of power were extraordinary, they had to be ratified by the voice of the people.

Moroni's conduct—especially putting to death those who refused to take up arms — may appear brutal or harsh to modern readers, but it was consonant with the martial laws of his day. An ancient passage in 1 Samuel 8:11-17 documents the right of the king to compel military service, a rule that would have been widely observed. As Maimonides more recently explained, the king could "issue a decree that whoever evades [military taxes or conscription] may be punished either by confiscation of property or by death."[8] Moreover, "Nahmanides adds that the power to levy an army was not limited to royalty but that whoever exercised lawful authority over the people had the right to raise an army for permissive war or a war of obligation."[9] Thus, Captain Moroni emerges as a man of law and order. He obtained his extraordinary martial powers through legitimate channels of governmental and popular authority, and he imposed normal penalties on those who refused to take up arms in a war of national survival.

3. The Position of the Chief Captain in the Nephite Government

Prior to the reign of the judges in Zarahemla, the king held all military and administrative power. King Benjamin and other Nephite kings were, in the tradition of the kings of Nephi, both warriors and statesmen (see, e.g., Words of Mormon 1:13). Therefore, during the reign of the kings, the kind of legal authorizations given to Captain Moroni was unnecessary, for the separate office of chief captain was nonexistent.

The change from kingship to judgeship was put into effect by the law of Mosiah promulgated and acknowledged in Mosiah 29. It appears from the record that the law of Mosiah did not contain any concrete provision establishing the office of a military leader, but rather the law anticipated that the chief judge would assume military leadership as occasions demanded. Over time, the position of chief captain evolved among the Nephites, as the following data indicates.

The first chief judge was Alma the Younger. He led the Nephite armies in battle against the rebellious Amlicites and the Lamanites, going "with his captains, and chief captains, yea, at the head of his armies" (Alma 2:16). As chief judge, Alma conducted the military affairs of his people and fought in hand-to-hand combat against Amlici, the leader of the insurgents (see Alma 2:29).

Six years later, however, the previously unmentioned Zoram led the Nephites in battle as their "chief captain" — a position to which he had been "appointed" (Alma 16:5). This office was legally constituted as a result of the division of governmental powers that resulted when Alma relinquished the judgment seat. Alma retained control of religious affairs as high priest but conferred power over judicial matters upon Nephihah as chief judge (see Alma 4:16-18). Evidently, military power was given to the chief captain. Neither Nephihah nor any subsequent chief judge is ever mentioned as leading the Nephite military.

Since the Nephites had no standing army (see Alma 3:1; 44:23), they probably had a chief captain only during times of severe hostilities. Apparently, they had no chief captain when the leader of the Gadianton robbers made threats against Lachoneus and the Nephites because Lachoneus, as chief judge, had to appoint "chief captains over all the armies of the Nephites, to command them at the time that the robbers should come down out of the wilderness against them" (3 Nephi 3:17).

As was the case with the chief judge, the chief captain worked in conjunction with the high priest over the land. Both Zoram and Moroni relied on Alma's prophetic powers (see Alma 16:5-6; 43:23-24), and Moronihah began preaching to the people himself when he realized his armies would see no success in their unrighteous condition (see Helaman 4:13-16). In fact, "the custom among all the Nephites [was] to appoint for their chief captains, (save it were in their times of wickedness) some one that had the spirit of revelation and also prophecy" (3 Nephi 3:19).

At first, the chief captain was appointed "by the chief judges and the voice of the people" (Alma 46:34). The position of chief captain, therefore, carried a certain democratic mantle with it, authorizing the chief captain to take "all the command, and the government of [Nephite] wars" (Alma 43:17). (A century later, Lachoneus seems to have acted alone in appointing Gidgiddoni chief captain — either the practice had changed by that time, or he acted expediently in urgent circumstances, or perhaps the record simply omits details about Gidgiddoni s appointment. See 3 Nephi 3:17-19.)

The powers of the Nephite chief captain were so extensive that the people undoubtedly saw him as the nation's *de facto* leader during times of war. This was a plenary commission, allowing him (1) to make "regulations to prepare for war" (Alma 51:22) in such matters as (2) recruiting troops (see Alma 46:11-28), (3) erecting forts (see Alma 48:8), (4) fortifying and building cities (see Alma 50:12, 14-15), and even (5) directing citizens to relocate when necessary (see Alma 43:26). He also had power (6) to execute armed dissenters (see Alma 46:31-35), (7) to negotiate terms of peace with the enemy (see Alma 44), and (8) to act as a sort of judge – at least in matters pertaining to national security or involving military affairs. In Alma 50:25-36, for example, the people in the land of Morianton claimed a part of the land of Lehi. Instead of turning to the chief judge to resolve this land dispute, the people of Lehi took their case to Captain Moroni. Apparently the case came under the military commander's jurisdiction because the people of Morianton had taken up arms and were determined to slay the people of Lehi with the sword. Apparently Moroni was the one who judged that the people of Lehi were "not in the wrong" (Alma 50:27).

Moroni's use of judicial power is reminiscent of the enhanced judicial role of Israelite kings during times of war. In discussing the "gruesome episode" described in 2 Kings 6:26-30, Boecker asks, "Why did the woman turn to the king?" instead of to the local system of justice. One possible answer, he suggests, is that the woman "reacted to a particular situation, one of war; she was besieged by the enemy. The law of war therefore prevailed. The commander-in-chief was also the supreme judge. This could be why the king was approached by the woman."[10]

Another power of the Nephite commander-in-chief seems to have been the power to relocate the entire population and mobilize their property in the war effort. Several times in Nephite history, the people moved (voluntarily or involuntarily) to avert war or to strengthen their defensive position. For such purposes, Nephi moved his fledgling colony from the Land of First Inheritance to the Land of Nephi; and Mosiah, the father of Benjamin, moved his people from Nephi to Zarahemla after a time of "much war and contention" (Omni 1:10-13). Most notably, Lachoneus ordered all Nephites to relocate with their property near the city of Bountiful (see 3 Nephi 3:13, 22-23), and Mormon directed a mass migration of his people in a final effort to regroup and prepare for battle (see Mormon 6:2-5).

Under normal conditions, the government probably would not exercise the extraordinary power of causing the entire population to abandon homes and property, although their property laws — which essentially rejected the idea of fee simple ownership[11]—would not have seen this as an unlawful taking of private property. Even during times of peace, the king of the Lamanites was able to command his people to vacate the land of Nephi so that Zeniff could occupy that land pursuant to a treaty which Zeniff and the king had entered into (see Mosiah 9:6-7).

There are many other cases in ancient history of compulsory migrations, for example, among the Assyrians, Romans, Mongols, and Byzantines (when the Slavs were moved into Anatolia). To a similar end under later Jewish law, the government could exact an 'unlimited tax" to support war (cf. 1 Samuel 8:11-14).[12]

As seen above, however, the chief captain's powers were neither unshared nor unlimited. In his angry epistle to the chief judge Nephihah, Moroni notes that the chief judge and "all those who have been chosen by this people to govern and manage the affairs of this war … [were] appointed to gather together men, and arm them with swords, … and send forth against the Lamanites" (Alma 60:1-2). Though Moroni's strategic command of the troops was complete, others, including the chief judge, were apparently jointly responsible for managing the affairs of war. Lachoneus also shared responsibilities over military affairs, perhaps because he initiated his defense plan before he appointed his chief captain. While Moroni's powers were unquestionably broad, he seemingly was cautious not to tread on the office of the chief judge when dealing with matters that might be deemed more domestic than military.

4. Increased Restrictions on the Freedom of Travel

The privileges of freedom of travel and of free trade were not always enjoyed in the ancient world.[13] In addition to difficulties like the lack of foreign monetary exchanges and limited public accommodations and transportation that imposed practical barriers to travel and trade, legal restrictions also existed. For example, exit rules were especially stringent in Ptolemaic Egypt.[14] Understandably, therefore, the unusual condition of free travel between the Nephites and Lamanites in the sixty-fourth year of the reign of judges was prominently and proudly reported in Helaman 6:8. Significant trade agreements or peace treaties must have been involved to allow the extent of free travel, reciprocal lodging, and trade concessions necessary for these merchants to exchange goods and prosper as they did. Such legal action could have taken a form similar to that of King Lamoni s decree granting the sons of Mosiah "free access to their houses, and also their temples, and their sanctuaries" (Alma 23:2). Allowing Nephites to go wherever they pleased in the sixty-fourth year would have represented a major political change among the Nephites, for only three years earlier, they still considered "[deserting] away into the land of Nephi" wicked and unlawful (Helaman 4:12).

Long-standing Nephite policies ostensibly discouraged free travel from the land of Zarahemla, as is reflected at several points in Nephite history. Special permission was apparently necessary to travel from one land to another (see Mosiah 7:2; 28:1), and armies pursued or held in subjugation several groups to prevent them from leaving a particular land (like Alma the Elder's group and Limhi s people). Travelers and foreigners were apprehended and treated with considerable hostility, especially when conditions were tense (see Mosiah 8:7; Alma 23:2). In the twenty-fourth year of the reign of judges, the people of the land of Lehi even called upon armed forces to prevent the people of Morianton from migrating into the land northward (Alma 50:25-36). Leaving Zarahemla was possible (see Alma 63:6-8; Helaman 3:3), but there is little evidence that any travelers from Zarahemla ever routinely returned or that Nephites viewed travel favorably.

In some ways population movements were a cause of war, and in other ways they were a result of war. Group separations were never well received, and almost every time one Book of Mormon group broke off from another, war ensued. The departure of dissenters precipitated several wars. For example, anger over Nephi's departure fueled the initial wars between the Nephites and the Lamanites. The major Lamanite offensive of the second century B.C. came on the heels of Mosiah's exodus from the land of Nephi. Among the Lamanites, military force prohibited Alma the Elder from taking his group of converts and leaving the land of Nephi. Among the Nephites, armed force restrained Amalickiah's dissenters from leaving the land of Zarahemla. The Zoramites seem to have

been allowed to separate themselves from the Nephites when they moved to Antionum, but Alma worried about the military threat this posed for the Nephites (see Alma 31:3-4).

Of course during times of war, freedom of travel is always likely to decrease. During war, fleeing to the Lamanites – with the probable intent of fighting with them against the Nephites – constituted a crime punishable by death (see Alma 46:30-35). These Nephite measures prohibiting their people from joining with or aiding an enemy are reminiscent of the Jewish laws that "forbade Jews to volunteer to fight in foreign armies as soldiers of adventure." Later, the Talmud extended this principle to banning all sales to or furnishing an aggressor with any "weapons or supplies which might serve him in a war of aggression against a peaceful neighbor."[15] The spirit of Jewish and Nephite rules in this regard is similar: Both demand the loyalty of their people to defend their state from within and without.

Law and the Conduct of War

Many legal rules or customs had the force of law with domestic and international significance and dictated the proper conduct of warring parties in the ancient world. Such principles affected every stage of war, from the initiation of hostilities through the conduct of battles to the consummation of peace treaties.

1. Preliminary Negotiations and Warnings

Among Book of Mormon peoples, military commanders typically corresponded with each other before launching any attacks. Even where hatred ran deep, and even when there was no chance that the proposed terms would be accepted, the parties asked for capitulation or extended terms of surrender before going to battle. Thus, the bloodthirsty Giddianhi gave Lachoneus a choice between yielding up his cities, lands, and possessions to unite as partners with Giddianhi s people, or else be destroyed (see 3 Nephi 3:6-8). Likewise, Moroni and Ammoron exchanged taunts, insults, and possible terms for the exchange of prisoners before Moroni went into battle formation around the city of Gid (see Alma 54). Moroni was especially reluctant to recommence a battle he was winning and become a man of blood without first offering Zerahemnah terms of peace (see Alma 44:1-7).

In addition to offering terms of settlement, communications also stated the parties' justifications for going to war. Thus, Ammoron offered his reasons, namely, to avenge the death of his brother and to restore the Lamanites to their alleged right to the government (see Alma 54:16-17). Similarly, Giddianhi sought to "recover their rights and government" (3 Nephi 3:10). These offers and explanations were issued as serious threats and proposals, as is shown by the fact that oaths and curses often attended these verbal volleys. Thus Amalickiah had sworn in going to war that he would "drink the blood of Moroni" (Alma 51:9), and Giddianhi swore "with an oath" that he would attack if his terms were not met (3 Nephi 3:8).

Great emphasis was placed on such preliminaries in the Book of Mormon, which is not surprising because not only ancient custom, but also Israelite law, required parties to justify their conduct and to consider a peaceful resolution before resorting to mayhem. "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee." If this offer were rejected, the Israelites could then besiege the city and totally destroy all its males (Deuteronomy 20:10-13).

This rule even applied in wars of national survival: "According to the Rabbis, the Biblical command that there must be a prior declaration of war, that a sneak attack like a 'Pearl Harbor' was forbidden, applies even to a war of

obligation."[16] "Even a nation at war must take all possible steps to avoid the shedding of blood. According to a biblical injunction, the Jewish army must offer peace before launching an attack.... One may not wage war against a nation without first offering peace."[17] Compare this to Doctrine and Covenants 98:23-48, especially 98:33-34: "This is the law that I gave unto mine ancients, that ... if any nation, tongue, or people should proclaim war against them, they should first lift a standard of peace unto that people."

Commonly, ancient wars were based on "animosities and arguments of leaders" of nations, and hence premartial correspondences were typical and appropriate "to justify declarations of war and call down divine support. Among the reasons given for the outbreak of hostilities were rebellion by a vassal state, reaction to attack, or reprisal for some other wrongdoing."[18] The practice of swearing oaths of conquest in such communiqués, reminiscent of the ultimatum of Giddianhi, is evidenced, for example, in the words of Yarim-Lim, king of Aleppo, to his enemy Yashub-Yahad, "I swear to you by Adad, god of my city, and by Sin, my personal god, that I shall not rest until I crush you and your land."[19]

These legal notices declaring war — in effect initiating a lawsuit between the gods of the respective sides, to be decided through the ordeal of battle[20]-were to be lodged according to Jewish law at least two or three days before opening hostilities.[21] Thus, it was consonant with such principles that Giddianhi gave Lachoneus until the "morrow month" to consider his proposal before his armies would come down against the Nephites and make them "extinct" (3 Nephi 3:8). Granting a few days' respite was necessary to allow the other side time to decide whether to accept or reject the offer. This also allowed time for the troops to gather at an appointed place for the battle if the enemy were to reject the terms. In the civil war with the Amlicites, for example, the Nephites evidently knew when and where the Amlicites would attack, for they had time to prepare and gather for the battle, knowing the "intent of the Amlicites" and "the time of their coming" (Alma 2:12-13). The most obvious case in the Book of Mormon of making such prearrangements was the final battle at Cumorah, in which the commanders agreed on the time and place where they would meet, as Mormon had requested (see Mormon 6:2-3). A similar practice is evidenced in the instructions of the ancient Egyptian commander Piankhi to his general "to give the enemy choice of time and place for the fight."[22]

2. The Duty to Take Up Arms

Roland de Vaux describes the duty of ancient Near Eastern peoples to take up arms in defense of their people: "Among nomads there is no distinction between the army and the people: every able-bodied man can join in a raid and must be prepared to defend the tribe's property and rights against an enemy.... This was probably true of Israel also."[23] Saul called all Israel to take up arms against the Ammonites (see 1 Samuel 11:1-11) and against the Amalekites (see 1 Samuel 15:1-7). The narrative of the Ammonite war also records the threat and curse Saul pronounced upon anyone who would not join in the battle. He symbolically cut a yoke of oxen into pieces and proclaimed, "Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen" (1 Samuel 11:7), and sent the pieces and the warning by messengers to marshal the troops. Compare also the demonstration of Yaqim-Addu, governor of Sagaratum, who executed a criminal in prison and paraded his head among the villages as a warning of what would happen if they did not assemble quickly.[24]

As discussed above, the same civic duty existed in Nephite law and society. Moroni had power to punish any people in the land of Zarahemla who would not "defend their country" (Alma 51:15; cf. Alma 46:35). Like Saul and Yaqim-Addu, Captain Moroni symbolically portrayed the fate of those who would not fight in righteousness by

tearing his coat and having the soldiers cast their coats to the ground and trample them, ceremoniously prophesying that they would be likewise torn and asking God to cast them down at the feet of their enemies if they should forget their God and fall into transgression (see Alma 46:21-22).

The duty to go to war, however, applied only in fighting against an enemy. Thus, according to Deuteronomy 20:1-2, instructing the leader to speak to his troops in a holy tongue when they go up to battle against an enemy was interpreted as not applying in a conflict against other Israelites: " 'Against your enemies' but not against your brethren, not Judah against Simeon nor Simeon against Benjamin."[25] A similar feeling may be reflected in the insistence of the Anti-Nephi-Lehis not to "take up arms against their brethren" or "shed the blood of their brethren" (Alma 24:6, 18).

In the Book of Mormon, the duty to fight evidently fell upon all able-bodied men. Thus Zeniff reports, "I and my people did go forth against the Lamanites to battle" (Mosiah 9:16), and, under extreme and desperate circumstances, even old men, women, and children were not exempt (see Mosiah 10:9; Alma 54:12).[26] The laws of Deuteronomy afforded humanitarian exemptions from military service for those who were engaged or had recently married, built a new house, planted a new vineyard, or were fearful (see Deuteronomy 20:5-9; 24:5), but there is no evidence that these exemptions applied in wars of national defense, nor are they mentioned expressly in the Book of Mormon.

The one Book of Mormon group that was afforded an exemption from military service was the famous case of the people of Ammon, who, in repenting of their previous bloodshed, had sworn an oath that they would never again take up arms (see Alma 24:11-13; 27:23). After they arrived in Zarahemla, they were granted an exemption from active military duty. Why were they granted this exemption? Unquestionably, their reason for not fighting was righteous and bona fide. Moreover, granting this extraordinary legal exemption may also have been justified on the legal basis of Deuteronomy 20:8, which exempts those who are "fearful and fainthearted." Since everyone going into battle was likely to be "fearful and fainthearted," this exemption undoubtedly had to be given a narrow meaning in actual ancient practice; otherwise, nearly everyone would be exempt. Indeed, as the Talmud explains, this biblical text only "alludes to one who is afraid *because of the transgressions he had committed.*"[27] In other words, if a soldier would have cowered in the face of enemy battle for any reason because of his previous sins (perhaps fearing that his sins prevented God from defending him, or because he was afraid to die a sinner), he was unfit for battle. On such grounds, certainly the Nephites would have recognized that the righteous fears of the Ammonites would have justifiably rendered them unsuitable for military duty.

The rabbis also report that the "fearful and fainthearted" exemption applied only with respect to "voluntary" exploits of the king. Thus, in a "compulsory war" of national defense, even the fainthearted were obligated to go into battle.[28] Perhaps a similar limiting regulation contributed to the older Ammonites' change of heart several years later. They felt that they should no longer claim their exemption but rather break their covenant and return to military duty, having been moved by compassion for the Nephites and their dire nation-threatening predicament. Only the prophet Helaman's fear that they might "lose their souls" if they violated their oath prohibited them from doing so. Instead, they sent their sons into battle, who entered into a covenant and went forth to fight (Alma 53:13-17).

The men who remained exempt, however, continued to support the war from the home front, for the Ammonites were granted their exemption, as the voice of the people said, "on condition that they will give us a portion of their substance to assist us that we may maintain our armies" (Alma 27:24). This arrangement is especially noteworthy,

since the Talmud likewise holds that most who are exempted from military service under the law of Moses are "only released from actual fighting, *but not from serving in the rear:* 'They must furnish water and food and repair the roads.' [29] The Nephite interpretation reflects a similar understanding of the law in Deuteronomy. The condition imposed upon the Ammonites, therefore, was not only logical and religious, but also consistent with the spirit of Israelite law, which generally placed a high civic obligation on all citizens to contribute actively to the defense of their country, their God, their religion, and their people.

3. The Age of Military Accountability

All legal systems recognize distinctions between minors and adults. Several texts in the Bible indicate that ancient Israelite law was no exception and acknowledge the importance of age distinctions for legal purposes. In particular, twenty appears to have been the age at which Israelite males became obligated to serve in the military.[30] Only men twenty and older were counted in the Israelite censuses recorded in Numbers 1 and 26 (see 1:2-3; 26:2); only men of that age were held accountable for the murmuring of the Israelites in the wilderness (see Numbers 14:29); only those twenty and older were subject to the half-shekel temple tax (see Exodus 30:14; 38:26); and, several centuries later, only men of that age were counted in the censuses of David and Amaziah numbering the men of military age (see 1 Chronicles 27:23; 2 Chronicles 25:5). These texts set a strong precedent establishing twenty as the age of full majority in ancient Israel. Similarly at Qumran, at the age of twenty a person became specifically responsible to God and explicitly subject to divine punishment,[31] knowing "good and evil," and was permitted to have sexual relations.[32]

The Book of Mormon writers seem to acknowledge four classifications of children and adolescents: infants, little children, children, and young men. King Benjamin's speech is the one source in which all these groups are mentioned. With respect to military obligations, we are interested primarily in the group he and other Nephite writers called "young men." Book of Mormon writers make frequent use of the term *young men.* When speaking to his people, Benjamin addressed them as "old men, and also ... young men, and ... little children" (Mosiah 2:40). In so doing, he addressed all the nation, "from the eldest down to the youngest," grandfathers ("old men"), fathers and single male adults ("young men"), and young sons and daughters ("little children") (Mosiah 2:5).

Since the term *young men* in the Book of Mormon almost always refers to soldiers, it is reasonable to conclude that a "young man" under Nephite law and society was a man who had attained the age of twenty and who was responsible to render military service. (The Hebrew terms *bahûrim*[33] and *na¡ûrim*[34] refer precisely to such young men liable for military service.) Thus, Isaiah, quoted in 2 Nephi 23:18, said that the bows of enemy soldiers would "dash the young men," and Book of Mormon usage followed that precedent. Zeniff mobilized all his "old men that could bear arms, and also all [his] young men that were able to bear arms" (Mosiah 10:9); in other words, he mobilized every able-bodied man who was of age.

The stripling warriors who fought under Helaman's command are described consistently as "young men" (Alma 53:18, 20; 56:5, 9, 55). The implication is that they were around the age of twenty, or that Helaman treated them that way. Helaman once spoke of these soldiers with endearment, saying that they were all "very young" (Alma 56:46). Some of these volunteers may have been under the legal age for military service and for that reason were not serving in the regular Nephite army. On the other hand, some of them could have been over twenty. Around 80 B.C., their fathers had sworn an oath against taking up arms (see Alma 24). The narrative does not mention how old these boys were at that time, when they were not required to swear that oath along with their fathers, but about sixteen years later, they were fighting under Helaman.

The numbering of the Lamanite "young men" among the Nephites as they prepared for war (see 3 Nephi 2:14-16) recalls the military censuses taken in ancient Israel that listed all men aged twenty and over in the "sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel" (Numbers 1:2-3). Presumably then, those Lamanite "young men" had to be twenty or over in order to be numbered. The only other place in the Book of Mormon where the phrase *young man* appears is in Mosiah 17:2, where Alma is described as "a young man." Since Alma was serving at the time as a priest and judge on King Noah's court, the use of the phrase *young man* here is consistent with its use elsewhere as a technical legal term describing those who had attained the age of full majority and public status under Nephite law.

4. The Military Census

Anciently, for both military and religious purposes, "numbering" was important among the legally acknowledged group. As Speiser has shown, the census taken at the conclusion of many ancient assemblies "involved in all cases more than a mere tally." The purpose was not just to count, but to "take into account" (Heb. *pqd)* and "to attend to [each constituent] with care."[35] Speiser explains:

> On periodic occasions, the higher powers made lists which determined who among the mortals was to live and who was to die. Now, the same basic concept confronts us throughout the history of Jewish religious thought. Moses says to God: "Efface me, I pray Thee, from Thy book which Thou hast written," and God replies, "Him only who has sinned against Me will I efface from My book" (Exod. 32:32-33). According to the Mishna *Rosh ha-shana*, the mortals are judged by God on New Year's Day, passing before him in review like *troops* (I 3). The appertaining liturgies carry this thought further. "On New Year's Day they are recorded, and sealed on the Day of Atonement: how many are to pass away and how many to be brought into being, who is to live and who is to die." More relevant still is a passage from another old Jewish poem which refers to the same occasion: "On it are the creatures recorded *(yippaqedu)*, to assign them to life or death." We have here the technical verb *pqd* itself, in its special idiomatic sense, which tradition had somehow managed to hand down although the correct meaning of the corresponding biblical occurrences had long been lost. To be sure, these are views relating especially to the New Year. But there are no compelling grounds for assuming that such ideas were always restricted to that one juncture.[36]

In Old Babylonian times "the census took its name from the incidental process of ritual 'purification,' "[37] and in ancient Israel these concepts are manifested in the several censuses taken of Israelite tribes and armies (see Numbers 1:3; 26:2; 2 Samuel 24). These enrollments filled two major functions: "To serve as the basis for levying and collecting taxes, and to serve as a register of those men subject to military duty."[38] At the time of these "numberings," the law required every man twenty years old and above to be numbered and to pay half a temple shekel "to make an atonement *(kofer)* for [their] souls" (Exodus 30:11-16). These soldier lists were "to be prepared methodically, place by place, … and name by name."[39] The process sometimes terrified those whose names were being enrolled in God's book of life and death, "bordering on a phobia about being counted,"[40] and hence this was a sacred, serious, and solemn undertaking. There were several purposes of this accounting: to organize the people, to purify the host, to assure that the entire army had been duly purified, and to designate those included and those excluded among the people of God.

In the Book of Mormon, the procedure of "numbering" is also mentioned frequently. Sometimes it relates to political citizenship and cultural identification (e.g., "Now all the people of Zarahemla were numbered with the Nephites," Mosiah 25:13; cf. 2 Nephi 4:11; 10:19; Mosiah 25:12; Alma 45:13-14; 3 Nephi 3:14). Other times it

refers to those who were adopted into or ritually numbered among the house of Israel or the church of God (e.g., 1 Nephi 14:2; 2 Nephi 10:18; Mosiah 26:32, 36; Alma 5:57; 6:3; 27:27; Helaman 15:13; 3 Nephi 15:24; 16:3, 13; 18:31; 21:6, 22; 30:2; Moroni 6:4, 7; 7:39). In general, it is associated with the concepts of constituting and purifying the people as a political and religious body, and on solemn occasions, all the names were individually inscribed (e.g., Mosiah 6:1). The census evidently functioned among the Nephites in many of the same ways discussed by Speiser: (1) to constitute tribal boundaries within the group; (2) to number and purify the army; (3) to assure the ritual purification of the entire population; and (4) to designate those who would live among God's people in this life and in the world to come. Each of these functions appears in the Book of Mormon.

For present purposes, we are concerned only with the military use of the census. For example, this practice seems to have been invoked at one of the most desperate times in Nephite/Lamanite military history: "All the Lamanites who had become converted unto the Lord … were compelled … to take up arms against those Gadianton robbers" (3 Nephi 2:12). When "the Nephites were threatened with utter destruction" (3 Nephi 2:13), they took a census of their armies and all their people: "Those Lamanites who had united with the Nephites were numbered among the Nephites" (3 Nephi 2:14). The result was purificatory: "And their curse was taken from them" (3 Nephi 2:15). Thereafter, this invigorated Nephite army went on with the aid of God to win an extremely emotional victory over Giddianhi, Zemnarihah, and their robbers (see 3 Nephi 3-4).

5. Oaths of Enlistment

People in antiquity often entered into legally binding obligations, contracts, or commitments by means of oaths. Oaths were used for several purposes in Israelite and Nephite military affairs: one was to demonstrate one's commitment to fight wholeheartedly. When Nephite men enlisted to fight for their country, they did so with a covenant. For example, Moroni recruited troops with this cry: "Behold, whosoever will maintain this title upon the land, let them come forth in the strength of the Lord, *and enter into a covenant* that they will maintain their rights, and their religion, that the Lord God may bless them" (Alma 46:20; italics added; see also Alma 53:17).

This oath was more than just a commitment to "maintain their rights" by fighting loyally for their country. The new soldiers "came running together with their armor girded about their loins, rending their garments in token, or as a covenant, *that they would not forsake the Lord their God;* or, in other words, if they should transgress the commandments of God, or fall into transgression, and be ashamed to take upon them the name of Christ, the Lord should rend them even as they had rent their garments" (Alma 46:21; italics added). The soldiers then entered a covenant in a manner similar to that of the Hittite Soldier's Oath.[41]

The primary purpose of such an oath seems to have been to enlist and establish the soldiers' commitment to obey the Lord valiantly in all things: "We covenant with our God, that we shall be destroyed, even as our brethren in the land northward, if we shall fall into transgression; yea, he may cast us at the feet of our enemies, even as we have cast our garments at thy feet to be trodden under foot, if we shall fall into transgression" (Alma 46:22).

The impact of such an oath on soldiers about to enter into battle is clear. In addition to strengthening the fainthearted and reducing the chances that these part-time warriors would desert in the frightening face of battle, the covenant relationship between God and the individual formed an essential alliance with the divine warrior who stood at the head of the troops and alone would give them victory or deliver them up to defeat. The righteous Nephites had faith that the Lord alone would deliver their enemies into their hands. When he had surrounded the invading Lamanite troops only a year earlier, Moroni had expounded this very point to his enemy Zerahemnah:

Ye behold that the Lord is with us; and ye behold that he has delivered you into our hands. And now I would that ye should understand that this is done unto us because of our religion and our faith in Christ…. Ye see that God will support, and keep, and preserve us, so long as we are faithful unto him, and unto our faith, and our religion; and never will the Lord suffer that we shall be destroyed except we should fall into transgression and deny our faith. (Alma 44:3-4.)

The most important oath that the Nephite soldiers hoping for victory could make was to covenant not to "fall into transgression," for they knew that the Lord would support, preserve, and keep them only so long as they were faithful to him and his commandments.

The ancient Israelites understood war in very much the same way. De Vaux writes that "war was regarded as a sacral undertaking with a ritual of its own,"[42] and, in addition to purity, "faith was an indispensable condition"[43] for the combatants. Rofe adds: "Inasmuch as war was perceived as an activity and a revelation of God, it was considered holy; … hence the term 'to consecrate battle' (Jeremiah 6:4; Joel 3:9; Micah 3:5) and the warriors' state of being 'consecrated' (Isaiah 13:3; Jeremiah 22:7; 51:2728)."[44] "Rigorous modes of oath-taking and dedication," notably among the Nazarites (see Numbers 6:5, 8), and other military oaths such as that of King Kartu in the Ugaritic epic of Krt were also taken.[45] The result that was to follow from such a sacral martial state is described in the law of Deuteronomy: "For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you" (Deuteronomy 20:4). The oath taken by Moroni's men clearly displays such faith and dependence upon God and commitment to keeping his commandments during wartime, in righteousness and purity.

6. Laws of Purity in Warfare

The obligation to maintain righteousness and purity extended well beyond oath making at the time of enlistment. The law of Moses also required holiness of the camp throughout the campaign.[46] "When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing" (Deuteronomy 23:9). Well known from the Old Testament are several laws, rules, and regulations requiring the ritualistic and hygienic purity of the armies of Israel: "The combatants had to be in a state of ritual cleanliness, *i.e.*, 'made holy' (Joshua 3:5). They were bound to remain continent (2 Samuel 11:11), and this obligation of cleanliness extended to the camp, which had to be kept 'holy' if Yahweh was to encamp with his troops (Deuteronomy 23:10-15). The reason was that the wars of Israel were the wars of Yahweh (1 Samuel 18:17; 25:28)."[47]

Hence God was consulted before the troops went into battle: In the period of the early monarchy, "Yahweh was consulted (Judges 20:23, 28; 1 Samuel 14:37; 23:2, 4) by means of the ephod and sacred lots (1 Samuel 23:9-10; 30:7-8)"[48] through a priestly function, while in the years around the time of Lehi, God's will in this regard was "conveyed through the prophet (Deuteronomy 18:1519)."[49] God himself "marched in the van of the army (Judges 4:14; 2 Samuel 5:24; cf. Deuteronomy 20:4)."[50] And the Talmud later reiterated these same principles: "So long as Israel turned their thoughts above and subjected their hearts to their Father in Heaven they prevailed, but otherwise they fell,"[51] and the exemptions from ritual washing applied only in optional wars, not those of obligatory national defense.[52]

Similar concerns over the righteousness of the army and about the need to consult God through his prophet prior to battle are present in Book of Mormon accounts. For example, Captain Moroni insisted that his troops not "fall into transgression" (Alma 46:22), for military success critically depended upon their righteousness. The "exceeding

faith" and purity of the stripling warriors of Helaman were their most distinctive virtues (Alma 53:21; 57:26). God gave them victory because "they did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness; yea, and even according to their faith it was done unto them" (Alma 57:21). The chief captain, Zoram, sought Alma's advice "whither the Lord would that they should go into the wilderness in search of their brethren,"[53] knowing that Alma "had the spirit of prophecy" (Alma 16:5). Captain Moroni was sure to consult with Alma the prophet and high priest before going into battle in the land of Manti, and the word of the Lord delivered by Alma told Moroni when and where to meet and defeat the enemy (see Alma 43:22-24). Later, chief captains were appointed who "had the spirit of revelation and also prophecy" (3 Nephi 3:19).

All this was to assure that the will of the Lord was done in battle and that the combatants remained pure and righteous, as the law required. Accordingly, the righteous Nephites attributed their military successes to God (e.g., Alma 44:5; 57:36; 58:33; Mormon 2:26), whereas the unrighteous claimed that victory was due to their weapons or their own strength (e.g., Alma 44:9).

7. Respect for Man in the Conduct of War

Since war was perceived as a ritual or sacral action of and with God, conducting hostilities with respect and dignity for all involved, as God dictated, was essential. Captain Moroni exemplified this noble spirit when he said to Zerahemnah in the intense emotion and heat of capture, "We do not desire to be men of blood…. We do not desire to slay you" (Alma 44:1). With the exception of the destruction of Ammonihah, there is no evidence that the occupying forces of the Lamanites during most of their history burned or destroyed Nephite cities (including Zarahemla, Nephihah, Mulek, Cumeni, and many others). Only in the final hours of the complete collapse of this civilization did the attacking armies begin to burn each other's towns, villages, and cities in wanton destruction (see Mormon 5:5).

These attitudes appear to reflect the humanitarian standards of conventional warfare that God's law required among the ancient Israelites. "In conducting military operations, wanton destruction of fruit trees in the enemy's territory was forbidden (Deuteronomy 20:19),"[54] and saving a human life was the most meritorious deed known to Jewish ethics, a value extended even into the conduct of battle: "Even a nation at war must take all possible steps to avoid the shedding of blood…. The moral repugnance against taking another person's life, even an enemy's, was expressed by Rabbi Yitschak (fourth-fifth century A.D.): 'Just as David was praying to God that he should not fall into the hands of Saul, he also prayed that Saul should not fall into his hands.' "[55] Thus, even in attacking a city, humanitarian concerns remained operative (see Deuteronomy 20:10).

In this regard, the rabbis derived a further rule from the instruction to wage war against Midian "as the Lord commanded" (Numbers 31:7), which they took to mean that "it was permitted to surround the enemy only on three sides so that they might flee from the beleaguered city."[56] Perhaps the people of Limhi saw the divine hand similarly affording them the opportunity to escape out "the back pass, through the back wall, on the back side of the city" (Mosiah 22:6), followed by a half-hearted Lamanite attempt to recapture these escaped civilians (see Mosiah 22:16). Thus, humanitarian attitudes are detectable at several points in the war records of the Book of Mormon, particularly in the treatment of hostages and captives.

8. Laws regarding Captives of War

While the Book of Mormon records no express set of provisions regulating the treatment of prisoners of war, examination of the passages concerning the matter shows several patterns in the Nephite military treatment of

captives. The Book of Mormon describes circumstances under which prisoners were taken, the types of people who were captured, the treatment given to those imprisoned, and the conditions upon which prisoners might be released.

In a heated and fair battle, Nephite military leaders had no qualms about pursuing and slaying the enemy, as when Alma led the Nephites, and they "did pursue the Amlicites all that day, and did slay them with much slaughter, insomuch that there were slain of the Amlicites twelve thousand five hundred thirty and two souls" (Alma 2:19; cf. Alma 43:38-41; 44:7; 51:32; 52:25, 32). The Nephites understood well the need to "defend themselves against their enemies, even to the shedding of blood if it were necessary" (Alma 48:14); yet they "did not delight in the shedding of blood" (Alma 48:23) and would have preferred not to slay their enemies at all (see Alma 44:1).

Whenever they obtained reasonable advantage over their enemies, they were quick to disarm their enemies and cease the work of destruction (see Alma 43-44; 52:3739). Moroni was repeatedly in a position to slay soldiers who had unjustly attacked his people, but instead he merely took them prisoner or offered generous terms of peace. For example, Nephite strategists whose men had surrounded drunken or sleeping Lamanite soldiers allowed the enemy to awake and surrender rather than slaughter them in their vulnerability (see Alma 55:18-24; 62:23-25). Even when guarding and transporting captured enemy troops meant risking the lives of Nephite soldiers and nearly depleting their own supplies, Nephite commanders preferred imprisoning Lamanites to executing them (see Alma 57:13-16). As a rule, the Nephites never killed an enemy who surrendered.

The only apparent exception to this rule was when Gidgiddoni led the combined Nephite-Lamanite forces against the Gadianton robbers. He commanded his men "that they should not spare any that should fall into their hands by the way" (3 Nephi 4:13). This was undoubtedly because of the nature of the war and the enemy: the Nephites were not attempting to push another nation's troops out of Nephite territory but were battling against a band of robbers whose parasitic existence would always threaten Nephite and Lamanite security if they were not eliminated. But even with such an enemy, when Gidgiddoni's troops later managed to surround the robbers, they did not follow the captain's extermination order but took prisoner all those who yielded themselves up (see 3 Nephi 4:25-27).

Moroni was a pragmatist as well as a prophet, and he was more likely to take prisoners (as opposed to letting captured soldiers go free with a covenant of peace) if he needed bargaining power to regain captured Nephites (see Alma 52:8). Yet unlike the Lamanites, Moroni's troops never took women or children prisoner (see Alma 54:3), largely because the Nephite soldiers never fought in Lamanite territory. Helaman's epistle to Moroni indicates that when Lamanite provisions became short, the Lamanites kept alive only the most valuable prisoners, the chief captains (see Alma 56:12).

When the Nephites took prisoners, they made good (but not excessive) use of them. Moroni had Lamanite prisoners both bury those slain in battle and fortify the city of Bountiful so that it became a suitable "stronghold to retain … prisoners." By doing so, he not only freed up Nephite troops for battle, but he also made guarding the prisoners easier (Alma 53:1-6). If prisoners did attempt to escape or revolt, they were slain (see Alma 57:30-34).

Prisoners were not sought after, however, as a cheap form of slave labor. Instead, Nephites generally avoided taking prisoners by allowing captured troops to go free if they yielded up their weapons and covenanted not to fight again. Often they allowed prisoners also to go free if they made a similar promise. Thus, Moroni allowed Zerahemnah and his men to go free when they agreed to such conditions out of desperation, after having previously refused to enter into a covenant of peace "which [they knew] that [they would] break" (Alma 44:8). The

people of Morianton were allowed to return to their lands "upon their covenanting to keep the peace" (Alma 50:36).

Such covenants were taken seriously. After defeating a Lamanite army, Moroni and Pahoran caused those who had not been slain "to enter into a covenant that they would no more take up their weapons of war against the Nephites. And when they had entered into this covenant, they sent them to dwell with the people of Ammon, and they were in number about four thousand who had not been slain" (Alma 62:16-17). Moroni and Pahoran sent four thousand Lamanite soldiers, who had given nothing more than their word, to live with the defenseless Ammonites! Eventually, all remaining prisoners were allowed to join the people of Ammon, and they began "to labor exceedingly, tilling the ground, raising all manner of grain, and flocks and herds of every kind; and thus were the Nephites relieved from a great burden; yea, insomuch that they were relieved from all the prisoners of the Lamanites" (Alma 62:29).

Later, after Moronihah had surrounded the Lamanite armies and regained possession of the city of Zarahemla, he "caused that the Lamanites who had been taken prisoners should depart out of the land in peace" (Helaman 1:33). Finally, after Gidgiddoni s troops had captured or slain all of the Gadianton robbers, the Nephites "did cause the word of God to be preached unto [the prisoners]; and as many as would repent of their sins and enter into a covenant that they would murder no more were set at liberty" (3 Nephi 5:4).

One category of prisoners deserves special attention, namely the Nephite rebels. Those who were Nephite citizens but attempted to overthrow the government or aid the enemy were treated in a manner similar yet not identical to the way the Nephites treated captured enemy troops. Armed resisters, as were rebellious Lamanite prisoners, were slain (see Alma 51:19), but any who opted to enter into a covenant "to support the cause of freedom" (Alma 46:35) were allowed to fight for their country. Unlike Lamanite prisoners, however, Nephite rebels could be put on trial and executed for their crimes (see Alma 62:9). Their resistance did not have to be active – refusal to defend the country also warranted execution (see Alma 46:35). The Nephites also singled out rebel leaders for punishment. The leaders of the king-men were thrown into prison (see Alma 51:19); Pachus, who had made himself king, was immediately slain, whereas his men were imprisoned and given a trial (see Alma 62:8-9); and Zemnarihah, leader of the Gadianton robbers, was ceremoniously hanged (see 3 Nephi 4:28). The singling out of rebel leaders for punishment and execution marks the most significant difference between the treatment of Nephite rebels and Lamanite prisoners. No captured Lamanite leader was ever executed or even treated differently than other captured soldiers, as far as the record indicates.

The Gadianton robbers, in particular, provide an interesting case study. The Nephites apparently considered them to be Nephite criminals rather than enemy prisoners of war, since those who would not change their ways were "condemned and punished according to the law" (3 Nephi 5:5). Yet the robbers must have been treated under martial law, because murderers would not normally have had the option of being "set at liberty" if they would "repent of their sins and enter into a covenant that they would murder no more" (3 Nephi 5:4).

Turning to provisions of early biblical and Jewish law dealing with the taking and treatment of prisoners of war, one again finds several points of comparison with the Nephite experience. First, a general humanitarian thrust is often emphasized in the law of Moses and by its rabbinic commentators. Proverbs 25:21, for example, states, "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink." The rabbis understood this ancient rubric to apply to enemies in wartime, even to those who " 'have risen up early' to kill you [Exodus 22:12], and [after being disarmed]."[57] Thus a principle of Jewish ethic was that "a defeated enemy, who no longer poses any danger, should be accorded humane treatment,"[58] a rule that Josephus reported as an ancient rule

regarding captives, requiring that one should "do them no harm."[59] Thus the Hebrews generally did not kill prisoners of war.

James Priest, like others, cites the encounter between Elisha and the king of Israel as demonstrating "that there was a generally understood practice of mercy toward war prisoners."[60]

> The king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them? And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. (2 Kings 6:21-22.)

Israel's kings were known for their mercy (see 1 Kings 20:31). Prisoners of war (excepting those mistakenly taken who should have been killed initially) were treated comparatively well. There are no Old Testament instances of Israel torturing its prisoners of war, for example, as some its neighbors, especially the Assyrians, were prone to do.[61] Similarly, the Nephites fed and treated their captives humanely after disarming them, and the Book of Mormon record especially notes cases where the enemies of the Nephites unethically violated these canons of conduct (see Alma 56:12).

Another general principle of Jewish law prohibited the exploitation of captives as forced laborers:

> If the enemy was vanquished or submitted peaceably, they could be compelled to serve their Israelite conquerors, to work for them but not as slaves. They must be paid, says Nahmanides, the value of their labor, like any free worker. Thus, Jewish law forbids the exploitation and enslavement of vanquished populations by forced labor without recompense.[62]

While only postbiblical texts articulate this principle clearly, the norm is consistent with early historical practices and texts. For example, Deuteronomy 21:10-14 requires that a captured woman cannot be held as a slave, but must be given the full status of a wife or released. Israelite laws also granted Hebrew slaves far greater rights than foreign slaves,[63] and Mosiah 2:13 notes an outright prohibition against making "slaves one of another." These principles would have made it very difficult for Nephites or Lamanites (who were still kinsmen) to hold slaves of each other, a condition that never arose in the Book of Mormon.

Furthermore, the law of Deuteronomy 21:10-14 regarding the treatment of female captives was interpreted "to prevent licentiousness, acts of rape on the field of battle, etc."[64] The treatment of the women whom Ammoron took captive seems to have followed this rule, for they were allowed to remain with their husbands and children (see Alma 54:11). At the opposite extreme, Mormon noted with particular odiousness that the soldiers in Moriantum had raped and tortured the Lamanite women they had captured (see Moroni 9:9-10), a mark of ultimate degeneracy.

The main exceptions to the spirit of these rules in ancient Israel occurred in the wars of the Israelite conquest of Canaan. There the rule was "take no captives." But this is viewed as a special case. De Vaux claims that such cases of mass extermination were exceptional: "Apart from the *herem* in a holy war which involved all living beings, the massacre of prisoners was never a general rule."[65] In the Conquest, if a distant city refused to submit, Israel was to slay every male and take all the "women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof" unto itself (Deuteronomy 20:13-14). Regarding the Canaanite cities in the Israelite territory,

however, the commandment was "Thou shalt utterly destroy them; … that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods" (Deuteronomy 20:17-18).

Thus, Moses was angry with his captains when they slew only the Midianite men in battle, taking the Midianite women and children captive. He commanded them to kill all the male children and females who were not virgins; the Israelites were allowed to keep alive the virgins for themselves (see Numbers 31:7-18). In a similar instance, the virgins of Jabesh-Gilead were spared so that the men of Benjamin could have wives (see Judges 21:10-14). Likewise, Joshua utterly destroyed "all that breathed" in several heathen cities (Joshua 10:40). In one campaign, the Lord commanded Saul through Samuel that he should "go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Samuel 15:3). Yet, because Saul spared the king and the best animals so that they could be sacrificed, the Lord "rejected [him] from being king over Israel" (1 Samuel 15:9-26), and Samuel himself executed the Amalekite king (see 1 Samuel 15:33).

Not until the time of David, who also engaged in the utter destruction of certain enemies (see 1 Samuel 27:9; 1 Samuel 30:17), did Israel again take prisoners or gain tributaries (see 2 Samuel 8:2-14; 2 Samuel 10:19).

Apparently, David made state slaves of the Ammonites (see 2 Samuel 12:31).[66] Thus the Book of Mormon peoples ostensibly followed the provisions in Deuteronomy concerning prisoners of war, with the exception of the irrelevant conquest commandments to destroy all enemies.

Note, too, that the treatment of captives changed considerably among the Lamanites in the final era of Nephite history. In the fourth century A.D., the Lamanites captured and sacrificed many Nephite women and children (see Mormon 4:14, 21). This may be connected with the widespread practice of human sacrifice of prisoners in later Maya, Toltec, and Aztec civilizations, and it represents a shocking, radical divergence from the nobler laws of war consistently observed in the earlier periods of the Nephite record.

9. Restrictions on Taking Booty and Plunder

Pillaging and plundering were strictly prohibited under Nephite law: "Neither have I suffered that ye should … plunder," reported the king and commander-in-chief, Benjamin (Mosiah 2:13). While plundering was rarely an issue for Nephite men under arms, since they always fought to defend their own territory, Nephite law continued to issue strong rules and penalties against those who plundered (e.g., Mosiah 29:14, 36; Alma 16:18; 23:3; Helaman 4:1213). It was, however, a common practice among the Lamanites and the wicked (e.g., Mosiah 10:17; 24:7; Alma 17:14; 18:7; Helaman 3:16; 6:17, 23), both in war and in peace.

Long-standing Israelite policies restricted soldiers from keeping booty for themselves. For example, Achan was put to death for hiding some silver, gold, and cloth under his tent, articles that were plundered from the fallen city of Ai (see Joshua 7:24-25). Indeed, noble traditions of collecting the booty of war and dividing it among the kings and soldiers involved in the battle date back to the times of Abraham and before [67] and survived long after.[68] Perhaps the roots of the Nephites' antipathy toward plundering can be traced back to these persistent historical precedents.

10. The Treatment and Burial of Victims

The Book of Mormon war records go out of their way to report the burial of war dead, particularly those of the enemy. King Zeniff, for example, reports, "I, myself, with mine own hands, did help to bury their dead" (Mosiah

9:19). The bodies of the Ammonihahites were heaped up and buried by someone in the area (see Alma 16:11); thousands of fallen soldiers were buried in the ground or heaped in mounds (see Alma 28:11); and the bodies of both Nephites and Lamanites were cast into the waters of Sidon to be buried in the sea (see Alma 44:22). All of these cases show considerable concern for burial and respect for the bodies of the victims of battle, including those of one's enemies.

High regard for burying the dead was common in early and late antiquity. Josephus expressed the regard that Judaism had for the body of an enemy killed in battle: "Let our enemies that fall in battle be also buried; nor let any dead body lie above ground, or suffer a punishment beyond what justice requires."[69] The crucial need for a proper burial is well documented in ancient records, especially dramatically in the story of Antigone, who risked her life to give her brother a proper burial, and in Thucydides' account of the Athenian admiral whom the people of Athens put to death for his failure (notwithstanding terrible weather) to return to the location of a sea battle to try to recover as many bodies as possible so they could be given a proper burial.

11. The Use of Oaths in Treaties

The subject of treaty oaths has been discussed in some depth by others.[70] The case of Moroni and Zerahemnah demonstrates in considerable detail how the Nephites and Lamanites often used oaths to consummate a legal treaty at the end of a war. Upon gaining a position of clear advantage in battle, Moroni proposed a negative covenant— something a conqueror commonly imposed in the Near East on a defeated army—requiring the Lamanites to surrender their weapons of war and covenant never to return to fight against the Nephites. The oath of peace was obviously an important part of Moroni's proposal because he refused Zerahemnah's counteroffer, which simply involved the Lamanites delivering up their weapons of war (see Alma 44:6-10). After further conflict, Zerahemnah and his soldiers eventually yielded up their weapons, and "after they had entered into a covenant with [Moroni] of peace they were suffered to depart into the wilderness" (Alma 44:20). The Nephites required similar covenants of peace of the Lamanites in later battles (see Alma 62:16), of the people of Morianton (see Alma 50:36), and of the captured soldiers of Zemnarihah (see 3 Nephi 5:4).

Although there is no record of Israelites entering into an agreement of this specific form, oaths of peace were often an important part of treaties in the ancient Near East. For example, George Mendenhall writes, "Hittite treaty oaths required a conquered nation or people to take an individual oath of allegiance to the king of the prevailing people and a vow not to return to war."[71] David Lorton explains how, in one ancient Egyptian treaty, "his majesty caused that [the defeated princes at Megiddo] be caused to *sdf3* a *tryt*-oath,[72] saying, "We shall not repeat the evil against *(nn whm.n r bin hr) Mn-hpr-R^c* — may he live forever! — our Lord, during our lifetimes: for we have seen his power, and he has given us 'breath' as he desires."[73]

The Moroni-Zerahemnah incident demonstrates the personal nature of these Nephite-Lamanite treaties. As was usually the case in the ancient Near East, these treaties apparently were primarily personal covenants.[74] The Nephites were always willing to release any individual soldier who would take the oath of peace, and some did, even before their leader. And when Zerahemnah agreed to the peace treaty, it was still not enough that he covenanted for his nation: each soldier had to take the oath individually as well (see Alma 44:15, 19-20).

12. The Ammonites' Unilateral Oath of Peace

Another military use of the oath in the Book of Mormon was the oath of peace sworn by the Lamanites Ammon and his brethren converted. Pursuant to this ritual, thousands of Lamanites took upon themselves a new name, the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi (see Alma 23:17). When the unconverted Lamanites began preparations to kill these people, Ammon and his brethren held "a council with Lamoni and also with his brother Anti-Nephi-Lehi, what they should do to defend themselves against the Lamanites" (Alma 24:5). None of the Anti-Nephi-Lehies "would take up arms against their brethren; ... yea, and also their king commanded them that they should not" (Alma 24:6).

In explaining his reasons for wanting to refrain from further bloodshed, their king stated that his people had been "convinced of [their] sins, and of the many murders which [they had] committed." He thanked God that "he hath granted unto us that we might repent of these things, and also that he hath forgiven us of those our many sins and murders which we have committed" (Alma 24:9-10). After explaining how fortunate they were to have been forgiven, the king pleaded with his people, "Let us retain our swords that they be not stained with the blood of our brethren; for perhaps, if we should stain our swords *again* they can no more be washed bright through the blood of the Son of our great God, which shall be shed for the atonement of our sins" (Alma 24:13; italics added). The people responded to their king's plea, burying their swords as "a testimony to God, and also to men, that they never would use weapons again for the shedding of man's blood; and this they did, vouching and covenanting with God, that rather than shed the blood of their brethren they would give up their own lives" (Alma 24:18).

This oath of the Ammonites (as they would later come to be known) reflected the resolve of converts with a unique background. Because of their "many murders," the Ammonites deeply feared that any further shedding of blood might take them beyond the scope of forgiveness (Alma 24:11-13). After these people arrived in the land of Zarahemla, their oath, which had been tested in blood, was honored by the Nephites, who continued to grant them exemption from active (but not economic) military duty (see Alma 27:24), as is discussed above.

The Use of Military Force in Law Enforcement

1. Dealing with Robbers

Good evidence establishes that most legal systems in the ancient Near East distinguished quite specifically between thieves and robbers.[75] Under these laws, a thief was usually a local person who stole from his neighbor. The *gannab* (thief), if apprehended, was dealt with judicially. The local government tried and punished him civilly, most often by a court composed of his fellow townspeople. A robber, on the other hand, was typically an outsider, a brigand or highwayman. Since the *gazlan* (robber) was not considered a member of the community necessarily entitled to the protections of law, he could be dealt with by military force and martial law. In most instances, it was the army's task to free the countryside of robbers, and the military could execute outlaws summarily.[76]

Thus, one of the main uses of military force in the ancient Near East was in combating and executing the bands of robbers and brigands who infested the lands. The same was also true in the New World. There is little question that robbers posed serious military threats to the peace and well-being of many ancient cities. Seeing these robbers, as military opponents (whatever their political, economic, ideological, or religious motives may have been) is necessary to understand how they were dealt with in the Book of Mormon.

How severely robbers were treated in the ancient world seems to have varied with the seriousness of the problem they caused at a particular time and with the ability of the central government to do something about them.[77] In the ancient Near East, robbers' raids sometimes involved large-scale destruction.[78] Other times they attacked just

to restock their supplies or supplement their meager income off the land.[79] The military strength of some of these robber groups cannot be doubted: one band nearly captured the city of Alexandria from the Romans.[80] They were more threatening than foreign invaders.[81] Robbers would often demand ransom or extort money from towns in lieu of ransacking. One text suggests that robber leagues were so common in Egypt that they became entitled by custom to demand ransom equal to one-fourth of the property seized or threatened.[82] Josephus accused Albinus of taking kickbacks from brigands.[83]

The task of clearing the countryside of the menace of robber bands was the responsibility of the local governmental authorities. Thus, for example, the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi distinguishes between *saraqu* (to steal)[84] and *habatu* (to rob).[85] The thief was a common criminal. He could usually be detected and made to pay. But in the case of a robber who was not caught, "the city and the mayor in whose territory or district the robbery has been committed" was obligated to replace whatever had been robbed; and if the victim had been killed, then the city or the mayor had to pay one *maneh* of silver to the descendant's heirs.[86] The Egyptian Report of Wenamun may show this principle in action: Wenamun complained to the Ruler of Dor, "I was robbed in your harbor and since you are the chief of this land and since you are its [investigating] judge—retrieve my money!" Nevertheless, this crime committed on the seas seems to have been outside the jurisdiction of the territorial officer, and Wenamun was left to help himself.[87]

Thus, a heavy responsibility fell upon the local authorities if a robber—but not a thief—were not caught. The difference seems to rest on the distinctions between "the individual offender and the organized group.... Such civic responsibility was an attempt to secure the central authority against attack, and existed in similar situations elsewhere in the ancient world."[88] Many Babylonian, Ugaritic, and Phoenician kings left inscriptions boasting that they had successfully eradicated the robbers from their territory, and Ipuwer laments the unsafe conditions in Egypt due to these brigands.[89] Related to this sense of civic responsibility for brigandage was the law that a shepherd or carrier was liable for loss from theft, but not for loss to robbers, against whom he was powerless.[90]

Although the evidence varies regarding capital punishment of thieves in the ancient Near East, it is unequivocal concerning the death penalty for robbers. For example, thieves were executed under the Code of Hammurabi, Sections 6-13 and 21, for several types of theft, such as housebreaking, or stealing from a temple or a palace, or dealing without documentation with a legally disadvantaged person, or concealing stolen goods; but it is not clear that there was a general death penalty for theft under that legal system. The evidence for capital punishment for theft under biblical law is even less conclusive, and possibly nonexistent. For robbers, however, the Code of Hammurabi, Section 22, clearly imposed capital punishment.[91] In Egypt, the death penalty applied even if a person could not prove that he had come by his wealth through an honest livelihood, presumably as opposed to having stolen it.[92] In early Roman law, the penalty for robbery was "the interdict of fire and water"; under Tiberius, the penalty became deportation; and for ordinary *grassatores* (highwaymen), the punishment was sometimes death.[93] The mode of punishment in at least one case was crucifixion.[94] Decapitation by the sword also seems to have been a likely mode of execution.[95]

Finally, the leaders of robber bands were treated especially notoriously. Josephus reports that Herod put to death a robber-chief named Ezekias, who headed a "large horde,"[96] and records the arrest of another brigand-chief

Eleazar, who was sent to Rome for trial even though he was not a Roman citizen.[97] We do not know why Eleazar was sent to Rome; perhaps it was for public humiliation, execution, or display as part of a triumph.

The foregoing description of ancient Near Eastern robber militarism parallels precisely the tactics and treatment of the robber bands in the final years of the Nephite reign of judges.[98] The robbers in the land of Zarahemla were militant. They came as invading armies, in siege warfare (see 3 Nephi 4:16), with military power capable of defying "whole armies" (Helaman 11:32; cf. 3 Nephi 2:11, 17; 4:1, 11). They suffered from shortages of supplies, for they, like the Near Eastern robbers, lived off the land (see 3 Nephi 4:3, 19-20). Their military strength was terrifying—they were the most feared of all Nephite enemies. Mormon identifies them as the primary cause of the overthrow and almost the entire destruction of the Nephites (see Helaman 2:13). Their attacks were so "great and terrible" that "there never was known so great a slaughter among all the people of Lehi since he left Jerusalem" (3 Nephi 4:11).

The Nephite government made little effort to deal with the robbers judicially. Helaman sent soldiers after the robber Gadianton, who fled, fearing that he would "be destroyed" (Helaman 2:11). It is doubtful that any kind of trial would have taken place if Gadianton had been apprehended, for Helaman sent men after these assassins already intending "that they might be executed according to the law" (Helaman 2:10), that is, the law permitted their immediate execution. Similarly, using "every means in their power" (Helaman 6:20), the Lamanites "did hunt the band of robbers" and "utterly destroyed" them in Lamanite lands (Helaman 6:37). "An army of strong men" was sent into the wilderness to "search out" and "destroy" the robbers who arose after the famine of Nephi (Helaman 11:28). The robber Giddianhi "was overtaken and slain" (3 Nephi 4:14), even though he could have been taken prisoner. The rank and file robbers under Zemnarihah were summarily slain if they would not become prisoners (see 3 Nephi 4:27), and even as prisoners they were "condemned and punished according to the law" if they did not make a covenant "that they would murder no more" (3 Nephi 5:4-5). Thus, such robber activity was clearly under the jurisdiction of martial law among the Nephites.

Similarly, clearing the Nephite countryside of robbers was a responsibility of the government. Helaman took official action against them (see Helaman 2:10), as the Nephites and Lamanites again did later (see Helaman 11:28). The government of Lachoneus consolidated the Nephites and built fortifications against the robbers (see 3 Nephi 3:24-25; 4:3-4). No private plaintiffs were necessary in such cases, as was usually the practice in initiating civil suits in ancient Near Eastern courts of law. The government considered itself responsible. Only when the robbers were "not known unto those who were at the head of government" were they "not destroyed out of the land" (Helaman 3:23). Mormon took pains to exonerate Helaman from any insinuation that Helaman had allowed the secret oaths of the Jaredite robbers to leak out of the records in his custody (see Helaman 6:26). By the same token, Mormon duly noted whenever the government successfully defeated the robbers (see Helaman 6:37; 11:10; cf. 4 Nephi 1:17).

Clearly, the Nephites and Lamanites summarily imposed the death penalty upon robbers in this era of their history. The mode of punishment for Zemnarihah was hanging (see 3 Nephi 4:28), a form of execution related to crucifixion (cf. Deuteronomy 21:22-23; Galatians 3:13);[99] and the deaths of robber leaders were particularly notorious. Zemnarihah's execution was a public spectacle, with all the people in unison chanting loud incantations and supplications and singing, praising, rejoicing, and exulting (see 3 Nephi 4:28-33).[100]

2. *The Annihilation of Apostate Cities*

Another governmental use of military force that the law of Moses mandated was the destruction of apostate cities, as recorded in Deuteronomy 13:12-16:

> If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities, ... certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known; then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you; thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword. And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, for the Lord thy God: and it shall be an heap for ever; it shall not be built again.

Alma 16:9-11 records the utter destruction of the wicked city of Ammonihah by Lamanite soldiers. There are several affinities between that account and the ancient Israelite law regarding the annihilation of apostate cities. Alma, who had been the Nephite chief judge, was likely well aware of this legal provision, even though he lacked both the desire and the power to destroy Ammonihah by military force. Still, his concept of justice would have included the idea that an apostate city ought to be destroyed and anathematized in a specific way. Since the inhabitants of Ammonihah satisfied every element of the crime of being an apostate city, their fate would naturally have been viewed as being in accordance with divine justice administered by God; after all, the building and razing of cities in a land of promise is divine, not human, work.

Consider the following elements: (1) This law pertains to "certain men [who] are gone out from among you." The people in Ammonihah had clearly gone out from among the Nephites, for they had "forgotten the tradition of [their] fathers" (Alma 9:8), and Alma condemned them as apostates: "If this people, who have received so many blessings from the hand of the Lord, should transgress contrary to the light and knowledge which they do have, ... it would be far more tolerable for the Lamanites than for them" (Alma 9:23). (2) The law of Moses was concerned to assure national purity and unity by exposing and suppressing apostate insurgency and sedition, and in fact the Ammonihahites were plotting to overthrow the government in Zarahemla (see Alma 8:17). (3) The law specifically applied when men had led a city to withdraw from God and to serve other gods, in violation of Exodus 20:3 and Deuteronomy 5:7, and it was concerned with the prevention of any form of illicit worship of Yahweh (see Deuteronomy 12:1-8). Alma averred that the men in Ammonihah had undertaken to study ways to pervert the nation, specifically to turn it away from the Lord Yahweh's statutes, judgments, and commandments (see Alma 8:17). (4) Deuteronomy describes these offenders as "the children of Belial." Likewise, Alma made it a matter of record that "Satan had gotten great hold upon the hearts of the people of the city of Ammonihah" (Alma 8:9).

The law of Deuteronomy required officers to investigate the situation thoroughly, to enquire, search, and ask to assure that the offensive condition in fact existed. Alma did this, too. After being rejected, Alma was instructed to return to preach in the city, to give them the necessary warning that they would be destroyed if they did not repent (see Alma 8:16). Acting as the two required eyewitnesses (see Deuteronomy 17:6), Alma and Amulek preached against the people, then stood and witnessed an awful scene of utter abomination (*see* Alma 14:9). As revolting as this experience was for them, it completed the case against the city and sealed its fate (see Alma 14:11).

The prescribed mode of execution of the inhabitants of an apostate city was by the "sword, destroying it utterly" (Deuteronomy 13:15). This is the only text in the law of Moses that calls for slaying by the sword. Significantly, Amulek twice focused his remarks on the manner in which the people of this city would be killed: "Ye would even

now be visited with utter destruction; yet it would not be by flood, as were the people in the days of Noah, but it would be by famine, and by pestilence, and the *sword*" (Alma 10:22, and again in verse 23). When the day of judgment came upon Ammonihah, the Lamanites did "slay the people and destroy the city" (Alma 16:2), certainly by the sword, their primary weapon of hand-to-hand combat. Slaying the city "by the edge [mouth] of the sword" has also been explained as meaning "by the word of prayer."[101] Alma's prayer eventually overwhelmed his captors in this city, also showing forth the power of the word (see Alma 4:19-26).

Additionally, the law demanded that the property in the city be totally destroyed by fire, "and it shall be an heap for ever" (Deuteronomy 13:16). As Alma recorded, "Every living soul of the Ammonihahites was destroyed, and also their great city, ... [and] their dead bodies were heaped up upon the face of the earth" (Alma 16:9, 11). Alma does not mention fire, but burning would have been natural enough. " 'All that is in it' relates to men, cattle, and the material property of the town, and not to men alone [as in Deuteronomy 20:13-14]."[102] Deuteronomy 13 describes the only situation under biblical law in which everything must be destroyed.

Finally, the law states that the ruins "shall not be built again" (Deuteronomy 13:16). The rabbis debated whether this ancient text meant "never again" or simply not "as it was formerly."[103] The fate and subsequent history of Ammonihah supports the latter interpretation: "People did not go in to possess the land of Ammonihah for many years.... And their lands remained desolate" (Alma 16:11). When the desolation of Nehors was later rebuilt, it was not as it had formerly been, but as a military outpost (see Alma 49:2).

Thus, this episode in the Book of Mormon conforms precisely with the legal provisions of Deuteronomy 13. It is a remarkable instance of the falling of the wrathful sword of divine justice (see Alma 54:6) pursuant to God's law.

3. Purification following Destruction

Quite possibly the Nephites were concerned with ritual purification following certain kinds of war. After the destruction of the city of Ammonihah, for example, the land of Ammonihah was apparently deemed untouchable for just over seven years (there are eight years, nine months and five days between the destruction in Alma 16:1-2 and the commencement of fortification in Alma 49:1-2). This period likely accomplished some kind of ritual cleansing. In support of this possibility, I have found one case when an early Christian synod removed the ban requiring the island of Cyprus to remain unoccupied for seven years after its inhabitants had been annihilated.[104] I have found no other evidence, however, of such a seven-year purification period. Other evidence of Nephite concern for ritual purification after battle may possibly be found in the ceremony performed after the death of King Noah (see Mosiah 19:24), or in the counting and disposal of the corpses of the war dead by throwing them into the river for burial in the depths of the sea (see Alma 3:3; 44:22).

Conclusion

The foregoing evidence gives but a glimpse into the legal side of the Nephite world of warfare. From it, however, one can confidently conclude that the Nephites conducted their lives in accordance with rules, regulations, concepts, customs, laws, and prohibitions, even in times of war. Their norms regulated and directed individual and collective military behavior, and they were notably consistent with and similar to ancient Israelite directives on the conduct of war. At no discernable point are inconsistencies apparent between the Book of Mormon and the ancient Israelite, rabbinic, or other derivative Jewish ethical concepts, whether with respect to the effects of war; the initiation of hostilities; the conscription and enlistment of soldiers; the rules of martial purity, humanity, honor, and restraint; or the use of arms against robber bands and apostate cities.

Since these long-standing religious and military attitudes must have been second nature to the prophet – historian Mormon, who spent most of his life as commander-in-chief of the Nephite armies, it is little wonder that his record consistently reflects an expert's awareness of such details. His record also characteristically views the total breakdown of the rule of law in the final days of Nephite warfare as the ultimate Nephite catastrophe: "How can a people like this, that are without civilization … expect that God will stay his hand in judgment?" (Moroni 9:11, 14). "O the depravity of my people! They are without order and without mercy…. They are without principle, and past feeling" (Moroni 9:18, 20). Without obedience to the laws of war, the Nephite doom on the field of battle was sealed.

Notes

1. For a convenient discussion of the Babylonian sources, see Victor H. Matthews, "Legal Aspects of Military Service in Ancient Mesopotamia," *Military Law Review* 94 (1981): 135-51. I am grateful to William Hamblin for drawing to my attention the martial codes from India in the Laws of Manu (200 B.C. to A.D. 200), Georg Buhler, tr., *The Laws of* Manu (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1886; reprinted New York: Dover, 1969), 230-48; and from Iran, see W. E. West, tr., *Pahlavi Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1892), 8690. I also acknowledge the assistance of Robert I. Eaton in researching and drafting parts of this paper.

2. See Alexander Rofe, "The Laws of Warfare in the Book of Deuteronomy: Their Origins, Intent and Positivity," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 32 (1985): 23-44.

3. See, for example, Paul D. Hanson, "War, Peace, and Justice in Early Israel," *Bible Review* 3 (Fall 1987): 32-45.

4. For a skillful discussion of methodology employed in studying biblical law, see Reuven Yaron, "Biblical Law: Prolegomena," in B. Jackson, ed., *Jewish Law in Legal History and the Modern World* (Leiden: Brill, 1980).

5. For example, a Jewish man could give his wife an extraordinary conditional divorce *(get)* in war time, so that, if he did not return from battle, she would become legally single (TB *Ketubbot* 9b; Menachem Elon, *The Principles of Jewish Law* [Jerusalem: Keter, 1975]), 422).

6. George Horowitz, *The Spirit of Jewish* Law (New York: Bloch, 1953), 147-48; TB *Sanhedrin* 20b; TB *Sotah* 44b. The antiquity of this distinction is unknown, but the classic example of a war of obligation was the conquest of Canaan.

7. TB *Sotah* 44a.

8. Maimonides, *Mishnah Torah Kings* IV, 1-5; cited in Horowitz, *Spirit of Jewish Law*, 153.

9. Horowitz, *Spirit of Jewish* Law, 153.

10. Hans Boecker, *Law and Administration of Justice in the Old Testatnent and Ancient Near East* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg, 1980), 45.

11. Ze'ev Falk, *Hebrew Law in Biblical Times* (Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1964), 87-92.

12. Elon, *Principles of Jewish Law*, 667.

13. See Lionel Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World* (London: George Allen, 1974), 154.

14. Allan C. Johnson, "Roman Egypt to the Reign of Diocletian," in Tenney Frank, ed., *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome,* 2 vols. (Paterson, New Jersey: Pageant, 1959), 2:594. For rules and edicts prohibiting people from departing by sea without purchasing an exit pass, see ibid., 2:715, nos. 64, 66, 68.

15. Horowitz, *Spirit of Jewish Law,* 149.

16. Ibid., 149-50.

17. Abraham Bloch, *A Book of Jewish Ethical Concepts* (New York: Ktav, 1984), 262.

18. Matthews, "Legal Aspects of Military Service," 139.

19. Quoted in ibid., 140.

20. Ibid.

21. Horowitz, *Spirit of Jewish Law,* 147.

22. Alan H. Gardiner, "Piankhi's Instructions to His Army," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 21 (1935): 219-20.

23. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel,* 2 vols. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1965), 1:214.

24. Matthews, "Legal Aspects of Military Service," 143.

25. TB *Sotah* 42a.

26. Compare also Code of Hammurabi 26; Hittite Laws 42.

27. TB *Sotah* 44a; italics added.

28. Ibid.

29. Horowitz, *Spirit of Jewish Law,* 154; see TB *Sotah* 43a (italics added).

30. "Puberty," *Encyclopedia Judaica* 13:1351; George Mendenhall, "The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 77 (1958): 52, 60; George W. Buchanan, "The Old Testament Meaning of the Knowledge of Good and Evil," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 75 (1956): 114-17. See Numbers 1:3, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28; 14:29; 26:2; 32:11; 1 Chronicles 27:23; 2 Chronicles 25:5.

31. Dead Sea Scrolls, *1QSa (Rule of the Congregation)* 1:11.

32. Buchanan, "The Old Testament Meaning of the Knowledge of Good and Evil," 114-20, and Robert Gordis, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Old Testament and the Qumran Scrolls," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 76 (1957): 123-38, argue that the expression to "know good and evil" refers to reaching the age of sexual maturity. Louis F. Hartman, "Sin in Paradise," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 20 (1958): 26-40, and Herold S. Stern, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil," *Vetus Testatnentum* 8 (1958): 405-18, take issue with giving a sexual interpretation to the fall of Adam, but they still agree that the age of majority in ancient Israel was twenty. See also Joseph M. Baumgarten, "On the Testimony of Women in 1QSa," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 76 (1957): 266-69; Sidney B. Hoenig, "On the

Age of Mature Responsibility in 1QSa," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 48 (195758): 371-75; Joseph M. Baumgarten, "1QSa 1.11—The Age of Testimony or Responsibility?" *Jewish Quarterly Review* 49 (1959): 15761; Gershorn Brin, "From … and Onward/Upward," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 99 (1980): 161-71.

33. ZŽ eb Weisman, "The Nature and Background of Bahžr in the Old Testament," *Vetus Testatnentutn* 31 (1981): 441-50. The primary and primitive meanings of this term are "young men," "men chosen to engage in war and associated functions," men "selected for a special campaign," "selected warrior" (ibid., 441, 443-44, 450).

34."*Bahur* as a designation of status is close to *na'ar*" (ibid., 449). See also G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz- Josef Fabry, *Theologisches Wšrterbuch ±utn Alten Testatnent* 5:507, 51516; John MacDonald, "The Status and Role of the Naar in Israelite Society," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 35 (1976): 147-70, especially 157-66, extensively discussing the biblical use of this term, meaning "squire," "a young man of good birth," serving in the elite corps of the army, carrying out a variety of entrusted missions, living "by a code of conduct strictly adhered to, no matter what" (ibid., 169).

35. E. A. Speiser, "Census and Ritual Expiation in Mari and Israel," in *Oriental and Biblical Studies* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967), 178.

36. Ibid., 183-84.

37. Ibid., 185.

38. Mendenhall, "Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26," 54.

39. Speiser, "Census and Ritual," 175.

40. Matthews, "Legal Aspects of Military Service," 142, citing the cautious census instructions of Samsi-Addu. See also Speiser, "Census and Ritual," 177.

41. See Terrence L. Szink, "Art Oath of Allegiance in the Book of Mormon," in this volume.

42. De Vaux, Ancient Israel, 1:214.

43. Ibid., 1:259.

44. Rofe, "Laws of Warfare in the Book of Deuteronomy," 24.

45. Ibid., 24 n. 4, citing Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Manual* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1955), 186.

46. Stephen D. Ricks, " 'Holy War': The Sacral Ideology of War in the Book of Mormon and in the Ancient Near East," in this volume, examines other aspects of holy war.

47. De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 1:258-59.

48. Ibid., 1:259.

49. Rofe, "Laws of Warfare in the Book of Deuteronomy," 26.

50. De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 1:259.

51. TB *Rosh ha-Shanah* 29a.

52. TB *Eruvin* 17a.

53. The manuscript is unclear whether this text was intended to read "whether" or "whither" (see *Book of Mormon Critical Text* [Provo: F.A.R.M.S., 1987], 2:621). "Whither" seems to fit the context here (cf. Alma 43:22-23). Typically, however, ancient oracles were asked a "yes-no" question about going to war, which would tend to favor reading "whether." Either way, the Israelite prophet's answer was not limited by the terms of the request (see 1 Kings 22:1525).

54. Horowitz, *Spirit of Jewish Law*, 150.

55. Bloch, Jewish Ethical Concepts, 262-63, citing Shohar Toy, Psalm 7:1.

56. Horowitz, Spirit of Jewish Law, 150-51, citing also Maimonides, Mishnah Torah Kings, VI, 7.

57. Rabbi Chamam b. Chanina (third century), Midrash Proverbs 25:21, cited in Bloch, Jewish Ethical Concepts, 263, citations deleted.

58. Bloch, Jewish Ethical Concepts, 263.

59. Josephus, Contra Apion II, 30.

60. *Governtnental and Judicial Ethics in the Bible and Rabbinic Literature* (New York: Ktav, 1980), 187.

61. De Vaux, Ancient Israel, 1:256.

62. Horowitz, Spirit of Jewish Law, 152.

63. Falk, *Hebrew Law in Biblical Titnes*, 118-20.

64. Horowitz, *Spirit of Jewish Law*, 151; TB *Kiddushin* 87.

65. De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 1:256; see also Hanson, "War, Peace, and Justice in Early Israel," 32-45.

66. De Vaux, Ancient Israel, 1:81, 89.

67. Yochanan Muffs, "Abraham the Noble Warrior: Patriarchal Politics and Laws of War in Ancient Israel," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33 (1982): 82.

<p68. Similar provisions applied in talmudic times. See TB *Sanhedrin* 20b.

69. Josephus, *Antiquities* IV, 24, cited in Bloch, *Jewish Ethical Concepts*, 262-63.

70. See, for example, Mark Davis and Brent Israelson, "International Relations and Treaties in the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report, 1982.

71. George Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh: Colloquium, 1955), 30.

72. The exact meaning of this phrase is uncertain, but it probably means to "swear" an "oath of allegiance" (see David Lorton, The Juridical Terminology of International Relations in Egyptian Text through Dynasty XVII [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 19741, 132).

73. Ibid., 176-81.

74. I. Gelb, "The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhadon," Bibliotheca Orientalis 19 (1962): 159-62; F. Charles Fensham, "Clauses of Protection in Hittite Vassal-Treaties and the Old Testament," Vetus Testamen turn 13 (1963): 133-43; Joseph Fitzmyer, "The Aramaic Suzerainty Treaty from Sefire in the Museum of Beirut," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 20 (1958): 444.

75. The legal definitions of theft and robbery, especially in the laws of ancient Israel, have been analyzed thoroughly by Bernard S. Jackson, "Some Comparative Legal History: Robbery and Brigandage," *Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law* 1(1970): 45-103; Bernard S. Jackson, *Theft in Early Jewish Law* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972); and Bernard S. Jackson, "Principles and Cases: The Theft Laws of Hammurabi," in *Essays in Jewish and Cotnparative Legal History* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 64-74. For a thorough legal treatment of robbers and robbery in the Book of Mormon, see my "Theft and Robbery in the Book of Mormon and Ancient Near Eastern Law," F.A.R.M.S. Working Paper, 1985.

76. Jackson, "Legal History: Robbery and Brigandage," 63. "Against them the laws of war operated" (Michaelis, Comtnentaries on the Laws of Moses [1814], iv. 280, cited in Jackson, Theft in Early Jewish Law, 16, 180, 251).

77. Jackson, Theft in Early Jewish Law, 153.

78. Henry Lutz, "The Alleged Robbers' Guild in Ancient Egypt," University of California Publications in Setnitic Philology 10 (1937): 234.

79. Jackson, *Theft in Early Jewish Law*, 14-15; Lutz, "Robbers' Guild in Ancient Egypt," 234; 1 Samuel 25.

80. Lutz, "Robbers' Guild in Ancient Egypt," 242.

81. Ibid., 238.

82. Ibid., 232.

83. Josephus, *War of the Jews* II, 278.

84. Code of Hammurabi, Sections 6-10, 14.

85. Ibid., Sections 22-23.

86. Ibid., Sections 23-24.

87. Hans Goedicke, *The Report of Wenamun* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 31, 43. A somewhat similar provision making local officials responsible for highway robbery within their jurisdiction was

enacted in England in 1676, 27 Eliz. ca. 13 (see Leon Radzinowicz, *A History of English Criminal Law and Its Administration frotn* 1750 [New York: Macmillan, 1956], 3).

88. Jackson, *Theft in Early Jewish Law*, 11.

89. Ibid., 15-16; Lutz, "Robbers' Guild in Ancient Egypt," 235.

90. Jackson, *Theft in Early Jewish Law*, 13-14, 39; Exodus 22:9, 11; Code of Hammurabi 103.

91. Jackson, "Principles and Cases: Theft Laws of Hammurabi," 66-69. Jackson also discusses the biblical sources in depth in *Theft in Early Jewish Law*, 144-54.

92. Lutz, "Robbers' Guild in Ancient Egypt," 232.

93. Jackson, "Legal History: Robbery and Brigandage," 79, 86.

94. Josephus, *War of the Jews* II, 253; see also the account of the two robbers *(kakourgoi, lestai)* crucified with Jesus in Matthew 27:3844; Mark 15:27-32; Luke 23:32-43.

95. See Abimelech's slaying of the Shechemite band in Judges 9:45; and Josephus, *War of the Jews* II, 260. Maimonides prescribes decapitation for murderers, *Sanhedrin* 15.12, and robbers are often associated with murderers. Compare Jackson, *Theft in Early Jewish Law*, 186.

96. Josephus, *War of the Jews* I, 204; Josephus, *Antiquities* XIV, 159, in Jackson, *Theft in Early Jewish Law*, 252.

97. Josephus, *War of the Jews* II, 253; and Josephus, *Antiquities* XX, 161, in Jackson, *Theft in Early Jewish Law*, 253-54.

98. For a more detailed discussion of the robber bands, see Daniel C. Peterson, "The Gadianton Robbers as Guerrilla Warriors," in this volume. I agree with Peterson that the Gadianton robbers were ideologically and religiously motivated and thus should not be thought of exclusively as a secular threat. My purpose here is only to show how they were

99. Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).

100. This execution followed ancient Israelite practice, as reflected in Maimonides, *Sanhedrin* 15.6; see "The Execution of Zemnarihah," F.A.R.M.S. Update, November 1984.

101. Lowenstein, cited in I. Drazen, Targutn Onkelos to Deuteronotny (New York: Ktav, 1982), 155; compare Revelation 1:16.

102. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Bible Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1949), 3:365.

103. Rabbi Jose, the Galilean, maintained that "[it shall not be built] *cod* [again] implies 'not at all,' whilst [Rabbi Akiba] holds that *'ad* implies 'as it was formerly' " (TB *Sanhedrin* 113a).

104. Constantini Porphyrogeniti, De Adtninistrando ltnperio 47, in PG 113:366.

"Holy War":
The Sacral Ideology of War in the Book of Mormon and in the Ancient Near East - The Basic Pattern

Stephen D. Ricks

In a sense, every conflict in the ancient Near East was prosecuted under the direction of the gods or of God. Men began war at the command of, or with the approval and aid of, the gods or of God; sacrifices generally accompanied it, men fought who were in a state of ritual readiness for combat, and the victors ended the conflict with thanksgiving and offerings to deity.[1]

The Akkadian ruler Sargon (ca. 2300 B.C.) claimed that "Enlil did not let anybody oppose [him]" and gave him "(the region from) the Upper Sea (to) the Lower Sea." Sargon said further that "Dilmun my [hand] cap[tured] .. . and [K]azallu I destroyed" through the help of the gods.[2] Similarly, the Sumerian ruler Ibbi-Sin (ca. 2000 B.C.), the last king of the Third Dynasty of Ur, exclaimed, following a victory of his forces, "The splendor of Enlil conquered the lands," whereas, following a defeat, he wrote, "Enlil looked toward another land" and "Enlil has sent evil upon Sumer."[3] The Egyptian king Kamose, following a major victory, claimed that the campaign had been carried out "according to the command of Amon, perfect in counsel." The military divisions of Pharaoh Ramses II (ca. 1300 B.C.)—each, significantly, named after an Egyptian deity (e.g., the "division of Amon," the "division of Re," the "division of Ptah," the "division of Seth") — cried out, in a moment of distress,

> What is the matter, O my father Amon? Has a father ever forgotten his son, or are these things which I am doing anything apart from thee? Have I not gone and stayed at thy command? Neither have I transgressed the plan which thou hast ordained, nor have I deviated from thy plans. Too great is the great lord of Egypt to let the foreigners in his way approach! What carest thou, O Amon, for these Asiatics, the wretched ones, unknown of the god? Do I not make for thee very many monuments and fill thy temples with my captives? I am building for thee my House of Millions of Years; I give to thee all my goods as furniture.... I have cried out to thee, O my father Amon, for I am in the midst of a strange multitude, whom I know not: all foreign countries which have united against me, while I am alone by myself, no other with me, while my numerous infantry has deserted me, and not one of my chariotry has glanced toward me. I cried out to them, but not one of them hearkened to me, alone among them, when I called. I found that Amon was worth more to me than millions of infantry, or hundreds of thousands of .chariotry, or ten thousands of chariotry, or ten thousand brothers and children, though they be united single-heartedly. The labor of many persons is naught, (for) Amon is worth more than they. I have come hither by the plan of thy mouth, O Amon, nor have I deviated from thy plan. [4]

The inscription that Zakir, king of Hama (ninth-eighth century B.C.), dedicated to Baalshamin reads in part:

> I am Zakir, king of Hama and of Laash. I was a humble man, but Baalshamin called me and was with me, making me the ruler over Hazrak. Bar Hadad, the son of Hazael, the king of Aram, gathered sixteen kings against me: Bar Hadad and his army [and] all these kings laid siege against Hazrak, raising a wall higher than that of Hazrak, and building a ditch beneath the wall. Thereupon I raised my hands toward Baalshamin and Baalshamin heard me, telling me, by means of oracles: "Have no fear! For I have caused you to rule. I will be with you and will free you from all these kings who have laid siege against you."[5]

A similar role for deity in the prosecution of war may be seen as well in Babylonian, Assyrian, Hittite, and Persian documents.[6]

Like other nations of the ancient Near East, ancient Israel had a sacral ideology of war. The Lord himself is described as a warrior and "the Lord strong and mighty … in battle" (Psalm 24:8): "The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name" (Exodus 15:3; see Isaiah 42:13).[7] The wars that Israel fought were "the battles of the Lord" (1 Samuel 18:17); indeed, among the lost books of ancient Israel is "the Book of the Wars of the Lord" (Numbers 21:14).[8] The enemies of Israel were the enemies of the Lord (see Judges 5:31; 1 Samuel 30:26), and the Lord assisted Israel in battle (see Joshua 10:11; 24:12; 1 Samuel 17:45). The Lord was consulted (see Judges 20:23, 28; 1 Samuel 14:37) and sacrifices were offered (see 1 Samuel 7:9; 13:9, 12) before hostilities were initiated. When Israel went to war, its army was called "the people of the Lord," "the people of God" (Judges 20:2), "the armies of the living God" (1 Samuel 17:26), or "the Lord's divisions."[9]

Combatants in the Israelite armies were expected to be in a state of ritual cleanness at the time that they went out to battle. Thus, Joshua told the camp of Israel, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you" (Joshua 3:5). Moses warned every member of the camp, "Keep away from everything impure when you are encamped against your enemies" (Deuteronomy 23:9; see 23:10-15). Specific requirements mentioned in connection with warfare in ancient Israel included fasting (see Judges 20:26; 1 Samuel 7:6; 14:24)[10] as well as abstinence from marital relations (see 2 Samuel 11:11).[11]

God insisted on strict observance of his commands when Israel was going to war. The consequences for violations could be devastating: defeat in battle could only be rectified by the punishment of the wrongdoer, or rejection by the Lord. Thus, following a most unexpected rout of the Israelites at Ai, Joshua lay prostrate before the Ark "until the evening" in order to learn from the Lord the cause of their defeat (see Joshua 7:6). Joshua was told that "Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions" (Joshua 7:11). Following a detailed plan that the Lord gave (and one that, interestingly, provides us with some of our best information about the tribal, clan, and familial structure of ancient Israel), Joshua was able to discover the wrongdoer, who confessed to having taken "a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels" (Joshua 7:21). He was stoned along with the rest of his family, then burned with the stolen goods. Only then were the Israelites able to defeat the people of Ai (see Joshua 8).

Similarly, the Lord rejected Saul as king because he kept back some of the spoil from the defeat of the Amlekites (see 1 Samuel 15). Just as the Lord would direct the righteous Israelites in their battles against their enemies, he would also punish a straying Israel through war (see Isaiah 5:26-28; Jeremiah 5:15-17; Ezekiel 21; 23:22-28). Indeed, the language of war is used to depict the judgment of God (see Joel 2:1-11).

Confidence and certainty of victory were to be the hallmarks of the armies of Israel, *since* "the hand of the Lord" had delivered the enemy into their hands (Joshua 8:1, 18; see Judges 3:28; 4:7; 7:9, 15; 1 Samuel 23:4). Indeed, faith was an indispensable concomitant of success in conflict. At the battle of Ai, the Lord told Joshua, "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged…. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land" (Joshua 8:1; cf. Joshua 10:8, 25).

Those soldiers who were fearful and lacked the necessary faith were to be sent away. As Gideon made preparations for battle against the Midianites, the Lord told him, "You have too many men for me to deliver Midian

into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her, announce now to the people, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.' So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained" (Judges 7:2-3, but see Deuteronomy 20:8). During battle itself, the Lord, fighting for Israel, called the elements of nature into service. Thus Joshua, recounting some of the mighty deeds that God had performed on behalf of Israel, said, "When [the children of Israel] cried to the Lord for help, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians; he brought the sea over them and covered them. You saw with your own eyes what I did to the Egyptians" (Joshua 24:7; see also Joshua 10:11; Judges 5:20; 1 Samuel 7:10). He would throw the enemy into confusion, even striking a "divine terror" into them (1 Samuel 14:15).

The Book of Mormon reflects a sacral ideology of war similar to that found both in Israel and in the ancient Near East.[12] Before going into the wilderness to retrieve the Nephites taken captive there, Zoram, the "chief captain over the armies of the Nephites" (Alma 16:5), and his two sons, Lehi and Aha, inquired of the high priest Alma,

> having heard that he had the spirit of prophecy, therefore they went unto him and desired of him to know whither the Lord would that they should go into the wilderness in search of their brethren, who had been taken captive by the Lamanites. And it came to pass that Alma inquired of the Lord concerning the matter. And Alma returned and said unto them: Behold, the Lamanites will cross the river Sidon in the south wilderness, away up beyond the borders of the land of Manti. And behold there shall ye meet them, on the east of the river Sidon, and there the Lord will deliver unto thee thy brethren who have been taken captive by the Lamanites.... They came upon the armies of the Lamanites, and the Lamanites were scattered and driven into the wilderness; and they took their brethren who had been taken captive by the Lamanites, and there was not one soul of them had been lost that were taken captive. (Alma 16:5-6, 8.)

This passage is of interest not only because it reflects the desire of a military leader to consult the Lord (as in the case of ancient Israel, through his priests) before entering battle, but also because the Lord is seen as the moving agent in this military undertaking. Similarly, the great captain Moroni,

> knowing of the prophecies of Alma, sent certain men unto him, desiring him that he should inquire of the Lord whither the armies of the Nephites should go to defend themselves against the Lamanites. And it came to pass that the word of the Lord came unto Alma, and Alma informed the messengers of Moroni, that the armies of the Lamanites were marching round about in the wilderness, that they might come over into the land of Manti, that they might commence an attack upon the weaker part of the people. And those messengers went and delivered the message unto Moroni. (Alma 43:23-24; see 48:16; cf. 1 Kings 22:1-28.)

The story of the Ammonite stripling soldiers is also striking for its religious content: the young men, who entered into a covenant with God (Alma 53:17), were not only "exceedingly valiant for courage, and also for strength and activity" (Alma 53:20), but their lives reflected outstanding purity. "They were men who were true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted. Yea, they were men of truth and soberness, for they had been taught to keep the commandments of God and to walk uprightly before him" (Alma 53:20-21). The word *stripling* in Alma 53:22 and 56:57 is itself interesting, since it is used only of these young men and only of men who were old enough to be conscripted, roughly parallel to the use in the Old Testament of the Hebrew word *bahur* and *nacar* for young men who have attained the age to enter the military.[13] The young men were, so far as we can tell, not married, thus enabling them to maintain the prohibition against contact with women for warriors involved in hostilities. Their protection in war was attributed directly to the manner of their lives.

Just as the Nephites inquired of the Lord before entering battle, expected his aid, and purified themselves — ethically, and perhaps ritually—the Lord's departure from the midst of their armies portended disaster. Mormon 2-6, surely some of the most heartrending chapters in all of scripture, provide ample proof of that. Hopeful that God would aid the Nephites in their struggle against the Lamanites, Mormon assumed the generalship of their armies. Soon, however, Mormon realized that his hope was "vain, for their sorrowing was not unto repentance, because of the goodness of God; but it was rather the sorrowing of the damned, because the Lord would not always suffer them to take happiness in sin" (Mormon 2:13). He takes an oath no longer to lead them, but finally "repents of the oath" and returns to command the army once again. Mormon has no expectation of victory, though, since God was no longer with his people because of their wickedness and hardheartedness, despite their boasts "in their own strength," and despite their oaths "before the heavens that they would avenge themselves of the blood of their brethren who had been slain by their enemies" (Mormon 3:9).

Without faith, all of these boasts were vain: God offers no promise of victory to armies that neither heed his word nor keep his commandments; without God, boasts of victory are no more than fustian. The final battle at Cumorah simply validates the principle given already to the ancient Israelites: through war, and by the wicked, God will punish his people. "The judgments of God will overtake the wicked; and it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished; for it is the wicked that stir up the hearts of the children of men unto bloodshed" (Mormon 4:5). Their battle fury, "as a man who is drunken with wine" (Ether 15:22), is redolent of the "wolfish rage" of the Homeric warrior, the *amoq* (amuck) of the Malaysian hero, or the frenzy of the Germanic *berserkr* or Celtic fighter when he is possessed.[14]

Wars of Annihilation: "Consecration" in Israel and the Case of Ammonihah

Provided for in the framework of Israel's sacred ideology of war is the total annihilation of cities and peoples, represented in Hebrew by *hrm* and words that derive from the same root, which may be defined as "to consecrate a city and its inhabitants to destruction; carry out this destruction; totally annihilate a population in war."[15] Thus, in 1 Samuel 15:3, Samuel commanded King Saul in the name of the Lord to "go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." His failure to do so resulted in his rejection as king. In his review of God's acts on behalf of Israel, Moses emphasized the totality of destruction when he recounted, "Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz. And the Lord our God delivered him before us; and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people. And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city, we left none to remain" (Deuteronomy 2:32-34; see Numbers 21:2-3; 1 Chronicles 4:41).

The closest parallel to this practice in the ancient Near East (etymologically and geographically, if not also phenomenologically), is that found in the Mesha Inscription: "Chemosh spoke to me: Go, take Nebo from Israel! Then I went by night and fought against Nebo from daybreak to noon. And I took it and totally destroyed 7,000 citizens and aliens, male and female together with female slaves; for I had consecrated it to Ashtar-Chemosh for destruction. Then I took thence the vessels of Yahweh and brought them before Chemosh."[16] In an inscription originating in Marib in the ancient South Arabian kingdom of Saba, there is mention of the slaughter of officers and soldiers along with their wives on the basis of a vow made before battle. Further, among the pre-Islamic Arabs, the Ghassanid prince al-Harit ibn ͨAmr is reported to have burned his enemies to the last man while invoking the gods, while the same is said to have been done by Ibn Saͨ ud, a member of the strict Muslim sect of Wahhabis. Further examples of the ritual destruction of populations can also be found in antiquity among the Greeks, Romans, Celts, and Germans.[17]

The destruction of Ammonihah is tersely recorded in Alma 16:2-3, 9-11:

> The armies of the Lamanites had come in upon the wilderness side, into the borders of the land, even into the city of Ammonihah, and began to slay the people and destroy the city. And now it came to pass, before the Nephites could raise a sufficient army to drive them out of the land, they had destroyed the people who were in the city of Ammonihah, and also some around the borders of Noah, and taken others captive into the wilderness.... And the people of Ammonihah were destroyed; yea, every living soul of the Ammonihahites was destroyed, and also their great city, which they said God could not destroy, because of its greatness. But behold, in one day it was left desolate; and the carcasses were mangled by dogs and wild beasts of the wilderness. Nevertheless, after many days their dead bodies were heaped up upon the face of the earth, and they were covered with a shallow covering. And now so great was the scent thereof that the people did not go in to possess the land of Ammonihah for many years. And it was called Desolation of Nehors; for they were of the profession of Nehor, who were slain; and their lands remained desolate.

This description of the destruction of Ammonihah—which must truly be called annihilation, like the "consecration" in ancient Israel—shocking as it is, squares well with other accounts of what might be called "civicide" (i.e., the annihilation of cities and, sometimes, genocide) from Asian and European annals. Josephus reports that piles of corpses could be seen in many of the cities of Judaea that the Romans had reduced during the Jewish Rebellion.[18] In the ancient Near East, the Assyrians were particularly notorious for their ferocity and systematic destructions. They would annihilate "every living thing in the lands they conquered, sowing fields with salt, like the Romans, and flooding the sites of cities they destroyed to convert them into uninhabitable wastelands."[19] Some contend, however, that the Assyrians were actually no more destructive or brutal than others in the ancient Near East, but aimed as their major purpose to terrorize their enemies into submission.[20] A similar policy was also to be found among the Aztecs.[21]

Two letters from the third millennium B.C. Mesopotamian city of Mari illustrate how unemotionally such destructions could be described. Isme-dagan writes to Yasmah-adad: "All the soldiers of the tribe of Ya'linu assembled under the command of Mar-addu to wage war. We had a battle at Tu[ ]wi and I won. Mar-addu and all the members of the tribe of Ya'linu were killed, and all his slaves and soldiers were killed."[22] The Egyptians, too, could display similarly destructive capacities in war. A report on Thutmose I indicates that "he hath overthrown the chief of the Nubians; the Negro is helpless, defenceless in his grasp.... There is not a remnant among the Curly-Haired, who come to attack him; there is not a single survivor among them."[23] The hordes of Chinghiz Khan reduced numerous cities in the Kingdom of Samarkand — Samarkand, Merv, Herat, Bukhara — to rubble and left only a handful of survivors, or no survivors at all.[24]

The grisly details of corpses and bones in the account in Alma 16 have parallels as well. The medieval traveler Joinville, traveling through Asia on the way to the court of the "cham of Tartary," saw huge mounds of bones along the path of Tartar conquest.[25] Similar scenes were reported in Russia following the tremendous battles between the Russian and Mongol armies from the same period of time: skulls and bones were to be seen everywhere. Where burying the bodies had not been possible, the armies had simply heaped them up in great piles. In our own century, eyewitnesses in the western Soviet Union in 1941 reported on the piles of corpses and the unbearable stench after the SS *Einsatzgruppen* (Mobile Killing Units) finished their grisly task of shooting hundreds of thousands of Jews who had been living there.[26]

One final point on the destruction of Ammonihah deserves mention. While the record is clear that the inhabitants of Ammonihah were totally destroyed, it carefully— and consciously — interweaves that story with the account of the rescue of those from the districts surrounding Ammonihah, who were safely brought home by Zoram and his sons, Lehi and Aha, without the loss of the life of a single captive, after Zoram and his sons had consulted with Alma. The implication of the story seems clear: while those who persecute the righteous (as the Ammonihahites had) will suffer, those who seek the counsel of prophets will be blessed and protected.

Wars of Destruction: Genocide or Political Dissolution?

The very uniqueness of the destruction of Ammonihah suggests that carrying out the complete annihilation of a city or people was not a general practice among the Nephites as it was among the Israelites, according to Deuteronomy 20 and the record of the Conquest. Further, wars of complete mutual annihilation, recorded in terrifying detail about the Jaredites in the book of Ether, do not hold true for the Nephites.

Although as a nation the Nephites were dissolved in the tragic denouement of the Book of Mormon, individual Nephites, who "mixed" through intermarriage with the Lamanites or "dissented" to them, forfended their total dissolution as a race or ethnic group. Mormon, in a letter to his son Moroni, wrote that "if it so be that they perish, we know that many of our brethren have deserted over unto the Lamanites, and many more will also desert over unto them" (Moroni 9:24). At another point, Mormon indicates that "all my people, save it were those twenty and four who were with me, and also a few who had escaped into the south countries, and a few who had deserted over unto the Lamanites, had fallen" (Mormon 6:15). Similarly, in the book of Helaman, the varied fate of the Nephites, including both death and absorption into Lamanite society, is emphasized:

> They have been handed down from one generation to another by the Nephites, even until they have fallen into transgression and have been murdered, plundered, and hunted, and driven forth, and slain, and scattered upon the face of the earth, and mixed with the Lamanites until they are no more called the Nephites, becoming wicked, and wild, and ferocious, yea, even becoming Lamanites. (Helaman 3:16.)

The sacred was an essential element of warfare in the Book of Mormon, as it was in ancient Israel and in the ancient Near East. Wars were carried out under the direction of, and with the approval of, God. Military leaders sought the guidance of the prophet. The soldiers were expected to be pure ethically and morally and to show courage and full trust in the Lord. When they ceased to have these qualities, victory was no longer assured. When they reached a sufficient level of wickedness, their defeat was certain. While armies through history have shared some of these elements, other elements were particularly characteristic of antiquity and in the ancient Near East. We should expect to find them in the Book of Mormon as well (since it derives, ultimately, from the ancient Near East), and we do.

Notes

[1.] Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel,* 2 vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 1:258; Dino Merli, "Le 'Guerre di sterminio' nell'antichitî orientale e biblica," *Bibbia e Oriente* 9 (1967): 57-66.

[2.] James Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament,* 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 267.

[3.] See ibid., 480-81, 611-13.

4. John Wilson, "The Texts of the Battle of Kadesh," *American Journal of Semitic Languages* 43 (1927): 266-87.

5. H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische and Aramäische Inschriften*, 3 vols. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1969), 2:204-5; compare Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 205.

6. Merli, "Le 'Guerre di sterminio,' " 57-66.

7. The majority of biblical quotations in this chapter are from the New International Version of the Holy Bible.

8. Millard C. Lind, *Yahweh Is a Warrior* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1980), 23-34.

9. See de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 2:258-59.

10. Compare Friedrich Schwally, *Semitische Kriegsaltertümer: I. Der heilige Krieg im alten Israel* (Leipzig: Töpelmann, 1901), 50-51. Although fasting is mentioned on numerous occasions in the Book of Mormon, it is not cited in connection with preparations for war (see Stephen D. Ricks, "Fasting in the Book of Mormon and the Bible," in *The Book of Mormon: The Keystone Scripture* [Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1988], 127-36).

11. Schwally, *Semitische Kriegsaltertümer*, 60-66.

12. While such a statement could certainly be construed as an apologia for the internal claims of the Book of Mormon, i.e., that it is both ancient and derives, ultimately, from an ancient Near Eastern milieu, the statement need not be understood in that manner, nor is it here intended as such. Just as such comparisons are made in biblical studies primarily to elucidate the text of the Bible, with no apologetic agenda intended, so the same may be done in the case of the Book of Mormon. I am interested here in better understanding the text of the Book of Mormon through cultural contextualization and not in "proving" its antiquity by adducing parallels between it and the ancient Near East (something I take as a given, much as biblical scholars accept the antiquity of the Bible, though they may disagree on the age of individual texts). Indeed, given the internal claims of the Book of Mormon that it originates in the ancient Near East, we should be surprised if it did not contain parallels from that area of the world.

13. See J. Macdonald, "The Status and Role of Naᶜar in Israelite Society," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 35 (1976): 147-70; Ze'eb Weisman, "The Nature and Background of Bahur in the Old Testament," *Vetus Testamentum* 31 (1981): 441-50; and H. F. Fuhs, *"naᶜar"* in G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, eds., *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1986), 5:515-16.

14. *Iliad* 9:239, 305; Bruce Lincoln, "Wolfish Rage," *Indogermanische Forschungen* 80 (1975): 98-105; Hans Kuhn, "Kämpen und Berserker," in *Kleine Schriften* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1971), 521-31; Otto Hšfler, "Berserker," in Johannes Hoops, ed., *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1976), 2:298304; Klaus von See, "Berserker," *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Wortforschung* 17/3 (1961): 129-35; Hermann Güntert, *Über altisl&ndische Berserkergeschichten* (Heidelberg: J. Hörning, 1912).

[15.] N. Lohfink, *"haram,"* in G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, tr. David E. Green, 5 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1986), 5:188.

[16.] Donner and Röllig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften*, 2:169.

[17.] Aeschines, Against Ctesiphon 107-12; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* II, 10; Diodorus Siculus, Library of History V, 27; Julius Caesar, *Gallic War* VI, 17; Strabo, *Geography* VII, 2, 3; Orosius, *History* V, 16, 5; Tacitus, *Annals* XIII, 57; see further Lohfink, *"haram,"* 191; Friedrich Schwally, *Semitische Kriegsaltertümer*, 34-42; K. Hofmann, "Anathema," in Theodor Klauser, ed., Reallexikon für Antike and Christentum (Stuttgart: Heinzelmann, 1950), 1:427.

[18.] Josephus, *Wars of the Jews* II, 18, 20.

[19.] Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites*, vol. 5 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1988), 236.

[20.] Gerhard Hasel, *The Remnant* (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1972), 97-98; and Wolfram von Soden, "Die Assyrer und der Krieg," *Iraq* 25 (1963): 131-44.

[21.] Ross Hassig, *Aztec Warfare: Imperial Expansion and Political Control* (Norman, Oklahoma: Oklahoma University Press, 1988), 17- 26, 111-14, 119-21, with specific historic references given in the latter part of the book, especially 125-235.

[22.] Albert Glock, *Warfare in Mari and Early Israel* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1973), 177-78.

[23.] James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 2:30.

[24.] David Morgan, *The Mongols* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 73-79, points out that the number of casualties the Mongols inflicted may have been substantially less than has previously been supposed and that the destruction of certain cities did not also result in a full-scale annihilation of their inhabitants.

[25.] Lord John of Joinville, *Memoirs of Louis IX, King of France*, in Lord John of Joinville, *Chronicles of the Crusades* (London: Bohn, 1848), 476, cited by Nibley in *The World of the Jaredites*, 237.

[26.] Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 3 vols. (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1985), 1:323-24

The Sons of Mosiah:
Emissaries of Peace

John A. Tvedtnes

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). Jesus repeated this beatitude from the Sermon on the Mount during his visit to the Nephites (see 3 Nephi 12:9). It should be read in the context of a passage from Isaiah: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth" (Isaiah 52:7).

This verse is cited in 1 Nephi 13:37 and 3 Nephi 20:40 and has generally been tied to missionary work. It implies that bringing the gospel ("good tidings") is a means of establishing peace. Abinadi, when asked to explain it (see Mosiah 12:20-21), tied it to Isaiah 53:8-10 (or Mosiah 14:810), explaining that the "seed" of Christ are his followers and that they are the ones who publish peace and bring good tidings (see Mosiah 15:10-18). Thus, Abinadi confirmed Christ's statement that those who establish peace are the children of God.

Jesus noted that the "children of the prophets" and of Abraham are the "seed" through which all the kindreds of the earth are to be blessed, through preaching the gospel (see 3 Nephi 20:25-27). He then quoted Isaiah 52:7 (3 Nephi 20:40). A similar thought is found in Doctrine and Covenants 98:16: "Therefore, renounce war and proclaim peace, and seek diligently to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children."

Alma the Younger, speaking of his conversion and that of his friends, the sons of Mosiah, wrote of being "born of God" (Mosiah 27:23-31). The record then notes that he and the sons of Mosiah went about trying to repair the damage they had done to the Church (see Mosiah 27:3237). "And how blessed are they! For they did publish peace; they did publish good tidings of good; and they did declare unto the people that the Lord reigneth" (Mosiah 27:37). This is immediately followed by their request to Mosiah to allow them to go to teach the Lamanites.

The mission of the sons of Mosiah among the Lamanites has generally been seen as one of the greatest missionary efforts in the Book of Mormon. This is undoubtedly true. One cannot diminish the importance of the spiritual conversion of many thousands of Lamanites to the gospel and of the miracles and faith that accompanied that conversion.

There is, however, another aspect to the mission that is generally overlooked. It is that the Nephite princes were seeking a means whereby their nation could be relieved of the burden of war with their Lamanite neighbors. Mosiah's sons

> returned to their father, the king, and desired of him that he would grant unto them … that they might impart the word of God to their brethren, the Lamanites — that perhaps they might bring them to the knowledge of the Lord their God, and convince them of the iniquity of their fathers; that perhaps they might cure them of their hatred towards the Nephites, that they might also be brought to rejoice in the Lord their God, that they might become friendly to one another, and that there should be no more contentions in all the land. (Mosiah 28:1-2.)

The Book of Mormon stresses that they were going to "a people who delighted in murdering the Nephites, and robbing and plundering them" (Alma 17:14). Many long years of war had taken their toll on the Nephites. Taking young men away from agricultural and other pursuits for military service undoubtedly had an adverse effect on the economy, in addition to the loss of life. If the sons of Mosiah could somehow change the hatred of the Lamanites for the Nephites to an acceptance of the Nephites as brothers in the gospel, this would certainly improve the lot of both peoples.

That the emissaries had a measure of success in establishing peace is evidenced in a number of ways. First, we note that prosperity returned to the Nephites during the absence of the sons of Mosiah. The resulting pride and wickedness prompted Alma to relinquish his position as chief judge to go and preach to the people. Indeed, there were but few Lamanite attacks during this period. And Nephite dissenters led those of which we do read! Even the very lengthy and costly war recorded in the last chapters of Alma — after the sons of Mosiah had returned home with their converts — was instigated by defectors from Nephite ranks.

The success of the Nephite missionaries is summed up as follows:

> Thousands were brought to the knowledge of the Lord, yea, thousands were brought to believe in the traditions of the Nephites.... For they became a righteous people; they did lay down the weapons of their rebellion, that they did not fight against God any more, neither against any of their brethren.... These are they that laid down the weapons of the rebellion, yea, all their weapons of war.... And they began to be a very industrious people; yea, and they were friendly with the Nephites; therefore they did open a correspondence[1] with them. (Alma 23:5, 7, 13, 18.)

When the unconverted Lamanites, led by Nephite dissenters, massed to attack the new converts, "there was not one soul among all the people who had been converted unto the Lord that would take up arms against their brethren; nay, they would not even make any preparations for war" (Alma 24:6). Indeed, they buried their weapons and covenanted not to shed blood (see Alma 24:17-19).

Apparently, the major factor that led the sons of Mosiah to hope they could establish peace through preaching the gospel was that the Lamanites were known for keeping their covenants. For example, at the time Limhi became king in the land of Nephi, the king of the Lamanites covenanted with him that his people would not slay the Nephites (see Mosiah 19:25). When the Lamanites believed that Limhi's people had broken their covenant by stealing Lamanite brides, they went to war (see Mosiah 20). But the Lamanite king, when convinced that the Nephites were innocent, repeated his earlier oath (see Mosiah 20:24), which his people reluctantly kept (see Mosiah 21:3). During the great wars of a generation later, the Nephites were willing to spare Lamanites who swore an oath of peace with them (see Alma 44:2-14; 62:16-17, 27-30).

In the battle of Lamanites against their pacific brethren, the unconverted fellow Lamanites slew many because they would not defend themselves. As more Lamanites saw the faith of the converts, they, too, buried their weapons of war (see Alma 25:14). In consequence, "Ammon, and Aaron, and Omner, and Himni, and their brethren did rejoice exceedingly, for the success which they had among the Lamanites" (Alma 25:17). This success was measured not only in spiritual terms, but in the fact that a large number of Lamanites were no longer willing to wage war. Ammon noted, "For if we had not come up out of the land of Zarahemla, these our dearly beloved brethren, who have so dearly beloved us, would still have been racked with hatred against us, yea, and they would also have been strangers to God" (Alma 26:9).

Ammon appears to stress the trade-off of war for peace more than the spiritual aspects of the Lamanite conversion. He further noted that the converts would rather sacrifice their own lives than to take up arms against others (see Alma 26:31-34). The converted Lamanites settled in the Nephite land of Jershon, "and they did look upon shedding the blood of their brethren with the greatest abhorrence; and they never could be prevailed upon to take up arms against their brethren" (Alma 27:28). Clearly, the missionaries from Zarahemla had accomplished a political, as well as a spiritual, miracle.

Subsequent missionaries to the Lamanites followed the same pattern. When "the Nephites greatly feared that the Zoramites would enter into a correspondence with the Lamanites," Alma decided to follow the method already proven successful by the sons of Mosiah (some of whom he took with him on his mission to the Zoramites). We read: "As the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just—yea, it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, which had happened unto them—therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God" (Alma 31:5). The effect of the preaching of Nephi and Lehi (sons of Helaman) among the Lamanites is recorded in Helaman 5:51-52: "As many as were convinced did lay down their weapons of war, and also their hatred and the traditions of their fathers. And it came to pass that they did yield up unto the Nephites the lands of their possession."

This last example in particular brought general peace, free trade, and prosperity (see Helaman 6:7-13). From the text itself, we can see that one of the primary goals of the Nephite missionaries to the Lamanites was to pacify neighboring enemies. They did this by disabusing them of the "traditions of their fathers," by which the Lamanites believed that the Nephites had wronged them. These traditions were replaced by the "traditions of the Nephites," that is, the teachings concerning God and the Christ to come. In this manner, the message of the Prince of Peace truly brought peace to peoples who were otherwise enemies.[2]

Notes

[1.] Some have suggested that the word "correspondence" implies that the Lamanites had opened trade relations with the Nephites. This is highly unlikely, however. When, at length, the converted Lamanites, led by Ammon and his brethren, fled their land, their king expressed fear that, if they went to Zarahemla, the Nephites would destroy them (see Alma 27:5-7). The sons of Mosiah went ahead of the group to determine if they would be welcome. Had there been regular contact between the two groups, they would have known that they would be welcome and could at least have sent messages in advance of their departure. Alma's surprise at seeing his friends again and learning of their successful mission is further evidence that there had been no communication between the Nephite and Lamanite peoples (see Alma 17:1-4; 27:16-20). According to Alma 24:7-9, the "correspondence" was with the Nephite missionaries who had accompanied Ammon and his brethren.

[2.] In Mosiah 29:14, we read that Mosiah taught the commandments of God and established peace, so that there would be no wars or contentions in the land. Here, too, there is a direct tie between teaching the gospel and establishing peace.

Warfare and the Book of Mormon

Hugh Nibley

Karl von Clausewitz's great work *Vom Kriege*, or *On* War, has been the Bible of the military for 150 years. The Book of Mormon reads as if it were written by a diligent student of this work. This is another case of Joseph Smith's timing to the split second, because the work wasn't published until 1833. Otherwise, you could accuse him of stealing the whole thing, because it's right out of Clausewitz, who was very active in the Napoleonic Wars. I'm going to read his principal maxims from his two-volume work—the great maxims of war; and you will think of some instances from the Book of Mormon just like those. I could mention a couple and draw out my speech. But one sentence would be enough to show modern applications, because if you've been reading the newspapers or the magazines, you'll know how relevant this all is.

The most famous saying of Clausewitz, the one that everybody knows by heart, is that "War is therefore a continuation of [state] policy by other means." As he puts it elsewhere, "[War] is ... a continuation of political intercourse ... by other means."[1] He is strictly a soldier, dealing only with the technical side, only with how war is conducted. He says he's not going to talk about the causes in the background. And there he spills the beans. This points directly to the causes — the continuation of politics. The Book of Mormon begins with the war in Jerusalem and ends with the war at Cumorah; and in between there are a lot of wars. They all deal with political ambition. We don't have to go into Egypt, Babylonia, and Jerusalem to illustrate this, because we see the territorial ambitions and the political ambitions of Zerahemnah, Amulon, Amalickiah, Ammoron, Laman, Nehor, Zeezrom, Korihor, etc. They were men of political ambitions who wanted to get ahead. They started out with political parties and ended up uniting bodies in war, such as the great coalitions of Amalickiah. Of course we don't need to comment as far as the present world is concerned — what is cold war but politics being carried on? It's a political movement on both sides; it's political systems in conflict.

Another saying of Clausewitz is "War ... belongs not to the province of arts and sciences, but to that of social existence.... It would be better ... to liken it to business competition ... and it is still more like politics, which ... may be regarded as a kind of business competition on a great scale."[2] As I said, Clausewitz is writing back in the eighteenth century, during the Napoleonic Wars. His main study was wars of the eighteenth century, wars of the princes and kings following the grandeur of Louis the Great, "Le Grandeur." It was all-important to be grand. You had to annex as much land as you could, for example, as in the tripartition of Poland between the three great powers. You grabbed not only resources but also a lot of peasants or people, and these strengthened your army. They became your aggrandizement. They strengthened you and enabled you to make further sweeps, which occurred all throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Everybody grabbed as much land as they could, the princes doing it in the interest of the state. It was *ratio status*—that would justify anything. (In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the great industrial barons were after the same thing—land, because along with that came raw materials, cheap labor, and market.) And so it went on, the territorial wars. Clausewitz continues: "Moreover, politics is the womb in which war is developed." It is "business ... on a great scale."[3] Nothing describes these days better than that. We don't need to explain, do we?

"The disarming of the enemy — this object of war in the abstract, [is the] final means of attaining the political object."[4] In the Book of Mormon, Moroni often requires the enemy to lay down their arms and lets them go home. There are no reprisals or anything similar (see Alma 44:6, 15, 20; 52:37). The test comes when they lay down their arms — then they know your will has dominated over theirs. So Clausewitz says, the "disarming of the enemy— this

[is the] object of war."[5] Moroni was satisfied when the enemy laid down their arms. Likewise in the French and Indian Wars, and in the Mexican Wars, and in the last war when the German and Japanese laid down their arms, the war was over.

Clausewitz's next maxim (and this is an interesting one, too) is "The aggressor always pretends to be peace-loving because he would like to achieve his conquests without bloodshed.... Therefore, aggression must be presented as a defensive reaction by the aggressor nation."[6] Nobody ever attacks. You're always just on the defensive. After World War I, the German War Office, *Kriegsamt*, changed its name to *Wehrmacht*, "defense power." We changed our War Office to the Department of Defense. We're just defensive now, that's all. Both sides must take the defensive position, whether they are aggressors or not. We see good examples in the Book of Mormon in the case of Giddianhi and Lachoneus. Giddianhi writes to Lachoneus, "We wouldn't bother you except you're infringing on our rights of government, our ancient society, which is old and venerable and you've been the aggressor against us" (cf. 3 Nephi 3:9-10). This is true, though; since the loser must always submit to the winner, each side is always fighting for its freedom. I don't want to submit to you and you don't want to submit to me, so I'm defending my freedom and you're defending your freedom. We have a Defense Department, if you please, all throughout the world.

"Those who belong to the profession," says Clausewitz, "will always look upon themselves as a kind of guild.... This corporate spirit ... must exist more or less in every army.... Military virtue is a quality of standing armies only."[7] It is professionalism that guarantees the ongoing tradition. But it's also a very dangerous thing: "It is impermissible and even harmful to leave a great military event ... to *purely military judgment*."[8] "The influence in the cabinet of any military man except the commander-inchief is extremely dangerous."[9] That's an interesting remark. It's not the business of military men to meddle in the higher policies of state. The chief military commander is the only one who should be in the cabinet; it's harmful and impermissible for the military to participate.

A good example is Moroni getting on his high horse when he writes to Pahoran. Speaking as a general in the midst of war, he blows his top and writes very indiscreet letters. He doesn't understand what is going on back home; he is writing to Pahoran about conditions he isn't aware of at all. He is going to take over: We'll come and seize the state. We'll expel you. I'll march with my men, and we'll unseat you (cf. Alma 60).

The first maxim is "It's politics by other means." The second maxim is "War is thus an act of force to compel our adversary to do our will.... War is nothing but a duel on a larger scale."[10] Alma fights Amlici face to face; that's the duel, but they represent the forces (see Alma 2:29). Amalickiah swears to drink Moroni's blood (see Alma 49:27; 51:9). Of course the classic is Shiz versus Coriantumr (see Ether 15:29-30). We still do the same today—we try to destabilize governments which do not favor us or which we do not favor, and we personify them in their leaders. The leader or whoever is in charge becomes the villain, and it becomes a personal duel between this president and that president, whoever they might be. Clausewitz goes on to say, "If the enemy should choose the method of the great decision by arms, our own method *must on that account be changed against our will to a similar one*."[11] What the enemy does, we must do. "If the enemy should choose the method" he's going to use, "of the great decision by arms," we can't do anything but reply in the same way. We must on that account, against our own will, adopt a similar method. Moroni repeatedly found that the enemy had copied his equipment and tactics. In war, armies come to look alike.

In another place Clausewitz says, "In modern times the armies of European states have arrived very much at a par in discipline and training."[12] You can see why: we can't allow the enemy to get any new gun —whether it's a

shepatovka, which we immediately adopted as a bazooka, or whether it's a Mark VI Panzer, which we immediately countered as a Pershing. We can't allow them to hold an edge, whether it's in the type of helmet or camouflage or anything else. We have to copy it if it works better than ours. So armies very quickly come to look exactly alike. Thus the duel, in which the parties are necessarily equal. There will be very little difference between them when they meet. That makes it all very destructive. When the Lamanites tried to encircle the Nephites with the same wine tricks the Nephites had tried, the Nephites then tried other tricks. But their tricks didn't work anymore, because the enemy knew them all by heart; both had adopted each other's methods.

Continuing on with the idea of the duel of the equal parts, Clausewitz writes, "The ruthless user of force who shrinks from no amount of bloodshed must gain an advantage if his opponent does not do the same."[13] Teancum and Amalickiah typify this principle. It's always the wicked against the wicked in the Book of Mormon, never the righteous against the wicked. In the duel between Amlici and Alma (see Alma 2:29-31), wasn't that a good guy against a bad guy? No, when the war was over they mourned terribly because they were convinced that the war had been because of their wickedness. They had brought it on themselves. They weren't fighting bad guys as good guys after all. In the same way, Mormon counsels, Don't worry about the wicked; surely the "judgments of God will overtake the wicked; and it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished" (Mormon 4:5).

Clausewitz describes the old-fashioned wars as punishment wars. We can't afford that luxury now. We must copy the enemy if he is bloody-minded. The Lord gives a rule right at the beginning of the Book of Mormon. The second chapter of the Book of Mormon states the wicked Lamanites "shall have no power over thy seed except they shall rebel against me also" (1 Nephi 2:23). When they fight, it is because they are both rebellious against God. Otherwise, there is going to be no fight. "They will have no power over thy seed unless they rebel against me also. I'll keep things going." That was the agreement, and it is repeated throughout the Book of Mormon.

Clausewitz continues: Because we're so equal, "the wastage of our own forces is always the greater the more our aim is directed toward destruction of the enemy's forces."[14] In other words, "the harder we try" — which is represented, of course, by the Book of Mormon's total extermination story, Shiz versus Coriantumr (see Ether 14:17-15:30). They exterminate each other, although such a thing can never happen, according to Clausewitz. But we know that such a thing can. It's kill or be killed. Teancum is an example (see Alma 51, 61, and 62), and the Nephites and the Lamanites, too. The Lamanites decidedly became completely disrupted at Cumorah, we are told, as well as the Nephites; but with that wastage, you must risk your own forces at whatever cost. If you're going to destroy, you must be destroyed. You must accept that, says Clausewitz. That's the rule.

"In the lower ranks the spirit of self-sacrifice is more required [than in others]."[15] You regulate the policy. The general is at a distance; we expect others to sacrifice. "Amalickiah [did not] come down out of the land of Nephi, at the head of his army.... He did care not for the blood of his people" (Alma 49:10). Such an attitude so shocks Moroni that he writes to Pahoran, "Can you think to sit on your thrones in a state of thoughtless stupor, while your enemies are spreading the work of death around you" (cf. Alma 60:7). They don't care for the lives of those on the front, and that's a policy which Clausewitz says you can't worry about. Self-sacrifice is what the soldiers are there for.

Then he goes on to the third rule: "We can never introduce a modifying principle into the philosophy of war without committing an absurdity.... War is an act of force, and there is no limit to the application of that force."[16] To talk about civilized warfare and the rules of warfare is ridiculous. If you're civilized, you won't start scratching and biting; you'll continue the discussion. And war is even worse. You try to kill the other person, and there's no limit to

that. Their death is what you're after. "To introduce a modifying principle is an absurdity." You can't modify it. There's no limit to the application of that force. Alma puts it very well when he says they had exhausted all their resource: "Whatever evil we cannot resist with our words, [then] let us resist them with our swords" (Alma 61:14). That means you must go all the way. There are no more rules in warfare — in "civilized" warfare. And the Lord says (a frequent expression), "Cursed shall be the land . . . unto destruction" (Alma 45:16). Brush-fire wars are out of the question.

At the end of World War II, the generals became very discouraged, because there was going to be no fighting for them. The war had been a lark for most of them. But then they discovered the concept of brush-fire wars and tried it out in Southeast Asia. I remember very well the day General Taylor, just glowing, discovered brush-fire wars; he explained how we could have little wars going on, so the military could get their promotions and always have opportunity for practice — send the officers out to get practice. It doesn't work that way. And this is why Clausewitz explains, "War and peace are ideas which fundamentally can have no gradations."[17] He goes on, "We need not lose sight of the absolute form of war. [War is all the way or nothing. There is no partial war]; rather [the] image [of absolute war] must constantly hover in the background."[18] After a great victory, Alma announces to the people, "I perceive that this very people, the Nephites, … shall become extinct" (Alma 45:10-11).

Clausewitz continues: In pursuing the aim of war, "there is only one means: *combat*…. All the effects manifested in [war] have their origin in combat."[19] Moroni, in combat, returns the sword to Zerahemnah. Zerahemnah didn't want to discuss terms anymore. Moroni invited him to take his sword back and continue fighting. That's all we can do — it's the only solution. Unless you choose to make a covenant of peace, you'll just have to go on fighting. Military combat is the only effective way — the pursuance of only one means. "All the effects manifested in [war] have their origin in combat." As Moroni hands Zerahemnah his sword back, he says, "We will end the conflict" — if you don't want to discuss it, there's nothing else to do (cf. Alma 44:10-11). Then the only reason, says Clausewitz, for "suspension of military action [is]0 … *to await a more favorable moment for action*."[20] When Zerahemnah puts up his sword, he is merely waiting for a more favorable time to strike back. He tells Moroni quite frankly to hand him back his sword and then adds, "We will not suffer ourselves to take an oath unto you, which we know that we shall break" (Alma 44:8-10). When he got his sword back, he immediately made a mad lunge for Moroni, only to have the top of his head cut off (see Alma 44:12). You suspend your action to wait for more action.

Again from Clausewitz: "The destruction of the enemy's armed forces is the foundation stone of all actions in war, the ultimate support of all combinations."[21] The theme is destruction, and the armed forces now of course extend to everybody. That was unthinkable at the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. Those were gentlemen's wars, but now everybody gets wiped out. The words "destruction" and "destroy" appear 534 times in the Book of Mormon, and nearly always in conjunction with the word *war*. Why with war? We're told that war and plague and pestilence and famine all go together, but the wars are the part you bring on yourselves. You cannot plead innocent victim as you can of famine and plague, for example. You invite war. In the army we were always told that our mission was to search and destroy. So Clausewitz says, "The soldier is levied, clothed, armed, trained — he sleeps, eats, drinks, marches — *merely to fight at the right place and the right time*."[22] That is the only reason for his existence — just to fight at the particular time and place. In World War II, only eight percent of the armed forces ever saw action. It was the cutting edge units that did the dirty work, and it was pretty nasty. All the others were just for the purpose of supporting them. That was their whole purpose and it still is — to destroy.

And so, quoting Clausewitz again, "If we speak of the destruction of the enemy's forces, we must expressly point out that nothing obliges us to confine this idea to the physical forces."[23] We try to break the enemy down

psychologically as well. But of course it was Clausewitz who introduced a doctrine of *Schrecklichkeit* — make yourself as terrible as possible — which the Germans applied so effectively in the first world war. Making yourself an object of utter terror is beautifully described in the Book of Mormon, as do the Lamanites on various occasions (see Enos 1:20; Mosiah 10:8; Alma 3:4-5), and also the Gadiantons in their various trappings (see 3 Nephi 4:7). They make themselves and their uniforms up as hideously as possible, like the trappings of the Middle Ages, which paralyzed resistance by fear. On July 4, 1944,; the Allies sent at least five thousand planes over Germany in one bunch to give a display of force. We thought that would show them. Well, people looked up once or twice but didn't pay any attention after that. The planes just went on and on, but who cared? It was a bore. As Tolstoy tells us, war is a crashing bore. All night long you pray for it to be day. All day long you pray for it to be night. That's the whole thing — search and destroy. But you can use more than the physical forces — you can employ Schrecklichkeit to make the soldiers objects of terror. Feudal trappings paralyze resistance and create fear. The Lamanites were especially good at that, specializing in it, and it sometimes worked rather well. But it didn't work when the Nephites were praying for the Lord to help them. The armies of Giddianhi — with the red on their foreheads, lambskins on their loins, and all that nonsense — thought they were praying because their fierce appearance had paralyzed the Nephites, but they were only supplicating the Lord for his protection (see 3 Nephi 4:8-10).

There is a fourth point, one on which Clausewitz lays very heavy emphasis. He very decisively states, "There is no other human activity that stands in such constant and universal contact with chance as does war."[24] "He who undertakes war ... must renounce every absolute certainty of a result."[25] Typical examples are found in Alma 49:10 and Alma 59:5-13, where Moroni, the great military genius, is caught flat-footed time and again. Coriantumr marches right into the center of Zarahemla, the capital city of Bountiful, catching the Nephites off guard; but in the end, he caught himself in a trap. When he tried to get out of the land, he found that the Nephites had put all their defenses on the periphery, and he couldn't get out (see Helaman 1:25-30). Everybody surprises everybody else in war; nobody is sure of anything. "War is therefore a chameleon," Clausewitz explains, "a strange trinity [three things make it up].... It is composed of [1] the original violence of its essence; [2] the hate and enmity which are to be regarded as blind, natural impulse; ... [3] the play of probabilities and chance, which make it a free activity of the emotions."[26] In other words, war is a madhouse. Those climactic pages of Mormon describe the final windup. Mormon prays for God to destroy them if they don't change their ways. They're so hopeless: "I saw that the day of grace was passed" (Mormon 2:15). The Nephites had reached the point of no return, and Mormon simply wished they'd get wiped out. There is nothing more terrifying than that, nor more vivid or to the point. It's like today's wars in Lebanon and Central America — madhouses, crazy scenes. "War, of all branches of human activity," says Clausewitz, is "most like a game of cards."[27] Again, only in Hollywood are we sure that the good guys are going to win.

One of the most famous phrases coined by Clausewitz, next to the one on war and politics, is "Three-fourths of the things upon which action in war is calculated lie hidden in a fog of uncertainty"[28]—the fog of battle. Fortunately I was in a position in the front in which I could see everything the Germans did while the battle was going on; all the general could do in his little tiny tent was pace back and forth and chew his nails. He tried to make contact with the walkie-talkie, but he never got through. Everything collapsed. As soon as the battle begins, nobody has any control. Nobody knows what anybody else is doing. I don't know if it would be so now. But you can imagine just a little technical flaw occurring, such as happens to our marvelous computers — how they can be jammed. How that will compound the fog of wars! So Clausewitz observes, "War ... is the province of chance.... It increases the uncertainty of every circumstance and deranges the course of events." He continues, "Differences of opinion are nowhere so great as in war [the generals never agree].... *Strength of character* leads to a degenerate form of [disagreement—which is sheer] *obstinacy*."[29] Arguments among the staff are terrible — Moroni versus Pahoran,

Patton versus Monty and Eisenhower (whose main job, his greatest achievement, was to reconcile clashing plans and personalities, prejudices and pride of the commanders). They never agreed on any plan, on any project, on anything else. Were you out in one of those CP's [command posts], you would hear them argue.

And finally, "We shall soon feel what a dangerous edifice war is, how easily it may fall to pieces and bury us in its ruins."[30] The Nazi SS learned in a hurry. Clausewitz explains, "Decision[s are based upon] reports [all of which have] been lies, exaggerations, and errors.... Most reports are false, and the timidity of men gives fresh force to lies and untruths." Note his frankness and honesty in these things. This is military "intelligence," part of a joke: "this difficulty of seeing things correctly ... is one of the greatest sources of friction in war"[31] among commanders. Thus Moroni has no idea what is happening to Pahoran, who is home with a rebellion on his hands, which could break everything up. When Pahoran writes back to Moroni and explains the situation, Moroni realizes he's had it all wrong from the beginning, yet he was as well informed as anyone (see Alma 61:1-62:1). What does a general do in a case like this? "War ... in its plan — is so often thwarted by [the] unexpected ... [that its conduct must] be left to talent [a person who has a genius for it. Frederick the Great and Napoleon had the genius. Of course, Clausewitz thought Napoleon was a great man, though he was really a great rascal], and less use can be made of a theoretical *guide* [in war] than in any other business."[32] So Clausewitz says to throw away the rule book. You must depend on the genius of the commander.

Of course that's what you learn from Tolstoy's *War and Peace.* Clausewitz says the thing that's surprising about war is that war is supremely simple. That is what fools everybody. That's why a talented genius, the most intelligent person, is not going to be the greatest general. You want a man like Suvarov who has the instinct to do the right thing and knows just what to do.

Here's another of Clausewitz's main doctrines, the central doctrine of strategy and tactics: "The defensive is the stronger form of [making] ... war.... It is ... contrary to the prevalent opinion— ... the defensive form of war is in the abstract stronger than the offensive. The absolute defense[, of course,] completely contradicts the conception of war."[33] "All the time which elapses [you spar for time you see] falls into the scale in favor of the defender."[34] Put confirmation off as long as you can. But of course "every defensive, according to its strength, will seek to change to the offensive."[35]

The defensive screen of the two thousand sons of Helaman is interesting. Helaman leads the Lamanite army on and on. Then finally the Nephites turn on their heels and attack and surprise the daylights out of the Lamanites (see Alma 56:30-54). That's why Clausewitz says, "It is extremely important always to bear in mind that almost the only advantage which the offensive possesses is the effect of surprise."[36] You have to be the innocent aggressor, yet you must make a surprise attack on someone; and there are many surprise attacks in the Book of Mormon.

"Every defensive, according to its strength, will seek to change to the offensive"[37]—as in the case of the two thousand sons, who turned suddenly in the opposite direction (see Alma 58:25-27). We claim defensive strategy today in Europe, Latin America, Africa, the Near East, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere, showing the flag; but armies don't exist to sit still. Their threatening presence and the power to destroy invite combat; it is a challenge to action in the medieval sense.

So Clausewitz says, "The negative effort ... must prefer a bloodless decision."[38] And "the only ... advantage of the negative object is [to] delay ... [a] decision."[39] It's game to switch to war after all. You can stall all you want, "but

everything is subject to a supreme law: *The decision by arms.*[40] Clausewitz underlines that. "When this is actually demanded by the enemy, such an appeal can never be refused [so it will make the war inevitable].... Accordingly, among all the objects which may be sought in war, the destruction of the enemy's forces appears always to be the one that overrules all others."[41] No matter how you spar, no matter how you wait, no matter how long you delay, no matter how strong your defensive position, this will be your objective — sooner or later you must destroy the enemy. But let him destroy himself. This is not what the Ammonites practiced, but it leads to the policy adopted by the Generalstab in World War II in the blitzkrieg. The blitzkrieg is strictly Clausewitz; that's where it came from. "No conquest can be finished too soon." Don't drag it out. But wars always do drag out, and that's the problem. Six-week wars always turn out to be five-year wars. "No conquest can be finished too soon; ... spreading it over a *greater period of time* makes it more *difficult*.... A speedy and uninterrupted effort toward a decision is essential to [an] offensive war."[42] "Until it [the final result] takes place nothing is decided, nothing won [you may be winning up to the final last minute, and then something will happen and you'll be defeated — that's happened], nothing lost.... The end crowns the work. War is an indivisible whole."[43]

At Cumorah, both lost (see Mormon 6:2-22; 8:2). This would be inconceivable to Clausewitz, who says, "Once the great victory is gained, there should be no talk of rest, of pausing for breath, ... or of consolidating, ... but only of pursuit."[44] That's the fatal flaw, because every campaign has to slow down somewhere, as ours did in World War II. We could have attacked the Germans very easily, had it not been for our gasoline supplies. Patton couldn't get the gasoline because Monty wanted it, and there was a big fight between them. "Beware ... of confusing the spirit of an army with its morale."[45] "The highest spirit in the world changes only too easily at the first check into depression."[46] There is always such a check, and that comes in the Book of Mormon, too, when the tide suddenly turns.

Clausewitz's last principle is important: "War is never an isolated act. In the real world, war never breaks out suddenly, and it does not spread immediately."[47] He observes that the modern world, and modern wars, are different. On this point Clausewitz is wrong. He saw that principle in the princes' wars, the gentlemen's wars, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but the nineteenth. and twentieth century wars are something different. And for a good reason, which still applies: "Human organizations" have, because of their inefficiency, "always fall[en] short." There are always the bungling, misunderstanding, and deficiencies. You never get things mobilized instantly, "and these deficiencies, operative on both sides, become a modifying influence."[48] That's why we have cold wars, and the Book of Mormon proceedings of men aspiring for position. The Nephite-Lamanite wars were sometimes raids, a very common thing. All wars are raids anyway. When Zoram went out, he said it was to obtain those who had been carried away captive into the wilderness. His whole purpose was to get them back, and he did get them back (see Alma 16:6-8). Incidentally, in talking about the defense, the best position, remember that all Book of Mormon wars take place on Nephite property, not on Lamanite. They rarely invade the other. The Nephites are rarely the aggressors, in that sense.

On that point, Clausewitz says something that will amuse us: "If the wars of civilized nations are far less cruel and destructive than those of the uncivilized, the cause lies in the social conditions of these states, internally and in their relations with each other."[49] The various documentaries on TV show that animals and savages do fight, but they know when to stop—before everybody is killed! We don't, as we find in the Asiatic exterminations, among the Jaredites (see Ether 15:25, 29-32), and so forth. They were what Clausewitz had in mind. Thinking of certain wars in Russia, he says they are unthinkable in our society because you can't exterminate a whole nation; a thing like that is out of the question. Yet what is the expression used in the Book of Mormon? "[When] the time ... come[s]

that the voice of this people should choose iniquity, … [or] fall into transgression, they would be ripe for destruction" (Alma 10:19). And when the cup is full, they shall be "swept off from the face of the land" (Jarom 1:3), and "ye shall become extinct" (3 Nephi 3:8).

Then Clausewitz says, "Since Bonaparte, war … has approached much nearer to its real nature, to its absolute perfection."[50] The Napoleonic Wars were the real wars: "The most violent element of war, freed from all conventional restrictions, broke loose with all its natural force."[51] This is the way it should be. Mormon says, "from this time forth … the Nephites … began to be swept off by them even as a dew before the sun" (Mormon 4:18). It was a total thing. "The most violent element of war," like a violent "natural force," like a plague sweeping the nation, simply appeared. When "freed from all conventional restrictions, [it] broke loose with all its natural force." That's what happens: war is absolute; war is basic. There are no rules or other restraints; war is much nearer to real nature in absolutes. Bonaparte put the whole nation in arms, and since then it's been the nation with arms. Operation Barbarosa, in June 1941, when Hitler entered Russia, took almost a third of Russia in two weeks, a terrific sweep of a vast land, total destruction. So Clausewitz was wrong— because he didn't have a nuclear bomb.

Finally from Clausewitz: "In the great combats which we call wars … there is usually no hostile feeling of individual against individual…. National hatred … becomes a more or less powerful substitute for personal hostility of individuals. Where this is also absent, … a hostile feeling is kindled by the combat itself; an act of violence … will excite in us the desire to retaliate and be avenged."[52] This is the circle. Amalickiah has to get the Lamanites to hate so they can go to war, so he has his people preach from towers – gets the propaganda machine going (see Alma 48:1-3). Such hatred is artificial. It has to be stirred up, but once the killing starts, there follows the idea of vengeance — the Green Beret syndrome. The good guy sees his friends bullied; so he seeks vengeance — the theme of almost all TV shows, so many on World War I and II. Every time you turn the TV on, you can see documentaries on World War I and II, which we hang on, because we know how it turns out and we want to see the bad guys get what's coming to them.

Revenge is the whole thing. Mormon, at the end, says, "And now, because of this great thing which my people, the Nephites, had done, they began to boast in their own strength, and began to swear before the heavens that they would avenge themselves of the blood of their brethren who had been slain by their enemies" (Mormon 3:9). What nobler motive can they have than to "avenge themselves of the blood of their brethren." With that, Mormon lays down his arms. He resigns as their commander and says he will have nothing more to do with them. He utterly refuses to avenge his enemy, for the one thing the Lord had absolutely forbidden them to do was to seek vengeance and build up hatred. For Mormon heard the "voice of the Lord … saying: Vengeance is mine, and I will repay" (Mormon 3:14-15).

So where does that leave us today? Well, short of Zion. It seems that war is inevitable, according to Clausewitz. President Benson is right — he says it all applies to us. That's why I don't like the wars in the Book of Mormon. They make me ill.

Notes

1. Karl von Clausewitz, *War, Politics, and Power: Selections from* ON WAR, *and* I BELIEVE AND PROFESS, tr. and ed. Edward M. Collins (Chicago: Gateway, n.d.), 83.

2. Ibid., 167-68.

3. Ibid., 168.

4. Ibid., 91.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., 33.

7. Ibid., 183, 185.

8. Ibid., 261.

9. Ibid., 264.

10. Ibid., 63.

11. Ibid., 108; italics added.

12. Ibid., 180.

13. Ibid., 64.

14. Ibid., 108.

15. Ibid., 156.

16. Ibid., 65.

17. Ibid., 252.

18. Ibid., 257.

19. Ibid., 100.

20. Ibid., 73; italics added.

21. Ibid., 106.

22. Ibid., 102.

23. Ibid., 107.

24. Ibid., 79.

25. Ibid., 210.

26. Ibid., 86.

27. Ibid., 80.

28. Ibid., 117.

29. Ibid., 122-23.

30. Ibid., 128.

31. Ibid., 129.

32. Ibid., 155.

33. Ibid., 189.

34. Ibid., 190.

35. Ibid., 245.

36. Ibid., 290.

37. Ibid., 245.

38. Ibid., 110.

39. Ibid., 111.

40. Ibid.; italics added.

41. Ibid., 112.

42. Ibid., 240.

43. Ibid., 206-7.

44. Ibid., 292.

45. Ibid., 188.

46. Ibid., 187.

47. Ibid., 68.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid., 64.

50. Ibid., 229.

51. Ibid., 230.

52. Ibid., 151.

The Gadianton Robbers as Guerrilla Warriors

Daniel C. Peterson

D. Michael Quinn, who rejects the equation of the Gadianton robbers with the Masons of nineteenth-century New York, offers an alternative explanation of them in his flawed but brilliant book entitled *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View.*[1] As befits his general thesis, he argues that the Book of Mormon views the Gadianton robbers as a confederacy of murderous black magicians and sorcerers whose oaths and secret works were less Masonic than occultic. His arguments are intriguing, although at certain crucial points they seem to me to rest upon a highly arbitrary reinterpretation of the text of the Book of Mormon. Still, there may be some truth in his discussion of the robbers and considerable value in the parallels he has adduced to them in occultic and Indian lore. Certainly, as I mention in my "Notes on 'Gadianton Masonry,' " the prevalent interpretation of the Gadianton robbers (among Latter-day Saints) as merely secular criminals is anachronistic and incorrect.

An examination of the Gadianton robbers as representing an alternative religious option within Nephite society is overdue. However, for the purposes of this paper, it is yet another facet of the Gadianton phenomenon that demands our attention. Ray C. Hillam, a Mormon political scientist who has studied modern insurgency and counterinsurgency methods in China and Vietnam, found them "strikingly similar to those in the Gadianton era."[2] "As one reads the accounts of insurgency and counterinsurgency in the Book of Mormon," he says, "one is impressed with its relevancy for modern times."[3]

Is such a comparison anachronistic? In the view of Roger Hilsman, an eminent authority on the subject of irregular war, it would probably not be. In his "Foreword" to the English translation of Vo Nguyen Giap's *People's War, People's Army*, Hilsman points out that "Guerrilla warfare goes much further back in history than what we call conventional warfare."[4] (And that, sadly, goes back a very long way indeed.) For instance, the guerrillas who harassed Napoleon's army in Spain after his 1808 invasion of that country helped at least partially to set him up for his disastrous defeat in Russia in 1812.[5] But they were late arrivals on the scene. One thinks of the ninth-century ᶜAlawi rebels fleeing to the mountains of the Iranian plateau, as Babak had done some years earlier.[6] Or there are the revolutionary Shiᶜite groups who operated in rural areas in the days of the ᶜAbbasid caliph al-Muᶜtadid (who reigned from A.D. 892 to 902).[7] Prior to them one might think of the Khawarij rebels against ᶜAli and the Umayyad caliphate. And yet earlier still are the Jewish Maccabean guerrillas whose revolt between 167 and 164 B.C. antedates the proto-Gadiantons of Helaman 1-2 by better than a century.[8] And these are only a representative handful from perhaps hundreds of similar groups that may be found in virtually any region at virtually any point in history.

Old as guerrilla warfare practices are, however, only in our century have they been systematized in formal theoretical terms. But, despite recent factors such as industrialization, improved communications and transportation, and air power, they remain essentially the same, and this is the key to the mode of analysis I shall employ for the remainder of this paper. The scope of this paper, of course, does not permit a full and exhaustive review of the contemporary literature on guerrilla conflict; neither does it allow a full justification of the claim that modern guerrilla practice necessarily resembles that of ancient guerrillas. Both tasks await a more comprehensive study of this subject. Nonetheless, I hope that the following analysis will exhibit the basic plausibility of the latter claim.

Certainly the recent interest in Sun-Tzu's *Ping fa* ("The Art of War"), written around 400 B.C. in China, and the continuing interest among military strategists in the early nineteenth-century *Vom Kriege* ("On War") of the Prussian theorist Karl von Clausewitz indicate widespread recognition that the fundamental rules of strategy do not change. "The reason for reading Clausewitz today," wrote Colonel Edward M. Collins in the "Introduction" to his 1962 anthology, "is quite simple: he has something to say which is important, timely, and relevant to our situation."[9] As Che Guevara, one of the leading practitioners and theoreticians of guerrilla warfare in our century wrote, "It is obvious ... that war responds to a certain series of scientific laws; whoever ignores them will go down to defeat.... Though geographical and social conditions in each country determine the mode and particular forms that guerrilla warfare will take, there are general laws that hold for all fighting of this type."[10] North Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap, another authority on the subject, agrees. "Revolutionary armed struggle in any country," he writes, "has common fundamental laws."[11]

This being the case, I think it not inappropriate to try to shed some light upon the behavior of the Gadianton robbers of the Book of Mormon by referring to some of the sad experience of our own dismal century. I do so by borrowing freely from the works of three men who are arguably the greatest authorities on guerrilla warfare of our time—Mao Tsetung,[12] Vo Nguyen Giap, and Ernesto "Che" Guevara. I do not mean to imply by my choice of three Marxist-Leninist strategists that the Gadianton robbers were somehow communist, or proto-Bolshevik. It is simply the fact that, in modern times and at least until the days of Jonas Savimbi in Angola, the most spectacularly successful practitioners of guerrilla warfare have been Marxists. (I would also like to have it clearly understood that, while I cite them on military theory, on which they are demonstrably expert, I do not endorse their political, economic, or moral positions. Nothing, in fact, could be further from the truth.) Rather, I try primarily to apply their theories and experience to an analysis of the behavior of the Gadianton robbers during one period of their history, recorded in the book of Helaman and in the first portion of 3 Nephi.[13]

In 52 B.C., a band of disgruntled politicians had successfully employed a certain Kishkumen to assassinate the chief judge. However, following their success the conspirators did not simply disband. Instead, "one Gadianton, who was exceedingly expert in many words" (Helaman 2:4) managed to insinuate himself into the leadership of an ongoing group. Who Gadianton was, we are not really told. Perhaps he was one of Kishkumen's original backers, a socially prominent supporter of Paanchi, who was now able to fill the void left by that would-be judge's execution. Or perhaps he was a mere adventurer or demagogic ideologue who, like Hitler and the National Socialist movement, was able to step in and, by superior force of personality, take over a preexisting organization and turn it to his own purposes. In any event, Gadianton was ready to move by about 50 B.C., and Kishkumen, in the service of his new master, set out to assassinate Helaman. Instead, he was discovered by a servant of the chief judge who, under cover, had penetrated the proto-Gadianton movement, and who, in one of the Book of Mormon's more dramatic scenes, stabbed him to the heart. When Gadianton began to worry about Kishkumen's delay in returning, "he caused that his band should follow him. And they took their flight out of the land, by a secret way, into the wilderness" (Helaman 2:11). In this, they anticipated Mao's dictum, "Fight when you can win, move away when you can't win."[14]

By 43 B.C., they had established secret cells "in the more settled parts of the land." However, so deep was their cover — they were not wearing Mr. Persuitte's telltale lambskins[15] — that the authorities failed to destroy them, having no idea that they were even there (see Helaman 3:23 — Mormon writes with the insight of hindsight). The followers of Gadianton were attempting to maintain their urban strategy and base, and this policy was, at the first, spectacularly successful — though less so among the Lamanites than among the Nephites. By 24 B.C., they were in

complete control of the government (see Helaman 6:1841). However, by 16 B.C., they were thoroughly discredited and, in the words of Nephi, "extinct" (Helaman 11:10).

But not quite. Only four years later, in 12 B.C., we read that a group of "dissenters" from the Nephites — note the ideological description — had resurrected "the secret plans of Gadianton." "And they did commit murder and plunder; and then they would retreat back into the mountains, and into the wilderness and secret places, hiding themselves that they could not be discovered, receiving daily an addition to their numbers, inasmuch as there were dissenters that went forth unto them…. Now behold, these robbers did make great havoc, yea, even great destruction among the people of Nephi, and also among the people of the Lamanites" (Helaman 11:24-27).

This withdrawal to the mountains seems to have been a conscious retreat to wilderness warfare on the part of the Gadianton movement, perhaps occasioned by the fact that their popular base of support had virtually disappeared. One thinks of the analogous cases of Che Guevara, the physician; Mao Tsetung, the teacher; and Vo Nguyen Giap, the lawyer and professor — all of whom gave up their natural, more-or-less urban locations and deliberately withdrew into rugged rural areas because popular support was not yet sufficient to sustain an alternative plan of action. "In view of the extreme weakness of its forces at the beginning," writes General Giap of the early Viet Minh, "people's power had to withdraw to the countryside after waging heroic street fights in Saigon and in the large towns."[16] "At the outset, the essential task of the guerrilla fighter is to keep himself from being destroyed."[17] Generalizing from the Cuban experience, Che Guevara summarizes the first phase of a guerrilla warfare as follows, in terms that certainly fit this era of Gadiantonism: "At the outset there is a more or less homogeneous group, with some arms, that devotes itself almost exclusively to hiding in the wildest and most inaccessible places."[18]

Historically, it has in fact been so. Guevara and Fidel Castro operated out of the Sierra Maestra mountains of eastern Cuba, and the Chinese communist revolution began as a guerrilla campaign based in the Chingkiang mountains.[19] One thinks naturally, too, of Vo Nguyen Giap, organizing his 1946-47 base camps in the caves around Thai-Nguyen and Hoa-Binh, in the mountainous region of Viet Bac —" 'redoubts' from which the French were never again able to dislodge him," although attempts to do so led to serious French losses.[20] This was the same mountainous area that he had already chosen in 1939 as the ideal region from which to commence his fight against both the French and the Japanese.[21] In the campaign of 1953, too, it was the mountainous regions of North Vietnam that were the guerrillas' best operating territory and that were "liberated" first.[22] "When we analyze more fully the tactic of guerrilla warfare," Guevara says, "we will see that the guerrilla fighter needs to have a good knowledge of the surrounding countryside, the paths of entry and escape, the possibilities of speedy maneuver, good hiding places; naturally also, he must count on the support of the people. All this indicates that the guerrilla fighter will carry out his action in wild places of small population."[23]

"The advantage of setting up base areas in mountainous regions is obvious," reports Mao Tsetung. Plains areas are less suitable, and perhaps not tenable in the long term. When the going gets rough, Mao says, plains-based guerrillas will have to go into the mountains in order to come back later.[24] "Fighting on favorable ground and particularly in the mountains presents many advantages," agrees Guevara. "Much more rapidly than in unfavorable ground the guerrilla band will here be able to 'dig in,' that is, to form a base capable of engaging in a war of positions."[25] "As soon as the survival of the guerrilla band has been assured," Guevara writes, "it should fight; it must constantly go out from its refuge to fight."[26] "The Cuban Revolution contributed three fundamental lessons" to the theory of guerrilla warfare, he says, and the third of those was that "in underdeveloped [Latin] America the

countryside is the basic area for armed fighting."[27] Presumably, the America of two millennia ago was at least as "underdeveloped" as the America of the twentieth century. Guevara's Marxist perspective on rural war may not, I would argue, have been altogether different from that of a committed Gadianton: "There, in places beyond the reach of the repressive forces, the inhabitants can be supported by the armed guerrillas."[28]

Like those who later faced Marxist insurgencies in Cuba, China, and Vietnam, the Nephite and Lamanite authorities had to do something. They could not simply sit back and tolerate the depredations their Gadianton enemies practiced upon them. But they would learn, as would the French, the Americans, Batista y Zaldívar, Chiang Kai-shek, and General Westmoreland, that guerrilla forces are extraordinarily difficult to defeat and virtually impossible to dislodge from their chosen territory. "The French colonialists used every scheme to raze our [mountain] resistance bases," boasts Vo Nguyen Giap, "but they suffered defeat after defeat and finally collapsed."[29]

A passage from the Book of Mormon will be seen to fit perfectly into this model of guerrilla theory and practice:

> It was expedient that there should be a stop put to this work of destruction; therefore they sent an army of strong men into the wilderness and upon the mountains to search out this band of robbers, and to destroy them. [Note the almost eery verbal echo of the "search and destroy" tactics so familiar from accounts of the war in Vietnam.] But behold, it came to pass that in that same year they were driven back even into their own lands. And thus ended the eightieth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi. And it came to pass in the commencement of the eighty and first year they did go forth again against this band of robbers, and did destroy many; and they were also visited with much destruction. And they were again obliged to return out of the wilderness and out of the mountains unto their own lands, because of the exceeding greatness of the numbers of those robbers who infested the mountains and the wilderness. ["Exceeding greatness"? Perhaps. But it sounds suspiciously like a defeated commander's excuse.] And it came to pass that thus ended this year. And the robbers did still increase and wax strong, insomuch that they did defy the whole armies of the Nephites, and also of the Lamanites; and they did cause great fear to come unto the people upon all the face of the land. Yea, for they did visit many parts of the land, and did do great destruction unto them; yea, did kill many, and did carry away others captive into the wilderness, yea, and more especially their women and their children. (Helaman 11:28-33.)

The picture of the successful guerrilla band in the early stages of its activity is here perfect and complete. With quick raiding strikes from the mountains, they weaken their enemy with minimum risk, while at the same time, they plunder and gain supplies — perhaps even seizing forced conscripts, and children to indoctrinate for the long term. ("Successes in many small fights added together gradually wear out the enemy manpower," General Giap observes, "while little by little fostering our forces.")[30] They do not yet venture pitched battles on the plains, but rather, and almost tauntingly, challenge the regular armies of their opponents to come up after them. "The guerrilla," writes Che Guevara, "having taken up inaccessible positions out of reach of the enemy … ought to proceed to the gradual weakening of the enemy."[31]

To do so, since their numbers are probably smaller than those of the opposing regular troops, the guerrillas must be sure that their raids are quick and successful, "battles of quick decision within protracted war."[32] This is imperative, says Guevara, on unfavorable ground. "The action cannot endure for long, but must be rapid; it must be of a high degree of effectiveness, last a few minutes, and be followed by an immediate withdrawal.… And the

guerrilla fighter on the plain must be fundamentally a runner. Here the practice of hitting and running acquires its maximum use."[33]

"Hit and run" some call this scornfully, and this is accurate. Hit and run, wait, lie in ambush, again hit and run, and thus repeatedly, without giving any rest to the enemy. There is in all this, it would appear, a negative quality, an attitude of retreat, of avoiding frontal fights. However, this is consequent upon the general strategy of guerrilla warfare, which is the same in its ultimate end as of [sic] any warfare: to win, to annihilate the enemy.[34]

After all, notes Mao, "The principle of preserving oneself and destroying the enemy is the basis of all military principles."[35] "Therefore," says Guevara, "the fundamental principle is that no battle, combat, or skirmish is to be fought unless it will be won," that "an attack should be carried out in such a way as to give a guarantee of victory."[36] This is the counsel of Vo Nguyen Giap, as well: "Is the enemy strong? One avoids him. Is he weak? One attacks him."[37] General Giap summarizes the patient strategy of his guerrilla campaigns as "contenting ourselves with attacking when success was certain, refusing to give battle likely to incur losses to us or to engage in hazardous actions."[38] "The numerical inferiority of the guerrilla makes it necessary," observes Guevara, "that attacks always be carried out by surprise; this great advantage is what permits the guerrilla fighter to inflict losses on the enemy without suffering losses. In a fight between a hundred men on one side and ten on the other, losses are not equal where there is one casualty on each side."[39] Mao Tsetung noted in December of 1936 that the Red Army generally operated by means of surprise attacks.[40]

To follow such a policy of avoiding risky battles and demanding that the enemy fight on his terms, the guerrilla will frequently be obliged to yield territory to his enemy. "Losses must be avoided," declares Vo Nguyen Giap, "even at the cost of losing ground."[41] "The main goal of the fighting must be destruction of enemy manpower, and ours should not be exhausted from trying to keep or occupy land."[42] He must avoid pitched battles at this phase of his struggle in any event.[43] Mao Tsetung is perhaps the foremost modern theoretician and practitioner of the tactic he called "strategic retreat." "A strategic retreat," he writes, "is a planned strategic step taken by an inferior force for the purpose of conserving its strength and biding its time to defeat the enemy, when it finds itself confronted with a superior force whose offensive it is unable to smash quickly."[44] Of course, to retreat constantly would be equivalent to defeat. "It is only when there is a wide disparity between the enemy's strength and ours that, acting on the principle of conserving our strength and biding our time to defeat the enemy, we advocate retreating to the base area and luring him in deep, for only by so doing can we create or find conditions favorable for our counteroffensive."[45] While a fully planned strategic retreat may appear to be made under compulsion, it is in reality an active and not a passive military operation, and one designed to lure the enemy into an ambush that will launch the guerrilla's devastating counterattack.[46] (For a Vietnamese example of strategic retreat, consider the response of the Viet Minh to the French attack on Hanoi in 1946-47.)[47]

Not all in the Red Army approved of Mao's notion of strategic retreat. "It is easy," says Mao,

to give an answer to such views, and our history has already done so. As for loss of territory, it often happens that only by loss can loss be avoided; this is the principle of "Give in order to take." If what we lose is territory and what we gain is victory over the enemy, plus recovery and also expansion of our territory, then it is a paying proposition. In a business transaction, if a buyer does not "lose" some money, he cannot

obtain goods; if a seller does not "lose" some goods, he cannot obtain money…. Sleep and rest involve loss of time, but energy is gained for tomorrow's work. If any fool does not understand this and refuses to sleep, he will have no energy the next day, and that is a losing proposition. We lost out in the fifth counter-campaign for precisely such reasons. Reluctance to give up part of our territory resulted in the loss of it all. Abyssinia, too, lost all her territory when she fought the enemy head-on, though that was not the sole cause of her defeat.[48]

Mao uses oddly capitalistic imagery here. He uses imagery of quite another kind in a vivid related passage:

"Is it not self-contradictory to fight heroically first and then abandon territory? Will not our heroic fighters have shed their blood in vain? That is not at all the way questions should be posed. To eat and then to empty your bowels—is this not to eat in vain? To sleep and then to get up—is this not to sleep in vain? … Territory has been given up in order to preserve our military forces and indeed to preserve territory, because if we do not abandon part of our territory when conditions are unfavourable but blindly fight decisive engagements without the least assurance of winning, we shall lose our military forces.[49]

The other view, which we call the desperate recklessness of "only advance, never retreat," is … wrong…. On the positive side, in order to draw the enemy into a fight unfavourable to him but favourable to us, it is usually necessary that he should be on the move and that we should have a number of advantages, such as favourable terrain [and] a vulnerable enemy … and the enemy's fatigue and unpreparedness. This requires that the enemy should advance, and we should not grudge a temporary loss of part of our territory…. On the negative side, whenever we are forced into a disadvantageous position which fundamentally endangers the preservation of our forces, we should have the courage to retreat, so as to preserve our forces and hit the enemy when new opportunities arise. In their ignorance of this principle, the advocates of desperate action will contest a city or a piece of ground even when the position is obviously and definitely unfavourable; as a result, they not only lose the city or ground but fail to preserve their forces. We have always advocated the policy of "luring the enemy in deep," precisely because it is the most effective military policy for a weak army strategically on the defensive to employ against a strong army.[50]

"The fundamental characteristic of a guerrilla band is mobility," writes Che Guevara. "This … permits it constantly to change front and avoid any type of encirclement. As the circumstances of the war require, the guerrilla band can dedicate itself exclusively to fleeing from an encirclement which is the enemy's only way of forcing the band into a decisive fight that could be unfavorable."[51] The ultimate purpose of this flight is to allow "the retreating army to choose terrain favourable to itself and force the attacking army to fight on its terms. In order to defeat a strong army, a weak army must carefully choose favourable terrain as a battleground."[52]

Ideally, this favorable terrain will be a place where, "pitting local superiority and initiative against the enemy's local inferiority and passivity," the guerrilla can control the situation and attain a guaranteed victory.[53] Following the principle of strategic retreat, says Mao, "we advocate retreating to the base area and luring him in deep."[54] "When the enemy launches a large-scale 'encirclement and suppression' campaign, our general principle is to lure him in deep, withdraw into the base area and fight him there, because this is our surest method of smashing his offensive."[55] Mountainous areas are, it is obvious, marvelously suited to be such "base areas" and to serve as venues for such maneuvers, as the armies that went up after the Gadianton irregulars learned to their great sorrow. Che Guevara, veteran, of many such encounters, describes the playing out of a typical scene from this stage of the conflict, as the first elements of the regular army's "search and destroy" units arrive at the carefully

chosen ambush site: "At the moment when the vanguard appears at the selected place — the steepest possible — a deadly fire is let loose on them, after a convenient number of men have been allowed to penetrate."[56]

At a certain point, the repeated application of such tactics as the above will put the guerrilla forces on the ascent to the point that they will want to transform themselves into something closer to a regular army, fighting a "war of positions" that involves sieges and the like. This has always been their goal, and, indeed, they must accomplish it in order to achieve the final victory they seek.[57] Speaking in December of 1936, Mao Tsetung announced that, "in our civil war, when the strength of the Red Army surpasses that of the enemy, we shall, in general, no longer need the strategic defensive. Our policy then will be the strategic offensive alone."[58]

The crucial problem for the guerrilla commander is to determine when the time for such a transformation of his forces into a conventional army has come. "Premature regularization," as Mao calls it, can be — and, historically, has been — disastrous.[59] Mao points to the January 1932 abandonment by the Red Army of what he calls, on the basis of its appearance in Chinese, "the sixteen-character formula" —"The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue" — as an object lesson in how to squander the advantages of a guerrilla campaign.

> From then on, the old principles were no longer to be considered as regular but were to be rejected as "guerrilla-ism." The opposition to "guerrilla-ism" reigned for three whole years. Its first stage was military adventurism, in the second it turned into military conservatism and, finally, in the third stage it became flightism. It was not until the Central Committee held the enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau at Tsunyi, Kweichow Province, in January 1935 that this wrong line was declared bankrupt and the correctness of the old line reaffirmed. But at what a cost! Those comrades who vigorously opposed "guerrilla-ism" argued along the following lines. It was wrong to lure the enemy in deep because we had to abandon so much territory. Although battles had been won in this way, was not the situation different now? Moreover, was it not better to defeat the enemy without abandoning territory? And was it not better still to defeat the enemy in his own areas, or on the borders between his areas and ours? The old practices had had nothing "regular" about them and were methods used only by guerrillas. Now our own state had been established and our Red Army had become a regular army. Our fight against Chiang Kai-shek had become a war between two states, between two great armies. History should not repeat itself, and everything pertaining to "guerrilla- ism" should be totally discarded. The new principles were "completely Marxist," while the old had been created by guerrilla units in the mountains, and there was no Marxism in the mountains. The new principles were the antithesis of the old. They were: "Pit one against ten, pit ten against a hundred, fight bravely and determinedly, and exploit victories by hot pursuit"; "Attack on all fronts"; "Seize key cities."[60]

> Without a doubt these theories and practices were all wrong. They were nothing but subjectivism. Under favourable circumstances this subjectivism manifested itself in petty-bourgeois revolutionary fanaticism and impetuosity, but in times of adversity, as the situation worsened, it changed successively into desperate recklessness, conservatism, and flightism.... They were the theories and practices of hotheads and ignoramuses. They did not have the slightest flavour of Marxism about them; indeed they were anti-Marxist.[61]

By subjectivism, Mao understood an attitude that took insufficient account of objective reality. A major problem in the early Chinese communist revolution, he says, had been the Marxist forces' tendency to underestimate their

enemy's strength and to overestimate their own. Some, he complained, "talked only of attack but never of defence or retreat." He condemns in strong terms "the military adventurism of attacking the key cities in 1932," when they were not yet ready to do so.[62]

"If guidance in struggle and organization was not precise ... knowing how to estimate the subjective conditions and compare the revolutionary forces with the counter-revolutionary forces," writes Vo Nguyen Giap of the experience of the Viet Minh in the 1950s, "we would certainly have met with difficulty and failure."[63] In the context of the Vietnamese "Resistance War," he describes virtually the same attitude and the same mistakes as Mao had, condemning, in language reminiscent of Mao, "subjectivism, loss of patience, eagerness to win swiftly."[64] If irregular warfare can be composed of forms ranging from pure guerrilla tactics all the way to conventional techniques, it is nonetheless crucial that "the conduct of the war ... maintain a correct ratio between the fighting forms."[65]

But just how difficult it is to make such determinations and to maintain such balance in real life is illustrated by a fact that General Giap conveniently omits from his own writings: In his profile of the North Vietnamese commander, Bernard B. Fall remarks that Giap

> [made] a grievous error in believing his troops ready for a set-piece battle with seasoned French troops in the plains of the Red River Delta. In the spring of 1951, he launched three offensives, involving several of his newly created full-fledged divisions, against Marshal Jean de Lattre de Tassigny's paratroops, Moroccans and Foreign Legionnaires, and was bloodily beaten back after losing thousands of his men in "human wave" attacks.[66]

The Book of Mormon offers a textbook illustration of "premature regularization," in the Gadianton fiasco of 3 Nephi 4. Apparently feeling ready to begin a "war of positions," the Gadianton chief Giddianhi sent his famous letter of A.D. 16 to the Nephite governor Lachoneus. In that letter, he demanded total Nephite surrender, threatening, otherwise, that "on the morrow month I will command that my armies shall come down against you" (3 Nephi 3:8). The Nephites did not surrender. Instead, Lachoneus prepared to fight a scorched earth campaign by drawing all of his people and their flocks and provisions together into one defensibly sound place. If, as Mao Tsetung used to say, guerrillas are to the people as fish are to the water, it would seem that Lachoneus's intent was to leave the fish flopping on dry ground.[67] Che Guevara tells us: "The guerrilla fighter needs full help from the people of the area. This is an indispensable condition. This is clearly seen by considering the case of bandit gangs that operate in a region. They have all the characteristics of a guerrilla army, homogeneity, respect for the leader, valor, knowledge of the ground, and, often, even good understanding of the tactics to be employed. The only thing missing is the support of the people; and, inevitably, these gangs are captured and exterminated by the public force."[68]

Lachoneus by his preparations perhaps intended to deprive the Gadianton movement of even the pretence of widespread popular support, to expose its claims of legitimacy as false in full view of the public. Certainly he intended to deny them the means of subsistence in Nephite lands. Further, he erected large and elaborate fortifications and reorganized the leadership of the Nephite armies (see 3 Nephi 3:13-17, 22-25). As chief general of the armies, he appointed a man by the name of Gidgiddoni who, the record tells us, was not only a fine soldier but a prophet as well. Gidgiddoni launched a weapons build-up among the Nephites to correspond to their fortification program (see 3 Nephi 3:26), but his greatest service to the Nephites in the impending conflict was probably in another area:

Now the people said unto Gidgiddoni: Pray unto the Lord, and let us go up upon the mountains and into the wilderness, that we may fall upon the robbers and destroy them in their own lands. But Gidgiddoni saith unto them: The Lord forbid; for if we should go up against them the Lord would deliver us into their hands; therefore we will prepare ourselves in the center of our lands, and we will gather all our armies together, and we will not go against them, but we will wait till they shall come against us; therefore as the Lord liveth, if we do this he will deliver them into our hands. (3 Nephi 3:20-21.)

In rejecting the calls of his people for a preemptive strike against the guerrillas' mountain bases, Gidgiddoni was in harmony with the rules of war revealed by the Lord to his prophets in both ancient and modern times (see D&C 98:23-48, especially verses 32-33). God, he declared, would not uphold the Nephites if they violated those rules. However, Gidgiddoni also showed that he had learned from earlier disastrous attempts to dislodge the Gadiantons from their wilderness redoubts. The war was now to be fought on Nephite terms, and not on terms dictated by their enemies.[69] Indeed, Gidgiddoni would force the Gadianton armies to attack the Nephites in the Nephites' own strongholds. Nephite fortified cities would effectively take the place of mountain base camps. Gidgiddoni was neatly reversing the situation. By yielding up territory in a classic "strategic retreat," he was, to borrow Mao's phrase, "luring the enemy in deep."

In the latter end of the eighteenth year those armies of robbers had prepared for battle, and began to come down and to sally forth from the hills, and out of the mountains, and the wilderness, and their strongholds, and their secret places, and began to take possession of the lands, both which were in the land south and which were in the land north, and began to take possession of all the lands which had been deserted by the Nephites, and the cities which had been left desolate. (3 Nephi 4:1.)

So far, so good. However, Che Guevara and other theoreticians of irregular warfare have insisted that careful planning for food and supplies must accompany guerrilla expeditions from mountain strongholds into the plains.[70] Apparently, Gadianton planning was not careful enough.

There were no wild beasts nor game in those lands which had been deserted by the Nephites, and there was no game for the robbers save it were in the wilderness. And the robbers could not exist save it were in the wilderness, for the want of food; for the Nephites had left their lands desolate, and had gathered their flocks and their herds and all their substance, and they were in one body. Therefore, there was no chance for the robbers to plunder and to obtain food, save it were to come up in open battle against the Nephites [who had seven years' worth of food and supplies]. (3 Nephi 4:2-4.)

(This recalls to mind the rebel stronghold of Masada in the first Jewish revolt against Rome. The well-provisioned Zealots frequently opened up their cisterns and let water gush down the slope in full view of their besiegers. The water, of course, was absorbed by the thirsty ground long before it did Flavius Silva's troops any good, and they continued to swelter in the abominable heat of the Dead Sea wilderness at the foot of Masada. The siege walls are still visible today, but it must surely have made the Roman soldiers wonder just who was besieging whom.)

This is a situation which; two millennia later, was quite familiar to Mao Tsetung. "Any army," Mao wrote, "which, losing the initiative, is forced into a passive position and ceases to have freedom of action, faces the danger of defeat or extermination."[71] And such was precisely the threat that hung over the Gadiantons at this stage. They were now passive, had lost the initiative. They must either retreat to fight again another day, or go to battle on terms dictated by the Nephites. Mao's advice in such a predicament is clear: "When forced into a passive position through some incorrect appraisal and disposition or through overwhelming pressure, a guerrilla unit must strive to

extricate itself…. In many cases it is necessary to 'move away.' The ability to move is the distinctive feature of a guerrilla unit. To move away is the principal method for getting out of a passive position and regaining the initiative."[72]

The proper decision for the Gadianton forces in this case would almost certainly have been to shift into the mode of what Mao terms "strategic defensive." But, as Mao points out, this leads inevitably to loss of territory, which is highly unpalatable to some strategists. Obviously it was unpalatable to Giddianhi and his staff, for they unwisely opted to continue on the offensive. (After all, they had taken possession of most of the Nephite lands and had the Nephite forces contained in a single relatively small area. Were they supposed to just walk away and give up this marvelously favorable position?)

> In the nineteenth year Giddianhi found that it was expedient that he should go up to battle against the, Nephites, for there was no way that they could subsist save it were to plunder and rob and murder. And they durst not spread themselves upon the face of the land, insomuch that they could raise grain, lest the Nephites should come upon them and slay them; therefore Giddianhi gave commandment unto his armies that in this year they should go up to battle against the Nephites. (3 Nephi 4:5-6.)

But this was a reactive and desperate expedient, rather than a coherent and carefully crafted strategy, and it definitely violated one of the central canons of guerrilla strategy and tactics — to fight only when assured of victory. "Ho Chi Minh," writes Paul Kennedy in his 1987 bestseller *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, "had declared that his forces were willing to lose men at the rate of ten to one — and when they were rash enough to emerge from the jungles to attack the cities, as in the 1968 Tet offensive, they often did."[73] Ho had apparently not learned the lesson that Mao had already mastered by the 1930s — or, perhaps, he did not care. ("Every minute," Ho's military commander, General Giap, is said to have remarked, "hundreds of thousands of people die all over the world. The life or death of a hundred, a thousand, or of tens of thousands of human beings, even if they are our own compatriots, represents really very little.")[74] Perhaps Giddianhi did not care, either. But his mistake would cost him dearly. The Gadianton assault was a disaster. Nephite patrols chased the remnants of the erstwhile guerrilla army back to the borders of the wilderness, killing all (including Giddianhi himself) who fell into their hands.

Astonishingly, Giddianhi's successor in the Gadianton leadership, a man named Zemnarihah, launched a repeat of this disastrous siege only two years later. (We recall that it took the Chinese communists three catastrophic years to abandon *their* "premature regularization.") Again, the result was Gadianton near-starvation. In the earlier siege, under Giddianhi, we are told that the Gadianton forces "durst not spread themselves upon the face of the land insomuch that they could raise grain, lest the Nephites should come upon them and slay them" (3 Nephi 4:6). (Dispersal of their forces, resisted but successfully imposed upon them by the Viet Minh, was a major factor in the French defeat in Indochina in the early 1950s.)[75] In this second Gadianton attempt, however, the situation grew so desperate that Zemnarihah evidently allowed his troops to split up into smaller agricultural or even foraging units, and the result was entirely predictable. The Nephites made quick and damaging sorties from their strongholds — effectively reversing the roles of the two sides by themselves functioning as guerrillas — which weakened and demoralized the would-be conquerors. Finally, prevailed upon by what remained of his troops, Zemnarihah gave up his siege and led his men in a retreat to the north. But it was a wise step taken much too late. The Nephite armies intercepted their retreat, and the Gadiantons were no match for the fresh, well-rested, and well-fed troops of Gidgiddoni. Those of the Gadianton forces who did not surrender were killed, and Zemnarihah was hanged.

In my "Notes on 'Gadianton Masonry' " in this volume, I attempt to show that the parallels commonly adduced between the Masons of nineteenth-century America and the Gadianton robbers are anything but conclusive proof that the Book of Mormon is a product of Joseph Smith's mind and milieu. I also hope to call into question the easy assumption that Joseph and the early Latter-day Saints were immersed in an atmosphere of compelling anti-Masonic hysteria from which they could hardly have been expected to — and did not — emerge unaffected. In the present essay, I have tried to depict an aspect of Gadiantonism that, as plausible historiographical material, goes considerably beyond anything Joseph Smith would have been likely to create out of his own imagination. (It is not simply the Book of Mormon's precise portrayal of irregular warfare that is foreign to Joseph and his environment. Its realistic and wholly unromantic military narratives do not, it seems clear to me, come from the mind of that Joseph Smith, who, while he abhorred actual battle, loved parades and military pageantry, relished his commission as Lieutenant- General of the Nauvoo Legion, and, uniformed in elegant blue and gold, liked nothing better than to review the troops while mounted on his black stallion, Charlie.)[76] This military aspect of Book of Mormon Gadiantonism is one for which the old Masonic theory is utterly powerless to account.

I certainly do not claim to reduce the Gadianton phenomena to a mere scriptural analogue of familiar contemporary irregular military organizations. To do so would be only slightly less misleading than the Masonic theory itself. "For purposes of analysis, we must, of course, call forth one thread, one theme, one idea at a time, but we must also bear in mind the existence of this larger world [portrayed by the Book of Mormon] and relate individual passages to greater structures if we are to find their broadest meaning."[77] In an article currently underway, I hope to place the Gadiantons within a larger context of not only military but also religious history. Nevertheless, a totally believable and coherent complex of military behaviors and responses forms an undeniable facet of Gadiantonism in the Book of Mormon, which oversimplified references to the anti-Masonic controversies of New York in the late 1820s cannot explain away. To me, the most likely and safest explanation lies in Joseph Smith's own account of the origin of the Book of Mormon, and in the understanding that it is, indeed, a record of authentic historical events.

Notes

1. I base my summary here upon D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), 160, 164-67, and my criticism of his thesis in this article suggests one of the many reasons why, while acknowledging its brilliance, I term his book "flawed." See the review of that work by Stephen D. Ricks and Daniel C. Peterson, "The Mormon as Magus," *Sunstone* 12 (January 1988): 38-39, as well as Quinn's response on the following page (to which I will resist the temptation to reply here). Another review of the book with which I largely agree is that of Stephen E. Robinson in *BYU Studies* 27 (Fall 1987): 88-95, which on pp. 92-93 questions precisely the kind of arbitrary reinterpretation of the Book of Mormon text that at least partially underlies Quinn's alternative model discussed in this paper. I feel it necessary to make my position on Quinn's book clear, since certain anti-Mormons have chided me for my alleged inconsistency elsewhere in citing as authorities people whose works I had otherwise criticized (e.g., Quinn) or whose worldview is radically incompatible with my own (e.g., Morton Smith). Such chiding seems to me quintessentially reflective of a fundamentalist's mindset—my "chiders" in this case were Protestant fundamentalists — as well as of a misunderstanding of the nature of argument and evidence. I use good evidence and good arguments wherever I find them (and when I can recognize them). I do not believe in biblical inerrancy—much less in the inerrancy of myself or my colleagues.

2. Ray C. Hillam, "Gadiantons and Protracted War," BYU Studies 15 (Winter 1975): 215. The entire article, 215-24, by Professor Hillam is of interest in illustrating his contention.

3. Ibid., 224.

4. Roger Hilsman, "Foreword," in Vo Nguyen Giap, *People's War, People's Army* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), xii.

5. Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987), 134-36.

6. See, for the two groups respectively, M. A. Shaban, *Islamic History: A New Interpretation*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 2:88 and 66-67.

7. Ibid., 2:116.

8. They are characterized as guerrillas by, among others, John Bright's standard *A History of Israel*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), 422-27.

9. In Karl von Clausewitz, *War, Politics, and Power* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1962), 1.

10. Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (New York: Monthly Review, 1961), 16.

11. Giap, *People's War, People's Army*, 68.

12. I am aware that there are various methods of transliterating this name. I choose this (currently less fashionable) version merely for the sake of consistency within this article, since it is that of the English translation of his writings that I use here — an official translation produced and distributed by the Chinese government under Mao.

13. Fairly straightforward narrative accounts of these chapters, dealing partially with the Gadianton robbers, may be found in Daniel C. Peterson, "Their Own Worst Enemies," in Kent P. Jackson, ed., *Studies in Scripture:* Volume Eight, *Alma 30 to Moroni* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 92-106, and Terrence L. Szink, "A Just and True Record (3 Nephi 1-5)," in ibid., 125-38.

14. Mao Tsetung, "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War," in *Six Essays on Military Affairs* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1971), 111.

15. For the lambskins, see the discussion in my "Notes on 'Gadianton Masonry,' " in this volume.

16. Giap, *People's War, People's Artny*, 15; see 46, 94. Compare Bernard B. Fall's profile of Giap, printed in the same volume, on xxxiii-xxxiv.

17. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 21.

18. Ibid., 73-74.

19. See, on the early days of the Chinese revolution, Mao Tsetung, "China's Revolutionary War," 112, 113, 134 n. 33.

20. See Giap, *People's War, People's Army*, 19; also Fall, in the same volume, xxxvi-xxxvii.

21. Giap, *People's War, People's Army*, 12, 114, 140.

22. Ibid., 23-24; see 78, 134, 191.

23. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 17; see 18, where the examples given include Mao in China, Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam against the French, and Algeria.

24. Mao Tsetung, "Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War against Japan," in *Six Essays on Military Affairs*, 163-64; see 166, 171, 181; cf. Hilsman, in Giap, *People's War, People's Army*, xix. For lists of such mountainous areas in use by the communist forces as of the writing of the article in May 1938, see 163, 193.

25. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 30; see 29.

26. Ibid., 29. He makes it clear that he is talking particularly about mountain-based guerrilla forces.

27. Ibid., 15.

28. Ibid., 16.

29. Giap, *People's War, People's Army*, 145.

30. Ibid., 104.

31. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 29.

32. The phrase is from Mao Tsetung, "Guerrilla War against Japan," 155. See also Giap, *People's War, People's Army*, 79.

33. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 33, 34. Compare Mao Tsetung, "Guerrilla War against Japan," 144-45.

34. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 19-20.

35. Mao Tsetung, "Guerrilla War against Japan," 141; see Mao Tsetung, "On Protracted War," in *Six Essays on Military Affairs*, 271, 273.

36. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 19 and 63. Compare Mao Tsetung, "On Protracted War," 316-318, 321; "China's Revolutionary War," 93.

37. Giap, *People's War, People's Army*, 48; see 104.

38. Ibid., 29.

39. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 24-25.

40. See Mao Tsetung, "China's Revolutionary War," 108.

41. Giap, *People's War, People's* Army, 48.

42. Ibid., 104.

43. See, for instance, ibid., 49.

44. Mao Tsetung, "China's Revolutionary War," 57.

45. Ibid., 71-72; see 93.

46. Ibid., 98.

47. See Giap, *People's War, People's Army*, 19.

48. Mao Tsetung, "China's Revolutionary War," 74-75; see "On Protracted War," 206. Indirect evidence of criticisms is to be found in Mao Tsetung's own writings, as in "China's Revolutionary War," 57, 64-65.

49. Mao Tsetung, "On Protracted War," 319-20.

50. Ibid., 300-301; see 317; also his "China's Revolutionary War," 64-65.

51. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 24.

52. Mao Tsetung, "China's Revolutionary War," 66.

53. The phrase is Mao Tsetung's, from his essay "On Protracted War," 288.

54. Mao Tsetung, "China's Revolutionary War," 71.

55. Ibid., 74.

56. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 63-64. "The guerrilla fighter knows the places where he fights, the invading column does not."

57. Ibid., 19, 20, 23; Mao Tsetung, "On Protracted War," 302; Mao Tsetung, "China's Revolutionary War," 110-11, 114, 115. On how to effect the transformation of guerrilla units into conventional units, see Mao's "Guerrilla War against Japan," 184-88, as well as "On Protracted War," 207, 243-44.

58. Mao Tsetung, "China's Revolutionary War," 52.

59. Ibid., 115.

60. Ibid., 61-63. See p. 108 of the same essay for a dismissal of what he calls "positional warfare" at that particular time of he communist insurrection.

61. Ibid., 64.

62. Ibid., 47-49.

63. Giap, *People's War, People's Army*, 76-77.

64. Ibid., 101.

65. Ibid., 109.

66. Fall, in ibid., xxxvii-xxxviii.

67. Giap, *People's War, People's Army,* 56, 124, uses this figure of speech without attribution. However, Mao seems to have originated it. See Mao Tsetung, "Yu Chi Chan (Guerrilla Warfare)," as quoted in Samuel B. Griffith, tr., *Mao Tse-tung on Guerrilla Warfare* (New York: Praeger, 1961), 92-93. Mao's essay was written in 1937. I thank my former student, Bryan Taylor, for locating this passage for me.

68. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare,* 17. The resemblance of guerrilla fighters to bandits is noted also by Roger Hilsman, in Giap, *People's War, People's Army,* xiv. Giap himself, clearly revealing the subjective nature of the distinction in cases like this, describes as "bandits" the guerrilla units the French left behind after their withdrawal from Na San to the North Vietnamese delta region (see ibid., 196). Interestingly, some of the glitter having worn off since his death, Mao Tsetung is now called by some Chinese *Mao Fei,* or "robber Mao." (I am grateful to my colleague, Professor Grant Hardy, for bringing this fact to my attention.)

69. In a later but similar Book of Mormon scenario, Mormon temporarily refused to lead the Nephite armies because of a dual issue related to that of Gidgiddoni (see Mormon 3-4). Mormon stepped down as commander when his people demanded that he leave off defensive warfare and launch an invasion into Lamanite territory. Their demand was both immoral and strategically mad, given the vast discrepancy between Lamanite and Nephite numbers. Mormon's selection of the city of Desolation, near the narrow neck of land, had been strategically wise because it gave the comparatively small Nephite armies a small and focused area to defend. (Analogous considerations led in the 120s A.D. to the building of Hadrian's Wall in England, from the mouth of the Tyne River to the Solway Firth, as well as to the construction, largely in the ninth century, of the lesser known Danevirke. The latter structure—at the base of the Danish peninsula near modern German Schleswig and discussed by Gwyn Jones, *History, of the Vikings,* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 99-105—"served to defend against invasion the vulnerable part of the frontier of Jutland, i.e., the narrow neck [!] between Hollingstedt on the river Treene in the west and the head of the Sliefjord in the east.") For the Nephites to leave their excellent defensive position for a penetration deep into Lamanite territory was extreme folly.

Seeing spiritual significance in things that the less faithful would probably explain naturalistically was characteristic of the religious minds in the Book of Mormon. Besides Gidgiddoni and Mormon, who both saw wise generalship and the laws of God as virtual flipsides of the same phenomenon, there are the contrasting explanations Moroni and Zerahemnah gave of the latter's defeat by the Nephites (see Alma 44:3-5, 9). Certainly nobody appreciated better than Moroni the importance of fortifications, weapons, and armor. He had led his people in war preparations. But, since he was a genuinely religious man, I believe he recognized the hand of God as both transcending these things and also, in a sense, working through them. Compare, too, the religious explanation given by "the servants of the king of Syria" at 1 Kings 20:23 of the success the Israelites enjoyed in the hills, which contrasted with their problems in the plains. A naturalistic explanation might rather say that the Israelites, with their nomadic heritage, did well in the hills because their style of warfare was not heavily dependent upon chariots —which were in any event far less useful in such territory. However, the matter was quite different when they went up against the charioteers of the plains. (This was one of the reasons they were long unable to dislodge the Philistines from the coastal flat country of the Gaza strip.)

70. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare,* 35.

71. Mao Tsetung, "Guerrilla War against Japan," 147.

72. Ibid., 150.

73. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 406.

74. Fall, in Giap, *People's War, People's Army*, xxxvii.

75. See Giap, *People's War, People's Army*, 159-63, 193-94, 201, 204-5.

76. Fawn M. Brodie so characterized him in *No Man Knows My History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975); 148, 271, 283. On p. 148, she suggests that his supposed passion for military lore "perhaps accounted for the innumerable battles in the Book of Mores mon." Why, then, do those battles so conspicuously lack any pomp and pageantry, colorful uniforms, romantic exploits — any of the things, that is, which formed the content of Joseph's alleged passoin according to Brodie's own testimony?

77. Richard L. Bushman, "The Book of Mormon in Early Mormon History," in Davis Bitton and Maureen U. Beecher, eds., *New Views of Mormon History: Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1987), 5.

Notes on "Gadianton Masonry"

Daniel C. Peterson

"Your leader, Monsieur?" said the Comtesse, eagerly. "Ah! of course, you must have a leader. And I did not think of that before! But tell me where is he? I must go to him at once, and I and my children must throw ourselves at his feet, and thank him for all that he has done for us."

"Alas, Madame!" said Lord Antony, "that is impossible."

"Impossible? — Why?"

"Because the Scarlet Pimpernel works in the dark, and his identity is only known under the solemn oath of secrecy to his immediate followers."

Baroness Orczy, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*[1]

The Problem

"In recent decades," writes Richard L. Bushman, "the environmentalist explanation of the Book of Mormon has replaced the Spalding hypothesis among non-Mormon scholars.... All but a few critics have dropped Spalding and Rigdon and credited Joseph Smith with authorship.... According to the environmentalists, Joseph absorbed images, attitudes, and conceptions from upstate New York rural culture and wove them into the Book of Mormon story."[2] Thomas F. O'Dea, the late Catholic scholar whose pioneering sociological study *The Mormons* remains justly famous today (more than three decades after its initial publication), will serve as an example of the environmentalist position on the Book of Mormon:

"It is obviously an American work growing in the soil of American concerns in terms of its basic plot," O'Dea declares.[3] "There is a simple common-sense explanation which states that Joseph Smith was a normal person living in an atmosphere of religious excitement that influenced his behavior as it had that of so many thousands of others and, through a unique concomitance of circumstances, influences, and pressures, led him from necromancy into revelation, from revelation to prophecy, and from prophecy to leadership of an important religious movement and to involvement in the bitter and fatal intergroup conflicts that his innovations and success had called forth. To the non-Mormon who does not accept the work as a divinely revealed scripture, such an explanation on the basis of the evidence at hand seems by far the most likely and safest."[4]

Just how likely and safe the environmentalist view actually is can be debated. (We are perhaps entitled to ask just how many "normal" people have written scriptures and founded world religions.) Certainly, if one presupposes that Joseph Smith could not have had access to revelation, or to a historically authentic ancient text, it is the obvious alternative. Fawn Brodie, reminiscing in 1975 about her famous biography, *No Man Knows My History*,

recalled that "I was convinced before I ever began writing that Joseph Smith was not a true Prophet."[5] With this attitude — she calls the Book of Mormon a "first novel"[6] — she was obliged to explain the book on the basis of Joseph's mind, his experience, and the contents of his nineteenth-century environment, however inadequate that basis might be. Since she could not allow him any real contact with ancient or heavenly realities, she had no alternative.

"Since the odd contents of the volume lamentably or ludicrously fall before every canon of historical criticism," Walter Prince blandly asserts, "scholars have not thought it worth while to discuss the notion of its ancient authorship, unless briefly for pragmatic and missionary purposes."[7] "There seems very little doubt today," Professor O'Dea dubiously declares, "as to Joseph Smith's authorship of the *Book of Mormon*."[8] By this he means to say that such hypotheses as are represented by the Spalding manuscript theory have died the death. But clearly, for him and others of his general persuasion, the other alternative, Joseph Smith's own story of the coming forth of the book, is simply unthinkable.

One of the primary exhibits in the prosecution's attempt to prove the Book of Mormon a product of nineteenth-century frontier obscurantism involves what O'Dea describes as "the many references to Masonry in the work."[9] Prince knows a large number of passages "plainly referring to Masonry under the guise of pretended similar organizations in ancient America."[10] If this exhibit is only one instance of the "anachronism of feeling and reference [which] is evidence of late origin to the critic," it is certainly among the most important to the case and one of the most complacently accepted by the prosecution's partisans.[11] Thus, it clearly merits closer examination for its plausibility and logic. This paper will look into the alleged presence of Freemasonry in the Book of Mormon.

Alexander Campbell was perhaps the first environmentalist critic of the Book of Mormon, as is shown in his famous statement, "This prophet Smith, through his stone spectacles, wrote on the plates of Nephi, in his book of Mormon, every error and almost every truth discussed in New York for the last ten years. He decides all the great controversies; — infant baptism, ordination, the trinity, regeneration, repentance, justification, the fall of man, the atonement, transubstantiation, fasting, penance, church government, religious experience, the call to the ministry, the general resurrection, eternal punishment, who may baptize, and even the question of free masonry, republican government, and the rights of man."[12] Without going into the details of his accusation, one might ask, When were most such questions *not* discussed in the history of Christianity?

Campbell, publishing on 10 February 1831, was the first who seems to allege that the Gadianton bands of the Book of Mormon reflect the Masonry of Joseph Smith's day.[13] But just how seriously he took this equation is not clear, since he also describes the Zoramites as "a sort of Episcopalians" and exclaims mockingly of Mormon as a military commander that "He was no Quaker!"[14] In other contexts, however, he makes a more serious implied criticism when he satirically surmises that Mormon must have been informed of the Arian heresy by an angel and when he terms the early Nephites "believers in the doctrines of the Calvinists and the Methodists."[15] Clearly, his intention was to link the Book of Mormon with things modern rather than things ancient. But his statements on the alleged derivation of Gadiantonism from Freemasonry are little developed and not at all rigorous, and, indeed, Campbell later adopted the Spalding theory and abandoned the comparison. Resuscitating the idea that the Book of Mormon was suffused by Masonry was left to later critics of Mormonism.

According to Fawn Brodie, the second half of the Book of Mormon "was charged with a crusading spirit that stemmed directly from the greatest murder mystery that ever stirred New York State."[16] This was the murder of

William Morgan, ostensibly by Masons who were angered by his publication of the secret rites and oaths of their fraternity. According to Brodie's scenario, Joseph Smith was composing the Book of Mormon at the very time that the Morgan case was whipping up passions throughout the state, and especially in the very area where the would-be prophet resided. "Masonry," she writes, "was being denounced everywhere as a threat to free government, a secret cabal insidiously working into the key positions of state in order to regulate the whole machinery of the Republic."[17] Joseph, ever alive to the currents of popular thought in his day, "quickly introduced into the book the theme of the Gadianton band, a secret society whose oaths for fraternal protection were bald parallels of Masonic oaths, and whose avowed aim was the overthrow of the democratic Nephite government."[18]

She even suggests, half seriously, that Joseph Smith might have coined the name "Mormon" partially on the basis of the name "Morgan." In this, she was following Walter Prince's articles, although evidently without acknowledgment.[19] Such notions, unrestrained by linguistic discipline, tend to multiply like fruit flies. Thus, Persuitte notes that "Joseph might have derived the names Mormon, Moroni, and several others from that of Morgan" and wonders if the name of Giddianhi, one of the prominent robber leaders in the Book of Mormon, might be derived from that of a Mason named Giddins or Giddings, who turned state's evidence in the Morgan case.[20] Prince deduces the adjective "anti-Masonic" from names like "Manti" and "Antiomno" and blames Emma Hale for "Emer," "Ammah," and "Helaman." "Harmony," the town in Pennsylvania where Joseph did much of the translation of the Book of Mormon, shows up as "Himni."[21] This sort of thing can really be quite fun when one turns oneself loose. Unfortunately for Professor Prince, however, a certain Theodore Schroeder was looking on, unamused by these "rigorous psychologic tests," as the professor quaintly described them. "To me," the anti-Mormon but honest Schroeder wrote, "they seem not at all rigorous nor a valid test of anything, and not even an important contribution to any problem except perhaps to the psychology of Dr. Prince…. [They] assume the very thing to be proven, namely: that the Book of Mormon names are of Smith's coinage." This fact shows Prince's method to be "so defective as to leave his conclusions wholly valueless. He reasons around in a circle."[22]

Nonetheless, Brodie is certain of the connection between Gadiantonism and Masonry; there is no tentativeness. Gadianton and Masonic oaths are not merely analogous; the former are, as she informs us, "bald parallels" of the latter. The Book of Mormon account "stemmed directly" from Masonic inspiration. Brodie is able to refer, without the slightest hint that alternative views might exist, to "Gadianton Masonry." So sure is Brodie that she even manufactures parallels out of thin. air: "Like the Masons, the Gadiantons claimed to derive their secrets from Tubal Cain."[23] This, if true, would have improved her case considerably—but the Book of Mormon nowhere mentions Tubal Cain. According to L. Hicks, Tubal-Cain is the "the eponymous ancestor of ancient metalworkers," as reflected in Genesis 4:22.[24] Brodie perhaps confused him with his ancestor Cain, with whom the Book of Mormon *does* associate the rise of "secret combinations" (see Helaman 6:27; Ether 8:15).[25]

David Persuitte agrees with Brodie on the identification of the Gadianton robbers with the Masons and on the origin of the Gadianton band in the controversies surrounding the disappearance of William Morgan.[26] However, Persuitte is less dogmatic on the matter than is Brodie and clearly feels obliged to establish his case by argument rather than by mere *ex cathedra* assertion. Evidently he does not claim the mystical insight into Joseph Smith's mind that, as Hugh Nibley pointed out years ago, is so prominent a feature of Fawn Brodi s biographical method. Persuitte contends for his proposition on the basis of the theory that "the Gadiantons of *The Book of Mormon* have … similarities with the popular rhetoric about the Masons."[27] "Joseph made a blunder," Persuitte remarks, "by having his book refer so frequently to the Masons. These references tag the book as a product of the early

nineteenth century."[28] Prince, noting the same alleged connections, is able to date the book to the period 1826-29, with the year 1827 standing out in particular.[29]

In the next few pages, I shall review the main similarities noted by Fawn Brodie, Robert Hullinger, David Persuitte, and Dan Vogel, four of the theory's chief modern devotees, between the Gadianton robbers of the Book of Mormon and the Masons of Joseph Smith's America. I shall then examine those purported similarities for significance and cogency.

What, then, are the main parallels adduced by our sources?

1. They point out that both the Gadianton movement and the Masons have secret signs and secret words that aid in mutual identification. Both have "oaths for fraternal protection" that oblige them to aid and protect one another, even in the committing of crimes.[30]

2. Persuitte notes that both the Gadianton robbers and the Masons claim ancient origin.[31]

3. Persuitte and Hullinger show that the Book of Mormon refers to the Gadianton robbers using two of the same terms newspapers used in referring to the Masons during the great anti-Masonic agitation of the late 1820s: Both groups are described as "secret societies" and "secret combinations."[32] "At the time of the Book of Mormon's publication," writes Dan Vogel in a recently published paper, "the term 'secret combinations' was used almost exclusively to refer to Freemasonry."[33] Indeed, Vogel asserts, the "secret combinations" of Doctrine and Covenants 42:64 (fear of which was one of the factors leading the Latter-day Saints to flee to Ohio in early 1831) can be none other than the Masons.[34]

4. In referring to 3 Nephi 4:7, Persuitte claims that "lambskins" are the typical garb of both Masons and Gadianton robbers.[35]

5. Persuitte notes the claim of 2 Nephi 26:22 that the Devil takes members of "secret combinations … yea, and he leadeth them around by the neck with a flaxen cord," and alleges the dependence of such a notion on reports that Masonic initiates bore a rope called a Cable-Tow around their necks.[36]

6. Persuitte points out that both the Gadianton robbers and the Masons of the 1820s were seen as a threat to the institutions of their native lands. Brodie implicitly makes the same comparison.[37] Not unrelated to this is Prince's declaration that "it is impossible to mistake the connection between the belief of the masses that the light sentences of the several men convicted of Morgan's abduction was [sic] an insult to justice and the statement in the Book of Mormon that lawyers and others connected with the ancient covenants conspired to 'deliver those who were guilty of murder from the grasp of justice.' "[38]

7. "If any doubt remains," asserts Persuitte, "that Joseph had the Masons in mind when he described the Gadiantons of The Book of Mormon, it should be removed by allusions in that book to the Masons of his own time."[39] He then proceeds to cite some of the prophecies and warnings of the Book of Mormon concerning "secret combinations" in the last days.

8. Hullinger sees significance in "the high percentage of anti-Masons among Smith's early converts in the 1830s when the anti-Masonic conflict was still fresh."[40] (He offers, it should be noted, no evidence of any such "high percentage.")[41]

9. Finally, as Bushman summarizes the critics' position, "Joseph Smith's later initiation into the Masons when a lodge was organized in Nauvoo in 1842 seems to confirm the idea of a fascination with Masonry, even though in Nauvoo Joseph was for the Masons instead of against them."[42]

Preliminary Evaluation

Bushman's just-quoted summary suggests one of the major difficulties presented by taking the Book of Mormon's Gadianton robbers to be a thinly veiled attack on Freemasonry. In order to do so, one must see Joseph Smith as a vocal and committed anti-Mason in 1830 who then, only twelve years later, enthusiastically joined the Masons and, as some would have it, borrowed the most sacred rituals of his religion from them.[43] "In other words," says Theodore Schroeder (himself an avowed enemy of Mormonism, who held to the Spalding theory and termed Joseph Smith "an ignorant conscious fraud"), "when the Book of Mormon was finished, Smith's 'obsession' suddenly and permanently disappears without any other explanation, and Joseph Smith himself became a Mason, in spite of this anti-Masonic obsession. Not long after its organization the Mormon church as a whole became a secret society and later was admittedly a 'bastard masonry.' "[44]

Is such a transformation plausible? It cannot, of course, be wholly ruled out. Nevertheless, there are some facts in the life of Joseph Smith and his family that make such an inference seem less than inescapable. First of all, the transformation from his alleged anti-Masonry to his universally admitted involvement in the craft cannot have taken twelve years. Instead, the sources seem to allow only thirty-three months. In a letter addressed to the Saints at Quincy, Illinois, and additionally signed by Hyrum Smith, among others, Joseph warned members of the Church of "the impropriety of the organization of bands or companies by covenant or oaths by penalties or secrecies." "Let the time past of our experiance and suferings by the wickedness of Doctor Avard suffise and let our covenant be that of the everlasting covenant as is contained in the Holy writ. and the things that God hath revealed unto us. Pure friendship always becomes weakened the verry moment you undertake to make it stronger by penal oaths and secrecy."[45] This letter was dated 20 March 1839. Noting that Hyrum Smith was among the signers is important, since, as I shall discuss below, he had joined the Masons already in 1823.

It was on 15 October 1841 that Grandmaster Jonas granted permission to George Miller to open a lodge of Freemasons in Nauvoo.[46] That is only thirty-one months later, just over two and a half years. Only thirty-three months after the letter, George Miller held the first Masonic meeting in Nauvoo, on 29 December 1841, at the office of Hyrum Smith. This meeting saw the election of temporary officers and the drafting of by-laws. On the following day, 30 December, the second meeting of the Nauvoo Lodge was held, and a petition was submitted, accompanied by a list of names applying for new membership. Among the applicants were Willard Richards, Brigham Young, Sidney Rigdon, Wilford Woodruff, John Taylor, and many other prominent leaders of the Church — including, most notably, Joseph Smith himself. (The formal admission of these new members did not take place until 15 March 1842.)[47]

The putative transition period may have to be shortened yet further. On 19 January 1841, less than two years after the letter to the Saints at Quincy, Joseph claimed to have received a revelation that made reference to Moses building a tabernacle in the wilderness, "that those ordinances might be revealed which had been hid from before

the world was." The revelation included a commandment to build a temple at Nauvoo. "For," Joseph quoted the Lord as saying, "I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times" (D&C 124:38, 41). If one were to accept the endowment-as-Masonic-plagiarism theory, one might believe that Joseph had begun fishing in Masonic waters at or around this time (although one must admit that similar promises go back to at least 16 February 1832 [see D&C 76:7]). Certainly the short interval between Joseph's Masonic initiations on 15 and 16 March 1842 and the introduction of the full endowment ceremony on 4 May 1842 would have left him little leisure for the massive reorientation of the Masonic rites that would be required on this hypothesis. And he was not idle in the intervening time, during which he organized the Relief Society, preached several major sermons, took part in several conferences and meetings, and concentrated on legal issues.[48]

Is a complete about-face on the issue of Freemasonry plausible in the space of just over two and a half years or less? It cannot, still, be ruled out. But is it not more plausible to assume that the kind of secret society condemned by Joseph and Hyrum Smith in their letter of 20 March 1839 and by the Book of Mormon, published in 1830, had, in their minds, no direct connection with Freemasonry?[49] This is no small question.

It is a question particularly relevant to the seventh of the parallels suggested by our sample population of the Book of Mormon's environmentalist reductors. However, a few moments of thought will show clearly that the alleged parallel rests on circular reasoning. That the prophecies of the Book of Mormon refer to the Masons of Joseph Smith's day is not at all obvious, though it is a possibility. To be certain that they do so refer, one must be certain that the secret combinations of the Book of Mormon narrative, with which those of the latter-days are equated, are in fact Masonic. But this is precisely the point at issue. An assumption that the Gadianton robbers are Masons cannot be used to prove that they are Masons. In fact, the March 1839 letter to the Church at Quincy, alluded to above, clearly refers to Sampson Avard and his Danites, and its denunciation of secret societies has no connection with Freemasonry at all.[50] (I myself see no reason to insist upon a simple one-to-one equation between the Gadianton robbers and any single modern organization. As I note below, at least some nineteenth-century Saints in this regard saw the persecutions they suffered as ample fulfillment of the prophecies of the Book of Mormon.)

There is scarcely more substance in the first alleged parallel, which notes that both the Gadianton movement and the Masons have secret signs and secret words to aid their adherents in mutual identification and protection. This is precisely what constitutes them as secret societies — and nobody denies the fact that they both, in a certain sense, fit under that category. But so do many organizations, including (apparently) the early Christian church itself. Around the year A.D. 200, for example, the Christian lawyer and apologist Minucius Felix wrote a dialogue named after Octavius, a deceased friend of his. In that dialogue, a pagan known as Q. Caecilius Natalis presents a sharp-tongued case against the Christians, in which, among other things, he labels them "a profane conspiracy."

"Assuredly," Caecilius declares, "this confederacy ought to be rooted out and execrated."[51] Their sins are many, and their offenses numerous, but all are made more irritating still by their clandestine character. "They recognize one another by secret signs and marks."[52] Commenting upon this accusation, the modern scholar Stephen Benko notes that "according to Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165) the Jews recognized each other by the secret sign of circumcision, and some pagans may still at this time have identified Christians with Jews. But the secret sign referred to by Caecilius could have been anything: the sign of the cross, the sign of the fish, or even a mark on the body, or a movement of the hand. It is natural for covert and persecuted groups of people to adopt such signs. In more recent times, secret societies such as the Freemasons have been suspected of using them."[53] (At least one of

the Gnostic groups of the third to fourth century, the Phibionites, did use a kind of secret handclasp for mutual identification.)[54]

Furthermore, that both Gadianton robbers and nineteenth-century Masons swear to uphold one another in crimes is merely the accusation that enemies of a secret, oath-bound society might be predicted to make — and both groups undeniably had enemies. What is needed is something more specific to link the two. However, this is not forthcoming. In fact, even on this score the dissimilarity between Gadiantonism and Freemasonry (as it was perceived by its foes) is striking.

"The [early nineteenth-century American] interest in Masonry," Richard Bushman notes, "provided a large market for anti-Masonic books and audiences for speakers who traveled from town to town to divulge Masonic secrets. The pamphlets rehearsed in great detail the lengthy Masonic initiation rites, elucidating the initiations into each of the degrees and going on to describe the specialized orders in Masonry's many branches." This is not at all what we find when we consult the Book of Mormon. "In the supposed anti-Masonic passages in the Book of Mormon," continues Bushman, "nothing was said about Masonic degrees or elaborate initiation rituals. Anti-Masonic books went on endlessly with all the details of how one passed from degree to degree, while acceptance of a simple oath of secrecy and allegiance admitted a person to the Gadianton bands." Anti-Masonic rabblerousers, Bushman notes, were "playing to the public's fascination with hidden rituals." The most intriguing parallel to be noted here, it seems to me, is that between these nineteenth-century charlatans and certain contemporary anti-Mormon lecturers, books, and films.[55]

One could actually argue that as many parallels exist between Baroness Orczy's "League of the Scarlet Pimpernel" — alluded to in the epigraph of the present article — and the Gadianton robbers, as between the latter and nineteenth-century Freemasonry. Members of Orczy's fictional "band" or "society" — for so it is called — are bound by a "solemn oath of secrecy" (cf. Helaman 6:25, 26; 4 Nephi 1:42) to their leader, who "works in the dark" (cf. 2 Nephi 9:9; 10:15; 25:2; 26:10; 26:22; Alma 37:21, 23; 45:12; Helaman 6:28-30; 8:4; 10:3; Moroni 8:27). This oath, the novelist informs us, "was one of obedience and secrecy," and members of the "League" — "who seemed to obey his every command blindly and enthusiastically" — were ready to lay down their lives in defense of their leader whenever he was in danger. From the standpoint of the novelist, of course, the Scarlet Pimpernel is a hero — as are the Gadianton robbers themselves from their own perspective (see, for example, 3 Nephi 3:2-10). On the other hand, to the government of revolutionary France, he is that nation's "most bitter enemy," since he conspires to deliver aristocratic "traitors" from the grasp of revolutionary "justice." Clearly, to a narrator from the government, the "League of the Scarlet Pimpernel" would be a conspiracy bound by oath to protect one another in the commission of crimes.[56]

What is one to make of these obvious parallels? Since the as yet unborn Baroness Orczy did not write the Book of Mormon, and since Joseph Smith did not write *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, probably nothing. What we see here are merely the promises of secrecy, loyalty, and mutual assistance generically common to groups involved in dangerous clandestine activity. A significant number of significant shared details would be needed to demonstrate the likelihood of a genetic relationship, but these are presently available in neither the case of Baroness Orczy nor that of the Freemasons.

Persuitte's observation – item #2 – that both organizations claim ancient origin is correct, but it implies greater correspondence than actually exists. Parallels as vague as this can be used to almost any purpose. For instance, E. D. Howe, the anti-Masonic editor of the *Painesville Telegraph* in Ohio, linked the Masons and the Latter-day Saints

(!) because of a common claim to antiquity.[57] Persuitte's nineteenth-century source alludes to the Masonic legend tracing the origin of their movement to Solomon, an origin nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints tended to accept. Thus Brigham Young, speaking in the Tabernacle on 10 February 1867, asked: "Who was the founder of Freemasonry? They can go back as far as Solomon, and there they stop. There is the king who established this high and holy order."[58]

But the Book of Moron never connects Solomon with the Gadianton robbers.[59] Instead, while the robbers themselves claim merely an unspecified antiquity, their opponents link them with Lucifer and Cain. (Early American anti-Masons, for all their conviction of the evil of their foe, did not assert so literal a link with Satan.[60.] On the other hand, the accusation of Satanic origin is precisely what we would expect in an ancient source. "The Fathers of the Church," Kurt Rudolph points out, "simply traced back the rise of Gnosis to the devil.")[61] The Lamanites did not attempt any objective historical account or ideological genealogy — no more than did the Nephite prophets in the face of the threat confronting them. Besides, virtually all movements in the ancient world sought to establish pedigrees back to earlier times; innovation has not always been thought a virtue as it is in today's technological societies. As on certain other issues, one is tempted to say that the environmentalist detractors of the Book of Mormon here reveal their limited, provincial knowledge of history. In the (largely Arabic) vocabulary of Islam, for example, the most common word for "heresy" is *bid^ca* — literally, "innovation."

But there is yet more reason to question the significance of this seeming correspondence. As D. Michael Quinn has pointed out, Masonic claims to antiquity were limited in scope, and the anti-Masons of Joseph Smith's day denied such claims in any event. "To have accepted the antiquity of Freemasonry, while arguing against its legitimacy, would probably have seemed inconsistent, if not contradictory, to most early nineteenth-century anti-Masons and largely irrelevant to the central issues of their polemic." Yet this, according to Persuitte's model, is precisely the argument the Book of Mormon implies — an argument wholly out of character for the anti-Masonry of early nineteenth-century New York.[62] "Based upon my reading of the sources," writes Quinn, "statements in early Mormon scriptures about the origin and purpose of secret combinations tended to reject rather than reflect the anti-Masonry of Joseph Smith's environment."[63]

Persuitte's demonstration — item #3 – that both the Book of Mormon and nineteenth-century newspapers refer to "secret societies" and "secret combinations" proves merely that the vocabulary of the English Book of Mormon is very likely that of a nineteenth-century American. This was never in doubt. Noah Webster's 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language* defines "combination" first as "intimate union, or association of two or more persons or things, by set purpose or agreement, for effecting some object, by joint operation; in a *good sense*, when the object is laudable; in an *ill sense*, when it is illegal or iniquitous. It is sometimes equivalent to league, or to conspiracy. We say, a *combination* of men to overthrow government, or a *combination* to resist oppression."[64] *Bouvier's Law Dictionary and Concise Encyclopedia*, originally published in 1839, defines "combination" as "a union of men for the purpose of violating the law."[65]

Furthermore, use of the word in this sense, although it may seem rather peculiar to modern Americans, has an old and very honorable pedigree. It appears numerous times in the works of Shakespeare, for example. The word is used precisely in the sense of "conspiracy" in *King Henry VIII*, where the Duke of Buckingham reveals Cardinal Wolsey's attempted treachery to the king: "This cunning cardinal the articles o' the combination drew as himself pleased ."[66] John Milton, in his *Animadversions* (1641), writes scornfully of "a combination of Libelling Separatists" and then, in the *Eikonoklastes* of 1649, denounces "Mysterie and combination between Tyranny and fals Religion."

(In a discussion of "Theevs and Pirates" in the same work, he expressly equates "combination" with "conspiracy.")[67] Such examples could be multiplied indefinitely.

More directly to our present purposes, use of the word in the sense of "conspiracy" was not at all uncommon in the United States during the decades following the American Revolution. It occurs, for example, in George Washington's "Proclamation on the Whiskey Rebellion" (7 August 1794) and in his "Farewell Address" (19 September 1796). It appears numerous times in the Federalist Papers.[68] It can be found in the context of labor relations (and even with the clear implication of secrecy) in William Cullen Bryant's "On the Right to Strike" from 13 June 1836, as well as in the Connecticut court reporter's account of the case of *Thompsonville Carpet Manufacturing Co. v. William Taylor, etc., etc.*, from January of that same year, and in a 24 April 1875 editorial of the *National Labor Tribune.*[69] That similar notions were current among Mormons of the last century is illustrated by George Q. Cannon's comments in 1900 on "secret organizations" in labor disputes.[70] Why should Joseph Smith not have used this word? (Does Mrs. Brodie's use of the phrase "secret cabal" to describe the anti-Masons' view of Masonry — cited previously in this paper — allow us to infer that she, or the Masons, or anybody else involved in the matter, has any connection whatsoever with the medieval Jewish mystical tradition of *qabbalah*, from which the word *cabal* comes?) In fact, so well-suited is the term as a description of genuine historical phenomena in the ancient world that one Latter-day Saint graduate student at a prestigious secular university was acceptably able to write in his doctoral dissertation of "secret combinations" in the days of the Roman Empire.[71] Appropriately, these were "combinations which prevented legal justice in a quest for extra-legal enrichment."[72]

Dan Vogel's claim that the phrase *"secret* combination" (emphasis mine) was used virtually exclusively to refer to Freemasonry at the time of the Book of Mormon's publication would, if true, be a fact worthy of note. But there is as yet no particular reason to think it true, and considerable reason to doubt it. Vogel's own evidence — which consists of seven anti-Masonic newspaper quotations[73] merely demonstrates what has been known for many years, that the phrase was indeed sometimes employed in reference to Masons. But this is a far cry from demonstrating that such was its *exclusive* use. (One could, by careful searching of the transcripts of the Army-McCarthy hearings, construct a powerful case for the proposition that, in the America of the 1950s, "conspiracy" meant "communism." But this would be utterly false and entirely misleading.)

What is needed, before one can confidently declare that the phrase "secret combination" was never used in non-Masonic contexts in the 1820s and 1830s, is a careful search of documents from that period of American history *that have nothing to do with the controversy surrounding the Masons.* This has not yet been done. Nevertheless, there is good reason already to predict that such a survey would not support Vogel's claim. After all, we have already seen that the term "combination" was an entirely ordinary word, in common use in early America to mean "conspiracy." And certainly the adjective "secret" is not so hard to imagine prefixed to "conspiracy." (We are not dealing here with an esoteric piece of technical terminology!)

A search of those nineteenth-century federal and state court opinions available on computer readily yields ten occurrences of the phrase "secret combination" — and most of the occurrences do not even relate to secret societies as such.[74] Unfortunately, though, many states did not begin printing reports with any degree of comprehensiveness until midway through the nineteenth century, and a large number of the older opinions are not on computer since they are not of current legal interest. Nevertheless, the following sampling reflects broad cultural and legal usage of the phrase "secret combination" in the nineteenth century:

In an 1850 decision, *Marshall v. Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Co.*, 57 U.S. 314, the United States Supreme Court warned against agents who are "stimulated to active partisanship by the strong lure of high profit" and denounced "any attempts to deceive persons entrusted with the high functions of legislation by *secret combinations* or to create or bring into operation undue influences of any kind." Such conduct was said to have "all the injurious effects of a direct fraud on the public." Half a century later, in *Hayward v. Nordberg Mfg. Co.*, 85 F.4 (6th Cir., 1898), the fraud of practicing deceit on the legislature was characterized as an attempt to deceive by *"secret combinations,"* citing the language in *Marshall v. Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Co.*

In *Hyer v. Richmond Traction Co.*, 168 U.S. 471 (1897), the court held that if courts could not be appealed to for certain relief, "it is evident that powerful *secret combinations* would be formed to procure vicious legislation under false pretenses."

In *Wiborg v. United States*, 163 U.S. 632 (1896), a conspiracy between a person and a captain of a ship was described as "a secret combination."

In the dissenting opinion in *United States v. E. C. Knight Co.*, 156 U.S. 1 (1895), a monopolistic agreement in restraint of trade was called a "shrewd, deep-laid, secret combination, [which] attempted to control and monopolize the entire grain trade of the town and surrounding country."

In *Lyon v. Pollock*, 99 U.S. 668 (1878), a case involving a Civil War Union sympathizer in Texas included among its facts the assertion that this person's life was "in consequence threatened by a *secret combination* of men known as the Knights of the Golden Circle, and that he was compelled to leave the country secretly and in haste."

In *Hoffman v. McMullen*, 83 F.372 (9th Cir., 1897), the court ruled on an agreement in restraint of fair competition, holding that "where there is a *secret combination*, call it partnership or any other name," the natural effect is the equivalent of fraud.

In a covenant not to compete, litigated in *Faulkner v. Empire State Nail Co.*, 67 F.913 (2nd Cir., 1895), the defendant had agreed not to disclose nor divulge any "information, knowledge, *secret combination*, or other thing whatsoever pertaining to or connected with the business."

In *Brundage v. Deardorf*, 55 F.839 (N.D. Ohio, 1893), a set of articles pertaining to local ministers contained a section prohibiting them from having "any connection with *secret combinations*, nor shall involuntary servitude be tolerated in any way."

Finally, in *United States v. Trans-Missouri Freight Association*, 53 F.440 (D. Kansas, 1892), an agreement in restraint of trade was held illegal since "it was apparent that the object was to form a *secret combination*, which would stifle all competition, and enable the parties by secret and fraudulent means to control the price of grain, cost of storage, and expense of shipment."

These opinions show that the phrase "secret combination" was commonly used in the second half of the nineteenth century, and over a wide geographical area, to describe any kind of secret agreement, coalition to exercise undue influence on the legislature, agreement in restraint of trade, secret business transactions, secret societies, and many other things. The phrase appears in catch-all pleonastic lists where the court is attempting to prohibit all forms of pernicious, secretive actions. These usages clearly demonstrate that the phrases "secret combination" and "secret combinations" were understood broadly in the nineteenth century.

The use of the term "combination" continues even today, of course, in antitrust regulation, where "lawful combinations" are distinguished from "unlawful combinations," much in the manner of the 1828 Webster definition cited previously. In antitrust discussions, "combination" is occasionally used as an antonym of "competition," and as a synonym for "monopoly" and "conspiracy."[75] One of the chief aims of combinations, so viewed, is the fixing of prices at artificially high levels, and the usual method chosen to effect this end is the source of the common legal phrase "combination in restraint of trade."[76]

What better term could Joseph Smith possibly have chosen to describe a group who had banded together among the ancient inhabitants of the Americas, "that they might get gain" (Helaman 6:17)? Thus, Joel Hills Johnson, reminiscing about the winter and spring of 1841, recalled that certain members of the Church in Ramus, Illinois, began to form what he termed a "secret combination," feeling themselves justified in stealing from the Gentiles.[77] Similarly, Heber C. Kimball claimed that the Kirtland apostates, in the winter of 1837-38, "entered into combinations to obtain wealth by fraud and every means that was evil."[78]

If some object that all of the decisions and legal materials cited above are considerably later than the 1830 publication of the Book of Mormon, I can only sadly agree that the laborious task of combing the unindexed and non-computerized legal and other records of the first half of the nineteenth century remains to be done. But the apparently widespread use of the phrase "secret combination" in nineteenth-century litigation, coupled with the highly conservative nature of legal language, leads me confidently to expect that the phrase was common in the earlier period as well. (The *Oxford English Dictionary*, under its entry for "combination," cites a certain Archbishop Bancroft already from 1593, whose language and intent is remarkably like what we seek: "By reason of their said combination and secretnesse used, many thinges lie hidde from those in authority.")

In fact, a survey of my own home library (lasting less than an hour) turned up one highly interesting specimen from precisely the period in question. (And since my collection concentrates on Islamic studies and classical philosophy rather than on nineteenth-century Americana, one can imagine what someone better equipped and with more time might turn up.) On 25 June 1831, Frederick Robinson, a journalist and Massachusetts legislator, wrote a letter to attorney Rufus Choate attacking bar associations as "monopolies in the practice of law." His language in doing so is directly relevant to our present concerns.

The bar association, he says, is a "secret, powerfully organized fraternity." He repeatedly terms it a "secret bar association," and refers to the "brotherhood of the bar" and "the secret brotherhood of the bar." It is a "fraternity," a "secret fraternity," "a privileged order," and a "secret, interested, organized body within the legislature." It is, precisely, a "secret society." Robinson accuses this "holy alliance" of "lawcraft" and charges that they have "set [them]selves up in opposition to the will of the people, and attempt by every means to invalidate the acknowledged laws of the land." The bar is attempting, he says, to seize control of the judicial system of the United States and to establish itself as a kind of aristocracy. This, he declares, "is an encroachment on the natural rights of man." Already, the situation is far gone. "Most of the offices of government are in your hands," he says to attorney Choate, expressly mentioning the presidents, governors, justices, sheriffs, judges, solicitors, attorneys of the state, and the press. He continues,

> The root of this aristocracy, which saps the liberties of the people and has branched out and covered the land, is in our colleges. Into these you are initiated in infancy; your seclusion from the world and your pursuits being different from the rest of society naturally excites your vanity, ambition, and pride; and even in infancy you look upon yourselves as a "superior order," as the future lawyers, doctors, priests,

judges, and governors of mankind; and you look upon the rest of the world as inferior—plebeians, laborers, educated only for manual employment. You are there permitted even in infancy to form secret associations, "Phi Beta Kappa Societies," etc., in which you are taught to recognize each other by signs and grips and passwords, and swear to stand by each other through life.

(Was Brodie simply somewhat off base? Is the Book of Mormon an extended critique of Phi Beta Kappa?)

"You say that the bar is a 'necessary evil,'" Robinson concludes.

I know that it is an evil; that it is necessary I deny. I know of no good resulting to the community from the existence of your secret bar association. Public good was not the object of your combination. It is a conspiracy against the rights and liberties of the people. The same motives influence you to associate into a fraternity denominated "the bar," which induce robbers to constitute a society called "a banditti," and one of these societies is as much a "necessary evil" as the other. And the *bar rules* of "these privileged orders" are not very dissimilar. The object of them both is to protect each other in their robberies and extortions, and to "put down" and destroy everyone who will not submit to their "rules and regulations," and become sworn brothers of the banditti, or the bar. Of these secret societies, however, the bar is the most to be feared. The one robs us of our purse, openly and honorably in comparison, in the highway, against law and at the risk of life. The other robs us, not of our purse alone but of our rights also, in the sanctuary and under the semblance of the law.[79]

The themes in Frederick Robinson's letter are so close to those sounded in the Book of Mormon that an environmentalist would want to cite it as a source — had it not been written more than a year after the publication of the Nephite record. And it has no reference to Freemasonry. Note the appearance in this final paragraph, in close succession, of the terms "secret bar association," "combination," "conspiracy," "secret society." Can any reader of the letter doubt that, for Robinson, the terms were essentially equivalent? Can anyone doubt that his not using the exact phrase "secret combination" was pure chance? Can anyone doubt that a more extensive search in period writings will locate precisely that phrase?

But what of Dan Vogel's assertion, based upon Doctrine and Covenants 42:64, that fear of Masonic "secret combinations" drove the Saints from New York to Ohio? First of all, we should note that Vogel offers no evidence whatsoever for his contention. Furthermore, there are plenty of reasons for the move other than invoking some supposed anti-Masonic paranoia among early Mormons: For instance, directing members of the Church scattered across several states was difficult for Joseph Smith; more members were in Ohio than in any other state; membership in Ohio was growing more rapidly than elsewhere. Finally, persecution and physical harassment were growing in New York. The move thus seems quite a natural one.

But then, who *were* the "secret combinations"? I think it likely that they were simply persecutors, the mobs with whom Mormons would become so wearily well acquainted.[80] W. W. Phelps, for instance, writing in the *Times and Seasons*, 25 December 1844, not many months after the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, did not hesitate to assign to persecution the same genealogy (back to Cain and Lamech) that the scriptures give to secret combinations (see Helaman 6:27; Ether 8:15; Moses 5:29-41, 47-55).[81]

Remarks made in connection with the 1884 murder of two missionaries in Tennessee also suggest such a linkage. At the funeral of Elder John Gibbs, held on 24 August of that year, Elder Moses Thatcher of the Council of the Twelve said, "I remember distinctly the impressions that were made upon the minds of some of our people when

they first learned of the organization of certain secret societies in the east, organized with the intention, no doubt, of taking life; and it is my strong belief and my firm opinion that the body which lies before us today, lifeless, is the result of the operations of the secret societies which, we have been forewarned, would be organized in the latter times."[82] George F. Gibbs, a brother of the murdered missionary and a ranking Church official in his own right, concurred. "It was soon after the Anti-Mormon league in Cleveland was formed, that my brother wrote and told me that the influence of that league had reached the Southern States. He stated that he had met that influence in conversation with and in the presence of mobocratic men, and I have no doubt whatever as to the correctness of Brother Thatcher's remarks in this respect."[83] Perhaps significantly, the perpetrators of the crime were said to have been dressed in the robes of the Ku Klux Klan.[84]

Newel Knight (1800-1850), recalling events in Missouri in July of 1833, described "the solemn covenant entered into by the mob, wherein they pledged their lives, their bodily power, fortunes and sacred honors to drive the Saints from Jackson Co." (Note the oath-bound character of the group, at least in Knight's perception.) This was, he says, an "unholy combination."[85] It was against precisely such persecutors that Joseph Smith had invoked the Lord's assistance in his prayer at the 1836 dedication of the Kirtland Temple. "We ask thee, Holy Father," he had prayed, "to establish the people that shall worship, and honorably hold a name and standing in this thy house, to all generations and for eternity; that no weapon formed against them shall prosper; that he who diggeth a pit for them shall fall into the same himself; that no combination of wickedness shall have power to rise up and prevail over thy people upon whom thy name shall be put in this house" (D&C 109:24-26).[86]

Thus, to at least some Latter-day Saints of the nineteenth century, "secret combinations" were simply those organizations or mobs that persecuted the Saints of God, "condemning the righteous because of their righteousness" (Helaman 7:5), acting in secret to carry out their evil designs. And the Saints had abundant scriptural warrant for such a view. On the other hand, there is no reason to suppose that the "secret combinations" alluded to in the Doctrine and Covenants have any connection at all with Freemasonry.

What is more, a proclamation Joseph Smith issued on 25 March 1843 in his capacity as mayor of Nauvoo clearly shows that the Prophet, who had by now been a Mason for somewhat over a year and who had introduced the full endowment ceremony on 4 May 1842, was still entirely capable of denouncing "secret combinations," and without any reference to Freemasonry whatsoever:

> Whereas it is reported that there now exists a band of desperadoes, bound by oaths of secrecy, under severe penalties in case any member of the combination divulges their plans of stealing and conveying properties from station to station, up and down the Mississippi and other routes: And whereas it is reported that the fear of the execution of the pains and penalties of their secret oath on their persons prevents some members of said secret association (who have, through falsehood and deceit, been drawn into their snares,) from divulging the same to the legally constituted authorities of the land: Know ye, therefore, that I, Joseph Smith, mayor of the city of Nauvoo, will grant and insure protection against all personal mob violence to each and every citizen of this city who will freely and voluntarily come before me and truly make known the names of all such abominable characters as are engaged in said secret combination for stealing, or are accessory thereto, in any manner.[87]

This document is of the deepest interest, for it shows Joseph Smith using the term "secret combination" — he later declared that his intention was "to ferret out a *band* of thievish outlaws from our midst" (emphasis mine; the word "band" is frequently used in the Book of Mormon with reference to the Gadianton movement) — many years after

the anti-Masonic agitation of the 1820s and in a context that clearly has nothing to do with the Masons. Furthermore, Joseph Smith the practicing Mason is the one who here decried the secret oaths of the thieves that bound them to one another in wickedness, and he did so on the basis of intelligence his long-time Mason brother, Hyrum, supplied: "In the office at eight, a. m.; heard a report from Hyrum Smith concerning thieves; whereupon I issued the following Proclamation."[88]

Is there any reason to doubt that neither the secret society Joseph and Hyrum denounced in their 1839 letter to Quincy, nor the "secret combination" they referred to in this proclamation of 1843, had the slightest connection with Freemasonry? And is there any reason, therefore, to suppose that the "secret combinations" of the Book of Mormon *do*? Furthermore, is it not apparent that the Book of Mormon's negative attitude toward "secret combinations" continues to be shared by Joseph Smith not only thirty-one months before, but also more than a year after, his public involvement with Freemasonry? Where, then, is the evidence of his alleged conversion from anti-Masonry in the late 1820s (during the translation of the Book of Mormon) to pro-Masonry in the 1840s (when he was revealing the ordinances of the temple)?

The contention of item #5 — that the devil's flaxen cord is the Masonic Cable-Tow — hardly seems specific enough to justify much weight being placed upon it. After all, animals are commonly led by the neck in cultures the world over, and the image seems a natural one, as in the example of the two long-necked beasts on the so-called "Narmer Palette" (ca. 3100 B.C.) from Hierakonopolis, which is now in the Egyptian Museum at Cairo. Even more to the point, the image of leading human captives by means of a rope around the neck is virtually universal in ancient art, and so must have been common in real life as well. The examples that come immediately to mind are Egyptian ones, like the Semitic captives from Syria/Palestine depicted upon the second pylon of Ramses III's mortuary temple at Medinet Habu, or the many prisoners shown in the triumphal monument of Sheshonk I (the biblical Shishak, who looted Jerusalem in the tenth century B.C.) at the temple of Karnak, or the victorious return of Seti I from Syro-Palestine shown again in the Karnak temple. Similar illustrations from the non-Egyptian art of the ancient Near East could also be multiplied indefinitely and without difficulty.

The Bible abounds with such imagery, too. "Loose the bonds from your neck, O captive one, Fair Zion!" says Isaiah, promising the restoration of Israel, "For thus said the Lord: You were sold for no price, and shall be redeemed without money" (Isaiah 52:2-3, Jewish Publication Society translation). Besides, the Book of Mormon mentions the flaxen cord only once, while the image of Satan leading his dupes is a ubiquitous one. He "leadeth them away carefully down to hell" (2 Nephi 28:21) and he secures them with "his everlasting chains ... his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance" (2 Nephi 28:18, 22). Where is the Masonic parallel for the chains?

A Near Eastern parallel that seems at least as close as the purported Masonic one is the "cord of fibre" [*habl min masad*] about the neck of Abu Lahab's wife in Sara 111 of the Qur'an. The nickname "Abu Lahab," or "Father of Flame," was applied to Muhammad's uncle ᶜAbd al-ᶜUzza b. ᶜAbd al-Muttalib for his (quite unfamilial) opposition to the message of Islam, and as a none-too-subtle hint of his ultimate infernal destination. So too was his wife Jumayl bint Harb b. Umayya promised punishment in the afterlife. E. W. Lane writes that the *habl min masad* of our passage came to be thought of in Muslim folklore as "a chain seventy cubits in length, whereby the woman upon whose neck it is to be put shall be led into hell." (*Here* is a "chain"!) *Masad*, he says, is basically "the fibres that grow at the roots of the branches of the palm-tree."[89] Will we therefore claim a tie between Masonry and the Qur'an because both use cords to lead captives?

Likewise, the parallel of item #6 — that both Freemasons and Gadiantons posed a threat to the institutions of their homelands — is too broad to prove anything by itself. What the Gadianton robbers here are said to share with the

imagined Masonic threat of the 1820s would also be common to the Bolsheviks, the First Continental Congress, the Egyptian Free Officers, and the followers of Oliver Cromwell. (The robbers are, indeed, and quite significantly, closer still to the Catilinian conspiracy of the late Roman Republic and to the famous Chinese Boxer rebellion. I plan to discuss these two movements in a sequel to the present paper.) Taken in connection with other parallels, this one might have significance — but its validity most definitely rests upon the validity of those other parallels, which is not at all well established.

The comparison Prince made between the allegations, on the one hand, that Masonic judges had given light sentences to their fellow Masons in the Morgan murder trial, and the description in 3 Nephi 6:29, on the other hand, of those who, because of their Gadianton oath, "deliver those who were guilty of murder from the grasp of justice," is an interesting one. The comparison would be far more interesting still if we had an account of any early Latter-day Saint who had made the same comparison. To my knowledge, we do not.

Incidentally, Prince did not quote the following verse, 3 Nephi 6:30, which represents the Gadiantons as covenanting with one another "to establish a king over the land." How would this fit the context of Joseph Smith's America and the contemporary anti-Masonic furor? "Anti- Jackson politicians saw in the rising fever the makings of a political party," writes Fawn Brodie. "The Democrats were appalled to count nineteen anti-Masonic conventions within twelve months and began to wonder if they might lose the election because their beloved Andrew Jackson was a Mason of high rank. Masonry was being denounced everywhere as a threat to free government, a secret cabal insidiously working into the key positions of state in order to regulate the whole machinery of the Republic."[90] It is clear, is it not, which side the early and — so we are to believe — rabidly anti-Masonic Latter-day Saints would choose? The vast majority of the anti-Masons joined the rising Whig party — but, at least in Kirtland, the Mormons were "Jacksonian Democrats almost to a man."[91]

The lambskin parallel between the Masons and the Gadiantons, item #4, is an intriguing one at first glance. However, the Book of Mormon places no great emphasis on the lambskin mentioned in 3 Nephi 4:7, where it is simply one among a number of elements of clothing the Gadiantons wore. Indeed, it is mentioned only once in the entire book. (In view of Alma 51:33-52:1, which tells us that the weather was hot in the first month of the year in Nephite territory, it is possible that the events of 3 Nephi 4:7, occurring in the sixth month, took place during the cold season. Is this significant?) Clearly the proto-Gadianton conspirators of Helaman 1-2 have no distinctive manner of dress. Nothing in their clothing distinguishes them from the mass of people in the Nephite capital. Further, the description of the Lamanites as "wandering about in the wilderness with a short skin girdle about their loins and their heads shaven" is a staple in the Nephite text (see Enos 1:20; Mosiah 10:8; Alma 3:5; 43:20; 49:6). Apparently the Gadiantons, being now self-exiled in the wilderness, have adopted the dress of the Lamanites who share that wilderness with them. Manifestly, Persuitte is putting far too much weight on the item.

Another possible parallel to the Gadianton lambskin is the "sheepskin" mentioned in Hebrews 11:37-38 as being worn by saintly outcasts, who "wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." For we are, surely, to think of raw, undressed skins with their wool and hairs.[92] "Who were the homeless wanderers clad in skins?" asks Dom A. Cody. "Elijah and Elisha, David and Ezekiel, the Maccabees, perhaps, or even Jewish sectaries (cf. John the Baptist)." It may be viewed as a kind of "prophetic garb."[93] (One might, perhaps, read Isaiah 11:5 and 2 Nephi 30:11 with this in mind.) W. S. McCullough says that the description of clothing in Hebrews 11:37 is "cited as illustrative of the destitution which the saints of the past had to endure."[94] "[The book of Hebrews] obviously sees in this striking dress of the prophets an indication of their antithesis to the world, of their need and affliction, of their lonely life in the desert and mountains."[95] What better dress could there be for

outcasts in Nephite society? Especially for those who had, as I believe the Gadiantons had, religious or sectarian pretensions.[96]

Finally, to take up the last piece of apparent evidence, it is not obvious that a high percentage of anti-Masons joining the early Church would signify anything even if it were true.[97] "Converts paid no attention to anti-Masonry," writes Bushman. "With the Anti-Masonic party growing rapidly after 1829 in New England, New York, and Ohio, Mormon converts might be expected to join the campaign to rid the nation of secret combinations. Insofar as early Mormons had political preferences, they likely were anti-Masons, but these sentiments were entirely overshadowed. Lucy Mack Smith said nothing about Masonry, Morgan, or anti-Masonry in her autobiography. Joseph was equally neglectful. At the height of the anti-Masonic excitement from 1829 to 1833, Masonry was scarcely mentioned among the Mormons."[98] When early Latter-day Saint use of the Book of Mormon is surveyed, the theme of anti-Masonry is notable only for its absence. It simply isn't there. This fact is all the more surprising, Grant Underwood notes, because, at least at first glance, the early Saints were precisely the kind of people who *should* have been anti-Masons.[99] "One would think that the passages on the Gadianton secret society would have aroused Smith and his followers to active involvement in anti-Masonry, but the early Mormons apparently paid no heed, even when the Anti-Masonic Party was at the peak of its influence."[100]

Indeed, in a report on references to the Book of Mormon within Latter-day Saint literature between 1830 and 1846, Underwood has recently questioned even Bushman's tentative concession that the early Saints may perhaps have leaned slightly toward anti-Masonry. Bushman had admitted that little if any evidence existed for this proposition; Underwood adduces circumstantial evidence for the counterproposition that the Saints may, in fact, have tended to *oppose* anti-Masonry.[101] (Eber D. Howe, the virulently anti-Masonic editor of the Painesville Telegraph, actually charged in March 1831 that the Masons and the Mormons were about to join together in a grand conspiracy against the Republic. Had the Book of Mormon not been printed at a "masonic press"?[102] It isn't clear to me just what being a "masonic press" would imply. However, even if Grandin's press were, in some sense, "masonic," the fact would seem to mean very little: Joseph and Oliver had also tried diligently to secure the services of Thurlow Weed, an *anti*-Masonic publisher in Rochester. If anything can be concluded from this, it is probably that, for them, other issues, such as Masonry and anti-Masonry, were of little concern when compared with the transcendent importance of getting the Book of Mormon published.)

This should not be surprising, since there is no good evidence that Joseph was caught up in the anti-Masonic enthusiasms of upstate New York in any event. The most obvious evidence for the negative is that he has little or nothing to say on the subject in extant sources. (And remember, it will not do simply to assume that the Gadianton robbers are Masons, and then cite the Book of Mormon as evidence for Joseph's obsession with anti-Masonry, which obsession then proves that the Gadianton robbers are mere fictionalized Masons. That's a logical fallacy known as "begging the question.")

Furthermore, a survey of the Palmyra area newspaper citations commonly quoted to show the pervasiveness there of anti-Masonic themes reveals advocates of the Gadianton-Mason equation to be stumbling over a very elementary but important fact: Historians who ought to know better have often written as though Joseph Smith must have resonated to every tremor of enthusiasm and paranoia that affected the Palmyra area.[103] Even if this patently unproven assertion were true, it is not obvious that it would have any relevance to the Book of Mormon. Fawn Brodie glides smoothly over a major problem when she concludes her summary of the anti-Masonic controversy with the words, "So it happened that Joseph Smith was writing the Book of Mormon in the thick of a

political crusade that gave backwoods New York, hitherto politically stagnant and socially déclassé, a certain prestige and glory."[104] The point is that the translation of the Book of Mormon did not occur in Palmyra, but rather, for the most part, in Harmony, Pennsylvania. In other words, for almost every dated Palmyra article commonly adduced, Joseph was two or three or perhaps even four days distant (in an age that lacked telephone, radio, and television). It may, of course, be the case that anti-Masonry was all the rage in Harmony as well, but this cannot be assumed without proof—and, so far as I am aware, nobody has attempted to adduce proof. Brodie asserts that the controversy spread beyond New York and eventually involved eight states. This may well be true. But the fact remains that frantically anti-Masonic quotations from *Palmyra* newspapers have no clearly demonstrated direct relevance to the mind of Joseph Smith.[105]

The matter of Joseph's alleged fascination with Masonry thus becomes rather problematic. And it is difficult, anyway, to believe that Joseph was a dedicated anti-Mason in 1830 when, as Hullinger himself admits, his dear brother Hyrum — who, be it also recalled, would later sign the 1839 letter to the Saints at Quincy, denouncing secret societies — had been a member of the Mount Moriah Lodge, Palmyra Lodge No. 112, since 1823.[106] (This is the brother whom Brodie implicitly identifies—and implies that Joseph identified — with the Book of Mormon's Sam. He was the older brother who faithfully followed the younger. If Brodie is correct, this identification was present from the very beginning of the book)[107]

Furthermore, the difficulty grows yet more daunting when one considers the possibility that the entire Smith family, and not just Hyrum, was involved in attempts "to win the faculty of Abrac" at least indirectly by its Masonic lore.[108] This is, admittedly, a controversial issue. Quinn attempts to downplay the Masonic connections of "Abrac,"[109] while others have denied altogether the involvement of the Smith family in such things. I do not pretend to have the definitive answer to this dispute, but I do note that, *if* the Smiths were involved in Masonic practices during the 1820s, they would seem unlikely anti-Masons during the same period. Some writers have attempted to have things both ways.

And having Joseph then turn around in the 1840s to steal his most sacred ritual from the Masons involves a rather implausibly sudden — and utterly undocumented — turnaround. Because he is aware of this difficulty, presumably, Hullinger offers a compromise. "Joseph Smith," he claims, "condemned current expressions of Masonry, but accepted it as a truly ancient form of God's way of maintaining relationships from Adam onward."[110] But if, as we have seen, the Gadianton-Freemasonic parallel is problematic, evidence for the proposition that the Book of Mormon is a tract for the *reform* of Masonry is utterly invisible.

I conclude from the brief summary and evaluation of alleged Gadianton-Masonic parallels given above that the attempt to read the Book of Mormon as even a partially implicit discussion of Freemasonry is badly flawed. It has always seemed odd to me to see the book as a lumpy stew of frontier revivalism, half-understood post-Reformation theology, assorted economic and class anxieties, topped with a generous helping of yahoo obscurantism. Its coherence is one of its most obvious qualities. "We may miss the point," writes Richard L. Bushman,

> if we treat the Book of Mormon as if it were [a] kind of hodgepodge. Sometimes we employ a proof text method in our analyses, taking passages out of context to prove a point. We seek to associate a few words or an episode with Smith or his time, the Masons here, republican ideology there, then a touch of Arminianism or of evangelical conversion preaching. While that kind of analysis may have its uses, it has had disappointing results."[111]

But the equation of the Gadianton robbers with the Freemasons fails on its own demerits, even in isolation. I believe with D. Michael Quinn "that anti-Masonic interpretations of the Book of Mormon, at least as they have been expressed so far in the literature, fit the context of these passages only superficially."[112]

Mormon Responses

Whenever we encounter something new, we bring it into our mental inventory by assimilating it to things that we already know. This is the very essence of language, by which a limited number of lexical items, words, and a much more severely limited number of letters or characters serves on the whole quite adequately to describe both remembered and fresh experience. All language is metaphor. And in the nineteenth century, Masonry was an almost ubiquitous phenomenon, a readily available metaphor. In Arthur Conan Doyle's early tale "A Scandal in Bohemia," for instance, Freemasonry serves simply to represent the easy intimacy of the late Victorian working class, so different from the reserve and formality of their social superiors. "There is a wonderful sympathy and freemasonry among horsey men," Sherlock Holmes says to Dr. Watson, explaining the disguise he had adopted in order to observe the flat of Miss Irene Adler.[113] And the implicit comparison continues to be made today. "Terrorists are building new alliances," writes Rushworth Kidder in the *Christian Science Monitor*. "Isolated groups are beginning to come together in what John Newhouse, a *New Yorker* writer, has dubbed 'a freemasonry of terrorism.' "[114] Obviously, nobody means by such statements that any real connection exists between a Masonic lodge in Wisconsin, say, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine or the Japanese Red Army Faction.

An excellent example of this sort of thing is found in Islamic studies, in the case of the Nizari Ismaᶜili Shiᶜ ite sect known as the "Assassins" (their title alone should indicate at least a portion of their relevance to the Gadianton robbers).[115] For the West, the Viennese literary figure Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall put together the standard form of their story in his book *Geschichte der Assassinen*, published in 1818.[116] "He devoted a whole book to their history," remarks Marshall Hodgson,

> but it was conceived more as a polemic against the revolutionary danger of secret societies than as an investigation of the Nizaris themselves; he stressed all the appalling wickedness of which he found them accused, and implied that one might expect the same of the Jesuits (and of the Freemasons), who were, after all, a secret order like the Assassins.... His work was translated into English and French, and evidently served as standard interpretation of the unfortunate sect, the numerous imprecations against whom he had indefatigably gathered, resolutely doubting any suggestion that might extenuate their crimes.[117]

Unfortunately, the pseudo-parallel with the Masons affixed itself firmly to Ismaᶜilism. The Ismaᶜ ilis, wrote DeLacy O'Leary in his *Short History of the Fatimid Khalifate*, were a "masonic fraternity," "a kind of free-masonry."[118] Even the loosely related group known as the "Brethren of Purity" is, to him, "a kind of masonic society at Basra."[119] When Duncan MacDonald describes the alleged early agnostic Ismaᶜ ili conspiracy of Maymun al-Qaddah, he too can fall back only on what he knows: "The working of this plan," he comments, "was achieved by a system of grades like those in freemasonry."[120] Perhaps most surprisingly, Ismail Poonawala, himself a contemporary Indian-American Ismaᶜ ili scholar, chooses to speak of early Ismaᶜ ilism's "secretive character and mysterious quasi-masonic organization."[121] This is astonishing because, as Wladimir Ivanow pointed out in an article published years ago, "it appears that all the stories about the 'degrees of initiation,' similar to masonic degrees, etc., are pure fiction — genuine Ismaᶜ ili literature preserves no trace of them."[122]

It is hardly surprising therefore that some saw Freemasonry in the Gadianton robbers. (After all, several astronomers saw Schiaparelli's illusory Martian canals.) The question is whether we should continue to be bound in our understanding of the Book of Mormon by a metaphor with such limited appropriateness. Certainly we should not conclude that the Gadianton robbers are a figment of someone's nineteenth-century imagination simply because a handful of historians could distort them to make them fit the Procrustes bed of other modern imaginations, any more than we should conclude that the Assassins were fictional.

Richard Bushman has pointed out that the critics of the Book of Mormon who have wanted to link it to Joseph Smith's nineteenth-century New York environment have tended to focus on similarities between the Gadiantons and the Masons, while overlooking the considerable differences. Alexander Campbell is a case in point.

> Conditioned by anti-Masonic rhetoric, he understandably reacted to familiar elements in the story, but readers approaching from another perspective might have noted quite different aspects of the Gadianton bands. They could with equal ease be perceived as modern terrorist guerrillas, dissenters at war with the old order, penetrating villages on the margins of official control, undermining from within, and attacking openly when they had strength. Viewed in context, the Masonic-like oaths and covenants were secondary to direct attacks on government through assassinations and military raids.

(Indeed, as I have pointed out before, the Gadianton oaths and covenants seem to have been "Masonic-like" only in the broadest and most generic sense.)

"In the supposed anti-Masonic passages in the Book of Mormon," Bushman continues,

> nothing was said about Masonic degrees or elaborate initiation rituals. Anti-Masonic books went on endlessly with all the details of how one passed from degree to degree, while acceptance of a simple oath of secrecy and allegiance admitted a person to the Gadianton bands. Nor did the Gadiantons connect with Solomon's temple, the Masonic craft, or Hiram, builder of the great temple. Perhaps most important, the crucial event in the anti-Masonic campaign, the murder of the Masonic traitor William Morgan in 1826, had no equivalent in the Book of Mormon.[123]

Another Latter-day Saint response to the alleged identity between Gadiantonism and Freemasonry has been to assert the secularism of the Gadianton movement and to deny it any real ideological character.[124] "A frequent charge against Masonry," notes Ostler, "also absent from the Book of Mormon, was that it displaced Christianity by being a religion in itself…. Book of Mormon bands of robbers were not a quasi-religious fraternity, but rather resemble bands of robbers and insurgents in the ancient Near East identifiable in legal materials from early Babylonia to Josephus."[125] As I hope to show in the near future, this assertion will have to be modified — but in a way that does not necessarily weaken it. Indeed, although I doubt that many truly secular mass movements are to be found anywhere in the ancient world, I am also convinced that the multi-faceted Gadianton phenomenon can profitably be examined from a secular perspective — provided that it is not exclusively or reductively so. To examine it along one such line of inquiry is, indeed, the burden of my essay on "The Gadianton Robbers as Guerrilla Warriors" in the present volume.

However, the fact that the Book of Mormon authors elected to treat Gadiantonism as a secular robber gang does not necessarily make them such. A close reading of the text even in its present tendentious state demonstrates that Gadiantonism was an ideological movement and an alternative religious vision of considerable seductive power. "Therefore," Alma counsels his son Helaman,

Ye shall keep these secret plans of their oaths and their covenants from this people, and only their wickedness and their murders and their abominations shall ye make known unto them; and ye shall teach them to abhor such wickedness and abominations and murders; and ye shall also teach them that these people were destroyed on account of their wickedness and abominations and their murders…. Trust not those secret plans unto this people, but teach them an everlasting hatred against sin and iniquity. (Alma 37:29, 32.)

Thus, the annalists and editors of the Book of Mormon deliberately attempt to present us with a one-sided view of a many-faceted movement. Even so, however, Ostler is correct in noting that the side they choose to present is not the side that the Palmyra milieu would have suggested to Joseph Smith had he merely been spinning out a naive anti-Masonic fiction.

Clearly, the Gadianton robbers and the Masons differ at many crucial points. "The differences may explain," says Bushman, "why critics in Joseph Smith's own day made so little of anti-Masonry in the Book of Mormon."[126] Alexander Campbell barely mentioned the Masons in passing in his 1831 critique. Subsequent critics of the 1830s failed to bring them up at all, since they accepted the Spalding theory of the book's origin — which could hardly reflect the anti-Masonic movement because Solomon Spalding had died in 1816, well before the Morgan case and the ensuing clamor. Eventually, Campbell himself came to accept the Spalding theory and, consequently, dropped his allegation about Masonry.[127] Such facts, coupled with early Mormon silence on Masonry, justify Bushman's remark that "The people who knew anti-Masonry and the Book of Mormon in the 1830s made less of the connection than critics today."[128]

Notes

1. Baroness Orczy, *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (New York: New American Library, Signet Classics, 1974), 27.

2. Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1984), 128. Briefly stated, the Spalding theory alleges that the real author of the Book of Mormon was a lapsed clergyman named Solomon Spalding (or Spaulding), whose manuscript romance about a group of sailors blown off course to the New World was stolen after his death by Sidney Rigdon and conveyed to Joseph Smith. The two of them, or Rigdon alone, or Rigdon and Oliver Cowdery, or any combination of the preceding with Parley Pratt, added a religious overlay to what had been a mere secular yarn and published it as a purported scripture. This theory was born in 1833 and given publicity the following year by Eber D. Howe's *Mormonism Unvailed* (Painesville: n.p., 1834). However, Spalding's manuscript was rediscovered and published in 1885 and proved to bear only the slightest resemblance to the Book of Mormon. No reputable scholar today holds to the Spalding theory. On the whole, its advocacy is left to such people as the notorious "Dr." Walter Martin, recently deceased. For analyses and summary information on the matter, see Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History,* 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), 442-56; and Lester E. Bush, Jr., "The Spalding Theory Then and Now," *Dialogue* 10 (Autumn 1977): 40-69. A critical review of one recent reincarnation of the Spalding theory is L. Ara Norwood, "Review of Vernal Holley, *Book of Mormon Authorship: A Closer Look,*" in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 1 (1989): 80-88.

3. Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1957), 32.

4. Ibid., 24. Some of the traces of early New York that O'Dea sees in the Book of Mormon are discussed on 26-27, 31-32, 39. With his identification of "revival exhortation" (23) and "slightly concealed revival meetings" (28), as

well as his discovery that "the doctrine of the book is wholeheartedly and completely Arminian" (28), O'Dea seems pretty well to have set the research agenda for at least one contemporary critic of Book of Mormon historicity.

5. Cited in Newell G. Bringhurst, "Fawn Brodie and Her Quest for Independence," *Dialogue* 22 (Summer 1989): 79.

6. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History,* 413.

7. Walter F. Prince, "Psychological Tests for the Authorship of the Book of Mormon," *American Journal of Psychology* 28 (July 1917): 373.

8. O'Dea, *The Mormons,* 266, n. 1. He does acknowledge that the question is a "not-quite-solved historical problem." At the risk of smugness, one might point out that, if the answer "4" were excluded as the possible sum of 2 and 2, the question "2 + 2 = ?" would long remain "not-quite-solved," as well.

9. Ibid., 35.

10. Prince, "Psychological Tests," 376.

11. The phrase is from O'Dea, *The Mormons,* 40.

12. Alexander Campbell, "Delusions," *Millennial Harbinger* 2 (10 February 1831): 93.

13. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mortnonism,* 128. See Campbell, "Delusions," 88-90, for examples.

14. Campbell, "Delusions," 88-89.

15. Ibid., 89-90.

16. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History,* 63. For her general discussion of the issue, see 63-66. Other descriptions of the episode occur at Robert N. Hullinger, *Mormon Answer to Skepticism: Why Joseph Smith Wrote the Book of Mortnon* (St. Louis: Clayton, 1980), 100104; Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism,* 12829, 231-32; David Persuitte, *Joseph Smith and the Origins of the Book of Mormon* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 1985), 174; Blake T. Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source," *Dialogue* 20 (Spring 1987): 73-74.

17. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History,* 65.

18. Ibid., 65. Richard L. Bushman has cast serious doubt on the alleged equivalence of Nephite and American governments, with particular reference to O'Dea. See Bushman, "The Book of Mormon and the American Revolution," in Noel B. Reynolds, ed., *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins* (Provo: Religious Studies Center, 1982), 189-211.

19. See Brodie, *No Man Knows My History,* 64 (note).

20. Persuitte, *Joseph Smith and the Origins,* 177.

21. Prince, "Psychological Tests," 380, 385, 387.

22. Theodore Schroeder, "Authorship of the Book of Mormon: Psychologic Tests of W. F. Prince Critically Reviewed," *American Journal of Psychology* 30 (January 1919): 67-68, 72. One of the names toyed with by the unfortunate Professor Prince, "Psychological Tests," 383, is, however, worth reexamining: "To us," Prince writes, "the Old French and Spanish name Isabel is richly grotesque considered as that of a descendent of Israelitish stock living in America some 2,000 years ago. The source of its adoption is clear almost to demonstration." What is that source? Why, it is a vague memory of the Castilian queen Isabella who financed Columbus. Since she was a Roman Catholic, and since Roman Catholicism is "the scarlet woman" to ultra-Protestants like Joseph Smith, "Isabel" becomes literally a practicing "harlot" in Alma 39. But is this really the source? I would suggest that the name "Isabel," far from justifying ignorant laughter, actually points to the roots of the Book of Mormon in an ancient text with Near Eastern connections, as follows: The "Jezebel" of 1 Kings in the Old Testament has long given that name a bad reputation — such that it would have been quite an appropriate name to bestow upon a harlot. In fact, the Book of Mormon *does* give that name to the harlot — only it does so in a manner arguably more accurate than could have been found in the King James Bible known to Joseph Smith. "Isabel", (cf. the modern German transliteration "Isebel") is, in my opinion, a far better rendering of the Hebrew "Izebhel" than is the KJV "Jezebel" with its misleading consonantal "j" (and better, even, than the Septuagint Greek and Vulgate Latin "Iezabel," which are presumably responsible for the KJV's rendering of the name). Thus, the name "Isabel" is unusually appropriate for its Book of Mormon context, but Joseph Smith could not have gotten it directly from his Bible.

23. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 65; see also the incautiousness of O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 35.

24. L. Hicks, "Tubal-Cain," in George A. Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 4 vols. and supplement (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962-76), 4:718.

25. On the other hand, Brodie is able to summarize the endowment ceremony as "essentially fertility worship" (*No Man Knows My History*, 279), so that there is really no way of knowing what she might have seen in the Book of Mormon text to suggest Tubal Cain to her. If we were to apply to her the method she practices on Joseph Smith, we might explain this useful bit of invented evidence by reference to "the unusual plasticity of [her] mind" (see ibid., 70), or to her "marvelously fecund imagination" (ibid., 44). "Mrs. Brodie is at her best when there is no evidence whatever to cloud her vision," David H. Donald, the Charles Warren Professor of American History at Harvard, once observed of another of her works. "Then she is free to speculate." For an enlightening collection of non-Mormon critical responses to Brodie, see Louis Midgley, "The Brodie Connection: Thomas Jefferson and Joseph Smith," *BYU Studies* 20 (Fall 1979): 59-67.

26. See, generally, the discussion at Persuitte, in *Joseph Smith and the Origins*, 173-80. Persuitte suggests several reasons for Joseph's alleged incorporation of anti-Masonic themes into his Book of Mormon (see ibid., 179-80; cf. 172-74, 206-7). The reasons are all quite speculative and beyond the scope of this paper. (It is worth pointing out, however, that the Lucy Mack Smith letter upon which Persuitt s argument partially rests is now admitted by its creator to be a twentieth-century forgery.)

27. Ibid., 176.

28. Ibid., 180.

29. Prince, "Psychological Tests," 374. Hullinger, *Mormon Answer to Skepticism*, 105-10, also tries to tie Masonry to the Book of Mormon generally, but his arguments are wholly unpersuasive.

30. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 65; Persuitte, *Joseph Smith and the Origins*, 177-78; Campbell, "Delusions," 88-89.

31. Persuitte, *Joseph Smith and the Origins*, 176. This may be the drift of Brodie's inaccurate allusion to Tubal Cain. See n. 17, above.

32. Ibid., 176; Hullinger, *Mormon Answer to Skepticism*, 114, n. 30 and 31. See also the references given at Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion," 73.

33. Dan Vogel, "Mormonism's 'Anti-Masonick Bible,'" *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 9 (1989): 18.

34. The identification is implicit at ibid., 27, and has been made explicit to me by Vogel in conversation. Doctrine and Covenants 42:64 should be read, according to Vogel's argument, in connection with D&C 38:12-13, 28-29, 32; 45:63-64; 84:117-19.

35. Persuitte, *Joseph Stnith and the Origins*, 177.

36. Ibid., 179.

37. Ibid., 172-80; Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 65. See also references at Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion," 73.

38. Prince, "Psychological Tests," 377-78. The Book of Mormon quotation is from 3 Nephi 6:29.

39. Persuitte, *Joseph Smith and the Origins*, 178; cf. Campbell, "Delusions," 90.

40. Hullinger, *Mormon Answer to Skepticism*, 113.

41. That Martin Harris had at least a little bit of anti-Masonry in his background is evidenced at ibid., 101; cf. D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), 161.

42. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonistn*, 130.

43. Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 184, provides references on the theory that the Latter-day Saint temple endowment is a plagiarism of Freemasonry. He rejects such an idea (on 184-86, 190), as do I.

44. Schroeder, "Authorship of the Book of Mormon," 70. I am not aware of anyone making such an "admission" as that referred to. I certainly would not. For Schroeder's opinion on the origin of the Book of Mormon and for his estimate of Joseph Smith, see ibid., 66.

45. Dean Jessee, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 405. Following Jessee, I have left the spelling of the original unchanged.

46. J. Christopher Conkling, *A Joseph Smith Chronology* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), 156, 158.

47. Ibid., 158-59.

48. For his activities during this period of somewhat less than two months, see Conkling, *Joseph Smith Chronology*, 162-65.

49. See Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 161.

50. Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 405.

51. I use here the translation given by Stephen Benko, in his *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 55. The two citations come, respectively, from *Octavius* 8 and 9. I am grateful to my friend William Hamblin for helping me to locate these references to secrecy in the early Christian church.

52. Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 9: *Occultis se notis et insignibus noscunt.* Here I use the translation of Gerald H. Rendall (London: Heinemann, 1966), 337. For a discussion of secrecy in early Christianity, with references, see Benko, *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians*, 126- 27.

53. Benko, *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians*, 60.

54. See ibid., 65; also Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis*, tr. and ed. Robert M. Wilson (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), 214.

55. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 129, 131.

56. Orczy, Scarlet Pimpernel, 27, 61-63, 81, 109, 153, 177.

57. See Max H. Parkin, "Mormon Political Involvement in Ohio," *BYU Studies* 9 (Summer 1969): 484-502, esp. 495.

58. *JD* 11:328.

59.A point noted, obliquely, by Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 131.

60. Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 162-64.

61. See Rudolph, *Gnosis*, 275. More will be said on this matter in another projected article.

62. Ibid., 162; see 161, 163-64, 166, 178-79.

63. Quinn, *Early Mortnonism and the Magic World View*, 161; see 164.

64. Italics in the original.

65. John Bouvier, *Bouvier's Law Dictionary and Concise Encyclopedia*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (Kansas City: Vernon Law, 1914), 1:528. Compare similar definitions at Henry C. Black, *Black's Law Dictionary*, rev. 4th ed. (St. Paul: West, 1968), 333, which was originally published in 1891, and Walter A. Shumaker and George F. Longsdorf, *The Cyclopedic Law Dictionary* (Chicago: Gallaghan, 1912), 168. Both of these dictionaries offer "conspiracy" as a synonym.

66. Shakespeare, *King Henry VIII*, I, i, 169 (references are to act, scene, and line). Its corresponding verb occurs in the same sense at *Macbeth*, I, iii, 111. On the other hand, the term is used more neutrally at *Twelfth Night*, V, i, 382;

King Henry V, II, i, 109; *Julius Caesar*, IV, i, 43; and *King Lear*, V, i, 29. The connection of the word with oaths and oath-making is illustrated by the duke's remarks at *Measure for Measure*, IV, iii, 145.

67. Dan M. Wolfe, gen. ed., *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, 8 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-82), 1:676-77; 3:509, 574.

68. See, for example, in the *Federalist Papers* 13, 16, 25, 26, 59, 70, 73, and 77 (all by Alexander Hamilton), and in the *Federalist Papers* 49, 51, and 55 (by James Madison).

69. For the latter three documents, see Mortimer J. Adler, ed., *The Annals of America*, 21 vols., index (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1968-1974), 6:248-51, 251-56 ("Labor Unions and Conspiracy"), 10:333-34 ("Secret Labor Organizations"). Compare Adam Smith's remarks (first published in 1776) in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* 1:8 ("Of the Wages of Labour").

70. Jerreld L. Newquist, ed., *Gospel Truth* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 42.

71. Richard Lloyd Anderson, "The Rise and Fall of Middle-Class Loyalty to the Roman Empire: A Social Study of Velleius Paterculus and Ammianus Marcellinus," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1962, 116-23.

72. Ibid., 112.

73. Vogel, "Mormonism's 'Anti-Masonick Bible,'" 18, n. 3.

74. Professor John W. Welch of the J. Reuben Clark Law School at Brigham Young University undertook the search at my request and summarized the results. I am grateful to him for his assistance. In every case cited that follows, the emphasis on the phrase "secret combination" is mine.

75. See A. D. Neale and D. G. Goyder, *The Antitrust Laws of the United States of Atnerica: A Study of Competition Enforced by Law*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 16-18, 86 n. 1, 330, 333, 458-60.

76. Ibid., 37, 39, 45, 247, 333 ("combination to eliminate competition"), 333 n. 1, 336, 341.

77. Joel Hills Johnson, "Autobiography," typescript in Harold B. Lee Library of Brigham Young University, 8.

78. Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Stevens and Wallis, 1945), 101.

79. The text is in Adler, *Annals of America*, 5:441-47, italics added; see also 7:124-27. Note that Robinson was a Jacksonian Democrat, see ibid., 5:598. Vogel, "Mormonism's 'Anti-Masonick Bible,'" would have us believe that fear of "secret combinations" was a hysteria peculiar to anti-Masons, who were uniformly anti-Jackson (since Andrew Jackson was a high-ranking Mason).

80. It is striking that the modern Greek translation of the Doctrine and Covenants renders the "secret combinations" of 42:64 by *tnystikai synotnosiai*, using the same word *(synotnosia)* as that used for the "conspiracy" to murder Paul that Acts 23:12-14 describes. The oath-bound nature of that conspiracy — the Greek word itself has for its roots syn ("together with") and *omnumi* ("to swear") — is perfectly appropriate for "combinations" in the Gadianton manner, as is its desire to murder a prophet and apostle of God.

81. *Times and Seasons* 5:757.

82. *JD* 25:281.

83. *JD* 25:283.

84. See Truman G. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith: The B. H. Roberts Story* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 145. This is the same kind of "secret combination," I think, as that considered in the case of *Lyon v. Pollock*, alluded to above. In view of their location, period, and apparent intent, the so-called "Knights of the Golden Circle" were most likely a Klan-related group. Although I have as yet located nothing specifically on them, Klan offshoots with names like Knights of the Air, Knights of the Flaming Sword, Knights of the White Camelia, Knights of the Great Forest, Knights of the Black Cross, Knights of the Flaming Circle, and Knights of the Golden Dawn, are well-documented.

85. See "Newel Knight's Journal," in "Scraps of Biography," as reprinted in the anonymously edited *Classic Experiences and Adventures* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969), 79.

86. See also *Messenger and Advocate* 2 (March 1836): 278.

87. B. H. Roberts, ed., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 5:31011. The text of the proclamation is also in Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938), 285. I am indebted to my friend and colleague Kent P. Jackson for bringing it to my attention.

88.*HC* 5:310.

89. E. W. Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1984), s.v. *masad*; see also J. G. Hava, *AlFara'id Arabic-English Dictionary*, 5th ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 1982), and John Penrice, *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Kor-an* (London: Curzon Press, 1971). Reinhardt Dozy makes it *"sparte,"* a kind of grass (Dozy's *Supplément aux Dictionnaires Arabes*, 2 vols. [Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1968]). Compare that with this rendering of the verse: "On her neck a rope of bast" (H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers, eds., *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* [Leiden: Brill, 1974], s.v. Abu Lahab). The *habl* under consideration here is, reports Lane, "a plaited rope, firmly twisted" (see Hava, *Al-Fara'id*; and Penrice, *Dictionary and Glossary)*. Hava is aware of an Arabic verb *masada/yamsudu* — obviously cognate with the noun *masad* — meaning "to plait a rope.") This is a parallel from the early seventh century A.D. and thus far later than the period the Book of Mormon claims for itself. But the Qur'an often mirrors ancient Near Eastern motifs, and it seems to me that this one is worthy at least of mention *(see* also M. M. Bravmann, *The Spiritual Background of Early Islam* [Leiden: Brill, 1972], 315-34, for potentially relevant materials from ancient Arabia).

90. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 64-65.

91. Grant Underwood, "The Earliest Reference Guides to the Book of Mormon: Windows into the Past," *Journal of Mormon History* 12 (1985): 82; see also Parkin, "Mormon Political Involvement," 484501; Milton V. Backman, Jr., *The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830-1838* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 24, 335. An as-yet-unpublished book-length study by Professor Backman on the Mormons in Ohio will include computerized statistical data on early Mormon Jacksonianism.

92. O. Michel, "Melope," in Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, tr. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964-76), 4:637. W. S. McCullough, "Sheepskin," in Buttrick, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 317, reads: "As sheepskin must have been one of the commonest leathers of biblical Palestine, the paucity of references to it in the Bible is remarkable."

93. Dom A. Cody, "Hebrews," in Reginald C. Fuller, Leonard Johnston, and Conleth Kearns, eds., *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1975), 1235 (942a).

94. McCullough, "Sheepskin," 317.

95. Michel, "Melope," 637.

96. Could there be a real referent for the warning against "false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (see Matthew 7:151 = 3Nephi 14:151)? Although by far most references to sheep or lambs in the Book of Mormon are metaphorical, as are most quotations from Old World writings, its peoples did raise sheep (see Ether 9:18; Alma 5:59; 25:12). That the Gadianton movement was characterized by a heretical religiosity (from the standpoint of the Book of Mormon writers) is one of the propositions I intend to advance in yet another paper on this topic, currently in progress.

97. Bushman, *Joseph Sntith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 232, n. 46, cites one piece of evidence that might tend to confirm Hullinger's claim—but in such a way as to lessen one's confidence in it.

98. Ibid., 131.

99. See Grant Underwood's examination of periodicals and pamphlets published before 1846, in his article, "Book of Mormon Usage in Early LDS Theology," *Dialogue* 17 (Autumn 1984): 35-74. Underwood explicitly endorses Bushman's assertion that "Masonry was scarcely mentioned among the [early] Mormons" at p. 81 of his article on "Earliest Reference Guides to the Book of Mormon."

100. Richard L. Bushman, "The Book of Mormon in Early Mormon History," in Davis Bitton and Maureen U. Beecher, eds., *New Views of Mormon History: Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1987), 4.

101. Underwood, "Earliest Reference Guides to the Book of Mormon," 82.

102. See Parkin, "Mormon Political Involvement," 494-95; Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 232 n. 46. E. D. Howe, incidentally, would immortalize himself in subsequent Latter-day Saint history with his 1834 publication of the first anti-Mormon book, *Mormonistn Unvailed*.

103. Thus Prince, "Psychological Tests," 378, claims: "The author of the Book of Mormon was, at the time he was writing it, powerfully obsessed by the ideas and emotions which characterized that popular movement [i.e., anti-Masonry] which, beginning in western New York in 1826, was to subside last in the same region."

104. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 65.

105. Ibid., 63. I thank John W. Welch for suggesting this line of thought to me.

106. Hullinger, *Mormon Answer to Skepticism*, 105; see also Schroeder, "Authorship of the Book of Mormon," 7: "At the time of writing the Book of Mormon, Hyrum Smith a brother and co-conspirator of Joseph Smith was already a mason, as also were Heber Kimball and others of the neighborhood who became leading Mormons. It requires more evidence than Dr. Prince has produced to prove that Joseph Smith had an anti-Masonic obsession, working subconsciously."

107. See the relevant discussion in her "Supplement" to the second edition of her biography, in Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 413-16.

108. Hullinger, *Mormon Answer to Skepticism*, 104-5; 116, n. 46.

109. Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 54-56.

110. Hullinger, *Mormon Answer to Skepticism*, 112-13.

111. Bushman, "The Book of Mormon in Early Mormon History," 5.

112. Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 161.

113. *The Strand Magazine* originally published the story between July 1891 and June 1892 in the series *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*.

114. Rushworth M. Kidder, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 13 May 1986, 18. Margaret Drabble's obscure allusion to "the esoteric masonic paradise of Oxford" also illustrates continuing metaphorical use of Freemasonry (see her novel, *A Summer Bird Cage* [New York: New American Library, Plume Books, 1985], 11).

115. A future article will examine that relevance in some detail.

116. Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte der Assassinen* (Stuttgart, 1818), was still used as an authority as late as the 1930s. Fortunately, it has been replaced in recent years by far more reliable and less tendentious accounts, notable among which are Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Order of Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizari Isma^{c}ilis against the Islamic World* ('s-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1955); and Bernard Lewis, *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam* (New York: Basic Books, 1968). Enno Franzius, *History of the Order of Assassins* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1969), is somewhat less reliable.

117. Hodgson, *The Order of Assassins*, 27.

118. De Lacy O'Leary, *A Short History of the Fatimid Khalifate* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1923), 17, 21.

119. Ibid., 139.

120. Duncan B. MacDonald, *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory* (Lahore: Premier Book House, n.d.), 41.

121. I. K. Poonawala, *Biobibliography of Isma^{c}ili Literature* (Malibu: Undena, 1977), 6. Professor Poonawala, my teacher in graduate school, has no rival in his knowledge of the vast and arcane field of Isma^{c}ili literature, and I

certainly do not dispute his mastery. That even he would use the Masonic metaphor shows how pervasive it has become, despite its inapplicability.

122. W. Ivanow, "Isma^ciliya," in the *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 181.

123. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mortnonistn,* 13031. (I have corrected an obvious printing error.) See Bushman's discussion of the anti-Masonic campaign on p. 129; cf. Hullinger, *Mormon Answer to Skepticism,* 101. Hullinger, ibid., 115, n. 32, looks away from the Book of Mormon to the Pearl of Great Price and sees the "Irad" of Moses 5:49-5p as the Morgan figure.

124. This, I think, is something of the approach taken by John W. Welch, "Theft and Robbery in the Book of Mormon and Ancient Near Eastern Law," F.A.R.M.S. Working Paper, 1985, and is reflected as well in Terrence L. Szink, "A Just and True Record (3 Nephi 1-5)," in Kent P. Jackson, ed., *Studies in Scripture:* Volume Eight, *Alma 30 to Moroni* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 128- 34.

125. Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion," 74. For the nineteenth-century claim that Masonry was a counterfeit religion, Ostler cites the *Proceedings of the Anti-Masonic Convention, 11 Sept. 1830* (Philadelphia: I. P. Trimble, 1830), 43-45, 79-83, 1027. For the ancient Near Eastern parallels, he relies mostly upon Welch, "Theft and Robbery," which I shall discuss in a future article.

126. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism,* 131.

127. Ibid., 131. It seems that the incompatibility of the Spalding theory with purported traces of the Morgan-Masonry excitement (which commenced in late 1826) in the Book of Mormon was at least a minor factor in Fawn Brodie's rejection of the theory (see Brodie, *No Man Knows My History,* 454).

128. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism,* 131; see Underwood, "Earliest Reference Guides to the Book of Mormon," 81.

Secret Combinations, Warfare, and Captive Sacrifice in Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon

Bruce W. Warren

In some ways, the rise of secret combinations described in the book of Ether and their relation to warfare and the subsequent captivity of kings parallel the Maya traditions and customs relating to myths of origin, secret combinations, sacral warfare, and the capture and sacrifice of divine kings in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica.[1] Just as the Jaredite record states that certain patterns of warfare originated with the organization of secret combinations, the Maya derive their customs of ritual warfare from ancestral gods, practices that they place in the third millennium B.C. The fact that some Olmec figurines were reused by the ProtoClassic Maya, who added Maya hieroglyphs dealing with royal accession, indicates some form of continuity with these traditions.[2]

This basic set of closely related themes, myths, and rituals can be found in various Maya materials, especially in the Quiché Maya sacred book, the *Popol Vuh;* the three famous hieroglyphic panels of the Cross, Foliated Cross, and Sun at Palenque, Chiapas;[3] Classic Maya painted ceramic vases;[4] Mixtec codices; and Maya stone monuments and stelae. Although clearly the sources and diffusion of the mythology of Mesoamerica are very complex, some of the items the Mayan materials discuss may be manifestations in later forms of historical, religious, and ritual events described in the Book of Mormon.

For instance, the *Popol Vuh* contains a fascinating episode centering around Vucub Cakish, his two sons, and Hun Hunahpu and his two famous sons the "hero twins" that may be related to the book of Ether account of the origin of secret combinations in ancient America.[5] The role of Vucub Cakish from the *Popol Vuh* and that of Akish in the book of Ether are similar. The names, too, are practically identical with the word *cakish* (which means "red feather," referring to the macaw parrot. Of course, it needs to be determined if *Akish* has any connotations involving feathers or birds). One of the names for Palenque is Xbalanque, one of the "hero twins" of the *Popol Vuh.* Benjamin Urrutia has pointed out that the first portion of the name Xbalanque means "small jaguar" and that the Jaredite name Shiblon or Shiblom means "lion cub" in Arabic.[6] The consonants in Xbalan are the same as those in Shiblon, that is, the *x* in Mayan takes the *sh* sound. The three Palenque hieroglyphic panels date the birth of these lords into the third millennium B.C. The key date for the rebirth of Hun Hunahpu and the birth of his "hero twin" sons is the latter part of the year 2360 B.C., which approximates the time of the Jaredite civilization.[7] Furthermore, some scenes from the *Popol Vuh* account painted in the Mixtec codices Vienna and Nuttall from southern Mexico depict events and origin myths paralleling the Book of Mormon story of the origin of the Jaredites.

Secret Combinations in the Book of Mormon

The source of secret combinations in the Book of Mormon is given in the following passage: Satan "did plot with Cain, that if he would murder his brother Abel it should not be known unto the world. And he did plot with Cain and his followers from that time forth. And also it is that same being who put it into the hearts of the people to build a tower sufficiently high that they might get to heaven. And it was that same being who led on the people who came from that tower into this land; who spread the works of darkness and abominations over all the face of the land, until he dragged the people down to an entire destruction, and to an everlasting hell" (Helaman 6:27-28).

The following passages provide insights into the structure of secret combinations in the book of Ether:

Now the daughter of Jared being exceedingly expert, and seeing the sorrows of her father, thought to devise a plan whereby she could redeem the kingdom unto her father. Now the daughter of Jared was exceedingly fair. And it came to pass that she did talk with her father, and said unto him: Whereby hath my father so much sorrow? Hath he not read the record which our fathers brought across the great deep? Behold, is there not an account concerning them of old, that they by their secret plans did obtain kingdoms and great glory? And now, therefore, let my father send for Akish, the son of Kimnor; and behold, I am fair, and I will dance before him, and I will please him, that he will desire me to wife; wherefore if he shall desire of thee that ye shall give unto him me to wife, then shall ye say: I will give her if ye will bring unto me the head of my father, the king.... And Jared said unto him [Akish]: I will give her unto you, if ye will bring unto me the head of my father, the king. And it came to pass that Akish gathered in unto the house of Jared all his kinsfolk, and said unto them: Will ye swear unto me that ye will be faithful unto me in the thing which I shall desire of you? And it came to pass that they all sware unto him, by the God of heaven, and also by the heavens, and also by the earth, and by their heads, that whoso should vary from the assistance which Akish desired should lose his head; and whoso should divulge whatsoever thing Akish made known unto them, the same should lose his life. And it came to pass that thus they did agree with Akish. And Akish did administer unto them the oaths which were given by them of old who also sought power, which had been handed down even from Cain, who was a murderer from the beginning (Ether 8:9-10, 12-15).

Therefore, behold, it came to pass that because of the secret combinations of Akish and his friends, behold, they did overthrow the kingdom of Omer.... And it came to pass that Jared was anointed king over the people, by the hand of wickedness; and he gave unto Akish his daughter to wife. And it came to pass that Akish sought the life of his father-in-law; and he applied unto those whom he had sworn by the oath of the ancients, and they obtained the head of his father-in-law, as he sat upon his throne, giving audience to his people. For so great had been the spreading of this wicked and secret society that it had corrupted the hearts of all the people; therefore Jared was murdered upon his throne, and Akish reigned in his stead.... Now the people of Akish were desirous for gain, even as Akish was desirous for power; wherefore, the sons of Akish did offer them money, by which means they drew away the more part of the people after them. And there began to be a war between the sons of Akish and Akish, which lasted for the space of many years, yea, unto the destruction of nearly all the people of the kingdom, yea, even all, save it were thirty souls, and they who fled with the house of Omer (Ether 9:1, 4-6, 11-12).

Cycles of prosperity followed by periods of hard times characterize subsequent Jaredite history. Secret combinations appear to follow the same pattern, with their prominence during prosperous times and their decline during hard times (see Ether 9:1, 26; 10:33; 11:15, 22; 13:18; 14:10). The Jaredite history also reveals the custom of beheading the king or those members of the secret combinations who divulged secrets (see Ether 8:10, 12, 14; 9:5; 15:30-31). Another well-documented Jaredite custom was the tradition of capturing the reigning king and holding him in captivity for long periods of time, sometimes for the remainder of his life (see Ether 7:7; 8:3-4; 9:7; 10:14, 30-31; 11:9, 18-19, 23).

Secret Societies in Pre–Columbian Mesoamerica

Secret societies in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica (in which the jaguar was the totemic guardian) were concerned initially with obtaining political power through warfare and obtaining economic gain by secrecy, deceit, and assassination, with the addition of later elements of open warfare resulting in the capture of enemy kings. Mexican artist and writer Miguel Covarrubias describes the nature of secret societies in Mesoamerica as follows:

In those days the ancient jaguar cult prevailed throughout southern Mexico and in Central America, superimposed upon the formal, official Indian religion. After the Conquest it took the form of politico-religious secret societies of people who had the jaguar as beast-kin or totemic guardian. These societies were called *nahualistas*, from *nawal*, totem. The word *nawal* or *nahual* is today the name of a sort of werewolf, a weretiger, to frighten children who won't go to sleep. The *nahualistas* were much like criminal secret societies of the African Tigermen. To quote Sahugun … , "People like assassins, daring and accustomed to kill, they carried on their persons pieces of jaguar skin, of the forehead and chest, and the tip of the tail, the claws, the canines, and the lips to make them powerful, brave, and fearsome." Chieftains who wanted to be courageous ate jaguar flesh roasted or boiled. It was used as a cure for insanity, for fevers, and "to cool off the temptations of the flesh."

In ancient times the jaguar was an earth god, symbol of the interior of the earth and of the night, of darkness, because jaguars were believed to swallow the sun and cause eclipses. He was the god of caves, the dark interior of mountains, the "Atlantean god of earthquakes, who supported the world upon his shoulders." As such he was worshipped throughout southern Mexico and particularly around Tehuantepec. The Maya of Chiapas called him *Uotan*, "Heart," "Innermost"; the Mexicans knew him as *Tepeyollotl*, "Heart of the Mountain," "Heart of the Land," and worshipped him at second hand, having acquired him along with the religious magic calendar from the tropical south, where he ruled over the third week as an ominous, unlucky sign.[8]

There are numerous parallels between secret societies found in many parts of the world, as Sorenson notes,[9] but often because of their secret nature very little is known about them. That secret societies did exist in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica and that they parallel to a certain degree those found in the book of Ether in some respects is nonetheless certain.

Maya Warfare and Jaredite Parallels

Two general aims of Maya warfare were the consolidation of rule and territorial expansion. Marriages between two dynasties or the obtaining of oaths of allegiance from other lords or chiefs often consolidated rulership. If marriage alliances and subservient oath swearing did not work, then warfare was the answer. These traditions are similar to the wars fought between Akish and his sons, as found in the Book of Mormon (see Ether 9:12).

A Late Classic Maya example (between A.D. 726 and 740) of territorial expansion by means of warfare comes from the site of Dos Pilas, Guatemala, on one of the tributaries of the Usumacinta River. The ruler of Dos Pilas conquered several of the neighboring kings and created a territorial state that lasted only until the conquering king's death. Then his successor was defeated and the expanded kingdom collapsed.[10]

Three examples of this type of territorial expansion will be described from the book of Ether:

After the space of many years, Morianton, (he being a descendant of Riplakish) gathered together an army of outcasts, and went forth and gave battle unto the people; and he gained power over many cities; and the war became exceedingly sore, and did last for the space of many years; and he did gain power over all the land, and did establish himself over all the land.…

There arose a rebellion among the people, because of that secret combination which was built up to get power and gain; and there arose a mighty man among them in iniquity, and gave battle unto Moron, in

which he did overthrow the half of the kingdom; and he did maintain the half of the kingdom for many years. And it came to pass that Moron did overthrow him, and did obtain the kingdom again.

And it came to pass that there arose another mighty man; and he was a descendant of the brother of Jared. And it came to pass that he did overthrow Moron, and obtain the kingdom; wherefore, Moron dwelt in captivity all the remainder of his days; and he begat Coriantor. And it came to pass that Coriantor dwelt in captivity all his days (Ether 11:9, 15-19).

Most of the Late Classic battles were fought just before a king was to accede to the throne. Thus two bearers carried the victorious king in a sedan chair at the time of his accession to the throne to witness the beheading of a captured king.[11]

Captive Sacrifice of Kings

From the 125 monuments known at the Mayan site of Yaxchilan on the west bank of the Usumacinta River in the state of Chiapas, Mexico,[12] it is possible to describe many details concerning Maya kings and ritual warfare.[13] We know, for instance, that the public dressing of the king was supervised by his wife. The king, in preparing for warfare, would dress in emblems of the central Mexican god Tlaloc, the Maya equivalent of Chac-Xib-Chac. Some Late Classic rulers at Yaxchilan were outsiders, hence the Tlaloc emblems. Items from the jaguar were part of the ceremonial dressing of the king. The gods of the Maya required blood-letting from many people, especially the shedding of the king's blood. Hence, on the same day as the ceremonial dressing of the king, a battle would be fought with some neighboring king. One of these kings must be captured. The captured king would be stripped of his clothing, bound, and often mutilated. This scene was followed by various blood-letting rituals involving many prominent priests and members of royalty. On the same day as the battle, or soon thereafter, the victorious king went through a ritual exchange of a jaguar paw with one of his *cahals* (a governor or subchief under his authority).

The fate of the captured king was usually horrible. He would be displayed publicly and stripped and bound on the temple stairway of the victorious king. Then he would be displayed in front of the victorious king's throne, at the feet of his captors. Some captured kings were immediately mutilated by pulling out their fingernails, cutting off the ends of their fingers, or pulling their teeth.[14] Scalping, heart sacrifice, beheading, and disembowelment[15] were other possible fates of the captured king. However, in some cases the captured king was kept in captivity for several years, as were many in Jaredite times, but most were ultimately tortured and killed.[16] In time, the ritual killing of the captured kings was tied to the sacred 260-day calendar, the planet Venus, and the ritual ball game (see appendix). Captured kings could be killed in more than one way, but decapitation, symbolic of certain astronomical events, was the main form of killing. As David Kelley notes, "It has been clear to all serious students of Mesoamerican culture that there was an intimate relationship between astronomical knowledge, the calendar, and religious beliefs and rituals."[17]

All this suggests that Jaredite secret combinations, warfare, and capture of kings have numerous parallels thatsurvived among the Maya for many generations. Though the forms of their rituals have changed, certain elements of rituals in Maya culture have remained since Olmec times (presumably the time of the Jaredites) even to the present day. With relatively few written records from Olmec times extant, a more exhaustive comparison is difficult at present.

Appendix: Ritual Ball Game

Detailed pictorial and hieroglyphic evidence from the Maya site of Bonampak, Chiapas, Mexico,[18] demonstrates that a prime time for ritual warfare was at the first appearance of the planet Venus as it emerged from either superior or inferior conjunction as either the Evening or Morning Star. Successful warfare was thought to depend upon the support of the gods of the planet Venus. Mayans usually initiated fighting on the last days of either the superior or inferior conjunction. This timing was important so that the ritual beheading of the captured king could take place in the ritual ball game at the time of the appearance of the planet Venus.[19]

This ritual ball game is representative of the earliest myths and legends of the Maya. In the *Popol Vuh*, the ritual drama of the brothers Hun Hunahpu (One Flower) and Vucub Hunahpu (Seven Flower) has its setting during the "dry season" when the two brothers are invited to the underworld of Xibalba for a ritual ball game with the lords of the dead. The brothers lose the ball game and are decapitated. Later during the "rainy season," the twin sons of Hun Hunahpu are also invited to the underworld for a ritual ball game with the lords of Xibalba. However, in the ball game, the "hero twins" defeat the lords of Xibalba and kill them. These sets of brothers have cosmic associations with the Sun, Moon, and the planet Venus.[20]

Certainly by Middle Classic times (A.D. 400-700), the *Popol Vuh* drama had developed to the point that the brothers Hun Hunahpu and Vucub Hunahpu have an intricate involvement in the sophisticated calendars of Mesoamerica. Kelley has demonstrated that the date 1 Ahau (1 Flower) 13 Muan occurs at the end of a calendar round of fifty-two years during the dry season, at the superior conjunction of the planet Venus, and that the same date occurs at the end of a 104-year cycle during the rainy season, when the planet Venus is in inferior conjunction at the autumnal equinox.[21] When the date 1 Ahau 13 Muan occurs at the autumnal equinox, it represents One Flower as the corn god Cinteotl ready for rebirth at the midpoint of the inferior conjunction of Venus. Significantly, 240 days later the other brother of the drama, Vucub Hunahpu (Seven Flower) is descending into the underworld at the superior conjunction of Venus.

When Hun Hunahpu (One Flower) descended into the underworld during the dry season and was defeated in the ritual ball game by the lords of Xibalba, he was decapitated. His head was hung in a calabash tree, and later he was reborn during the rainy season as the corn god Cinteotl mentioned above.

Note that all the lords and gods involved in the underworld ball games and sacrifices have names in the 260- day ritual calendar. In fact, Zipacna, one of the sons of Vucub Cakish, has the calendar name One Crocodile. In the Mixtec codices One Crocodile is married to Thirteen Flower, and his calendar name is the first position in the ritual calendar and his wife's calendar name represents the last position. Obviously Zipacna and his wife have fundamental connections with the ritual calendar. Thus the rituals were tied closely to the calendar since early times.

During the Classic period of Mesoamerica, there are several examples of captured kings (after playing in the ritual ball game) being taken to a temple and bound in the shape of a rubber ball and rolled down the temple steps to their death.[22] Then the captive king would be decapitated, and often his head would be coated with rubber and used as the ball in future ball games. Perhaps the curious Olmec monument from coastal Guatemala that shows the bodies of two individuals bound together into the shape of a ball reflects an early stage of this ritual ball game.[23]

The interrelationships between ritual and warfare in Maya culture suggest that being in harmony with the universe was of prime importance. Thus, the timing of warfare and capture of kings with the sacred 260-day calendar suggests that those kings seeking to gain power and control sought to be in harmony with the universe at the time of their accession.

Notes

1. For a general introduction to Mesoamerican secret societies, see John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1985), 300309.

2. Linda Schele and Mary Ellen Miller, *The Blood of Kings: Dynasty and Ritual in Maya Art* (New York: George Braziller, 1986), 119.

3. Esther Pasztory, ed., *Middle Classic Mesoamerica:* A. D. 400-700 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 129.

4. Schele and Miller, *The Blood of Kings*, 119, 127.

5. See *Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Ancient Quiche Maya*, trs. Delia Goetz and Sylvanus G. Morley (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950), 93-99.

6. Benjamin Urrutia, "Shiblon, Coriantumr, and the Jade Jaguars," *Proceedings of the SEHA* 150 (1982): 1-3.

7. Schele and Miller, *The Blood of Kings*, 60 n. 53.

8. Miguel Covarrubias, *Mexico South: The Isthmus of Tehuantepec* (New York: Knopf, 1947), 77-78.

9. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 300-309.

10. See Stephen D. Houston and Peter Mathews, *The Dynastic Sequence of Dos Pilas, Guatemala* (San Francisco: Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute, 1985); Schele and Miller, *The Blood of Kings*, 250.

11. See the Late Pre-Classic Stela 21 at Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico.

12. This site was occupied from Late Pre-Classic times through the Late Classic period (ca. 300 B.C. to A.D. 900). Most of the huge site was built during the Late Classic period.

13. See Schele and Miller, *The Blood of Kings*, 209-39.

14. Compare this parallel to Vucub Cakish in the *Popol* Vuh (see text accompanying notes 5-7).

15. Compare the Middle Pre-Classic Monument 3 at San Jose Mogote, Oaxaca, Mexico, dated to about 700 B.C.

16. Schele and Miller, *The Blood of Kings*, 14-15, 103-31, 175-207, 209-40.

17. David H. Kelley, "Astronomical Identities of Mesoamerican Gods," *Archaeoastronomy*, supplement no. 2, to *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 11 (1980): S1.

18. Floyd G. Lounsbury, "Astronomical Knowledge and Its Uses at Bonampak, Mexico," in Anthony F. Aveni, ed., *Archaeoastronomy in the New World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

19. Pasztory, *Middle Classic Mesoamerica*, 130, 138-39.

20. Ibid.

21. Kelley, "Astronomical Identities of Mesoamerican Gods," S19, S26—S28.

22. Marvin Cohadas, "Diverse Architectural Styles and the Ball Game Cult: The Late Middle Classic Period in Yucatan," in Pasztory, *Middle Classic Mesoamerica*, 86-107; Cohadas, "The Symbolism and Ritual Function of the Middle Classic Ball Game in Mesoamerica," *American Indian Quarterly* 2/2 (1975): 99-130; cf. Schele and Miller, *The Blood of Kings*, 241-64.

23. A couple of Early Classic scenes of ritual offering of decapitated human heads come from the lowland Maya and the Zoque region of Chiapas, Mexico. The first scene from the lowland Maya is from an unspecified site, and the second scene is from Mirador, Chiapas; see Cohadas, "The Symbolism and Ritual Function," 99100, who dates the ritual ball game to Olmec times.

The Impact of Shifting Cultural Assumptions on the Military Policies Directing Armed Conflict Reported in the Book of Alma

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In the midst of his accounts of military encounters described in the book of Alma, Mormon inserts an extended explanation of "the iniquity of the people" (Alma 31:1). Thirteen chapters (Alma 29-42) are devoted to reporting a contest of ideas and activities that affected both individuals and groups, describing problems and strategies to remedy these problems. Apparently the content of these chapters is significant to understanding Mormon's interest in the military events (see Alma 30:1-6; 43:1-3).

Mormon begins his commentary in the aforementioned thirteen chapters with a description of Korihor the anti-Christ and an encounter he had with Alma. The text clearly points to six propositions Korihor used in an attempt to dissuade Alma and others from their beliefs. Korihor argued that (1) religious doctrines and prophecies are foolish and unenlightened ancestors create superstitious traditions (see Alma 30:13-14, 28), (2) only evidence that the physical senses can confirm is valid (see Alma 30:15), (3) religious convictions result from a frenzied and deranged mind (see Alma 30:16, 28), (4) God does not intervene in life — we survive only by our own efforts (see Alma 30:17), (5) there is no such thing as a crime (see Alma 30:17-18), and (6) churches are instruments of bondage, slavery, and oppression (see Alma 30:27). These were not new arguments then, nor are they unfamiliar to those who live today. They are fundamental to a popular modern worldview.

Many contemporary scholars are writing books analyzing historical and present cultural manifestations of the fundamental conflict between Korihor's argument and its antithesis.[1] The underlying issue that makes the debate possible is the axial tension between what the Greeks perceived as the *mantic* versus the *sophic* view,[2] what has been identified in ancient Judaism as the *vertical* versus the *horizontal* tradition,[3] and what has been termed in the modern era as the *supernatural* versus *natural* perspectives.[4] In other words, does man look to God, to his authorized representatives, to a higher order, for light and truth to guide him in primary decisions; or does he look to himself, to his own unaided intellect, for solutions to his basic questions? Is the foundation of the human disposition to be vertical or horizontal, supernatural or natural?

Even in states of apostasy and under conditions of deception, as men by degrees fall away from the truth of God toward a reverence for their own power, the controversy remains clear. The reality Korihor doubted and the counterfeit he proposed remain as man's dispositional anchor points. The so-called "middle ground" or "the areas of grey" are just so many variations on the primary theme. The Zoramites are a classic example of one such variation (see Alma 31:1-23). No one needs to doubt the source of knowledge and power on which they relied in their day- to-day lives. Their hearts were far removed from the religious terms emanating from their lips.

As Justin Martyr explained to the Greeks, "Neither by nature nor by any human skill is it possible for men to know such high and holy things; but only by a gift that descends from above upon holy men from time to time." The only prerequisite is "to keep themselves pure to receive the power of the spirit of God, so that the divine plectrum can express itself through them."[5] This is the vertical look, the appeal to the supernatural. No training is necessary in analytical technique, speech, or skill in argument. The horizontalist, on the other hand, turns his disposition downward: it focuses on man and man's relationship to man. H. C. Wright describes this choice of basic assumptions as "the central problem of intellectual history."[6] We are of the opinion that it is also central to the

analysis of the military policies Nephite and dissident Nephite leaders used while directing the armed conflicts reported in the book of Alma.

Within the framework of this age-old conflict, Mormon reports the particular cultural tensions that led to the armed conflicts described in the book of Alma. A clear understanding of this ideological battle gives both meaning and clarity to the armed conflicts and military actions Mormon describes. To study the military operations without recognizing the ideological foundation of the policies directed by Nephites on both sides of the conflict is to miss what could be Mormon's primary message.

Paradigm of a Divided Family

A paradigm often used in scriptural literature to convey the struggle between the vertical and horizontal life-style is the paradigm of the divided family. Beginning with the premortal conflict in heaven (see Moses 4:1-4; cf. Revelation 12:7-9), the book of Moses clearly describes this problem and follows its continuation in the account of Adam and Eve and their children.

The story of Cain and Abel illustrates the separation. Cain rejected the counsel of God, killed his brother Abel, and moved to the land of Nod where he and his descendants established a *horizontal* culture that rejected the relevance of God in one's personal life. This "displeased God, and he ministered not unto them, and their works were abominations, and began to spread among all the sons of men" (Moses 5:52). These people abandoned the *vertical* connection of seeking and heeding revelation from God. Another segment of the family, however, remained faithful to God. "God revealed himself unto Seth, and he rebelled not" (Moses 6:5). Seth and his son Enos began "to call upon the name of the Lord, and the Lord blessed them" (Moses 6:3-4).

Hugh Nibley has explained that the Sethites remained in high places and kept themselves holy. "They were preachers of righteousness" (Moses 6:23). The Cainites moved down onto the plaints and established their own worldly society. They built walled cities, organized armies, invented money, established business based on greed, worked with metal, created musical instruments of brass, made covenants with Satan, and wore expensive clothing and jewelry.[7]

This separation continued until the days of Jared, who was the sixth generation from Adam. A delegation from the Cainites invited him to visit their city. Soon, many of the youth began to leave the high places and move to the cities below. Subsequently, Enoch was called by God to be a missionary to those who had gone astray. With power and authority he pleaded with them, saying, "Ye are my brethren, and why counsel ye yourselves, and deny the God of heaven?" (Moses 6:43). Some listened; most did not.

The same paradigm is reflected in the Book of Mormon account of the family of Lehi. Some of his children also rejected the teachings of their parents, whom angels had instructed to teach these things to their children, as had Adam and Eve. The family divided. Again it was brother against brother, disobedient against obedient. As in Adam's day, the conflicting ideologies eventually created two fundamentally different cultures. Dissidents from the one were drawn to the other. The righteous Nephites nurtured and sought to preserve the *vertical* position that seeks for and is driven by revelation from God. Dissident Nephites, and the Lamanites they sought to "employ" with varying degrees of opposition, inclined toward *horizontal* life-styles of one form or another. The presence and cultural dominance of these alternate traditions set the stage for the emergence of the ideological policies that underlie the conflicts described in the book of Alma.

War Is a Consequence of Cultural Conflict Involving Moral Issues

The general military accounts by the prophet-generalhistorian Mormon compiled in the book of Alma emphasize the primacy of a theistically based ideology in conflict with belief systems seeking its overthrow. In Alma, the issue at stake is whether people who held to the *vertical* tradition, those who acknowledged and were motivated by revelation from God, would be permitted to retain the freedom to believe and live according to that tradition. The armed conflicts Mormon reports can be understood more clearly if this spiritual context is taken into account. This is particularly true when it is remembered that the actual leaders of the conflicts were, in the main, Nephites and dissident Nephites rather than Nephites and Lamanites. The remainder of this paper will examine specific issues that arose during the first thirty-one years of the reign of the judges as reported in the book of Alma. Careful reflection indicates the ideological conflict in this material has relevance in our own day.

The fundamental ideological issue motivating the political and legal conflicts in the book of Alma is whether or not a cultural heritage premised on the existence of a divinely based higher law would be allowed to remain dominant in Nephite society. The record shows that cultural assumptions accepting or rejecting a theistic, higher law as valid and legally binding were expressed in educational, legal, political, military, and personal settings.

Background of Dominant Cultural Heritage during Armed Conflicts

There are two primary ideological components identified in the book of Alma. First, traditional Nephite political and military policies presupposed the existence of God, personal accountability, and divine intervention. This is in accord with the vertical tradition. Second, a relativistic, agnostic philosophy became dominant among much of the educated intelligentsia, the policy-making portion of Nephite society. This is in accord with the horizontal tradition. Nehor popularized a version of this philosophy and sought to enforce his priestcraft with the sword (see Alma 1:12). Horizontal curricula designed by dissident Nephites were also major influences in the Lamanite educational system (see Mosiah 24:4-7). The burning of believers and their religious texts at Ammonihah may also demonstrate the presence of a horizontal mindset in the Nephite culture (see Alma 14:8). The conflicting assumptions of these two distinct ideological positions often found expression in internal and external armed conflict in the Nephite nation.

Vertical Assumptions in Nephite Government and Military Procedures

Acceptance of vertical assumptions as valid and legally binding was the foundation of the freedom enjoyed by the Nephites (see Alma 46:10). The rationale used to justify the change in political government from kings to judges is evidence of the role of these assumptions. Similar assumptions are also dominant in Nephite war policies.

King Mosiah based his reason for favoring the change of Nephite government from a kingship to a judgeship on accepting God's existence and individual accountability to him. This is in accord with the vertical tradition:

> Now it is better that a man should be judged of God than of man, for the judgments of God are always just, but the judgments of man are not always just. Therefore, if it were possible that you could have just men to be your kings, who would establish the laws of God, and judge this people according to his commandments, yea, if ye could have men for your kings who would do even as my father Benjamin did for this people — I say unto you, if this could always be the case then it would be expedient that ye should always have kings to rule over you.... Now I say unto you, that because all men are not just it is not expedient that ye should have a king or kings to rule over you. (Mosiah 29: 12-13, 16.)

A wicked king destroys the purposes of God and the righteousness of the people in specific ways. First, because he has "friends in iniquity, and he keepeth his guards about him" (Mosiah 29:22), one "cannot dethrone an iniquitous king save it be through much contention, and the shedding of much blood" (Mosiah 29:21). Second, "he teareth up the laws of those who have reigned in righteousness before him" (Mosiah 29:22). Third, "he trampleth under his feet the commandments of God" (Mosiah 29:22). Fourth, "he enacteth laws, and sendeth them forth among his people … after the manner of his own wickedness" (Mosiah 29:23). Fifth, if he can, he will destroy those who will not "obey his laws" or those who "rebel" against them (Mosiah 29:23). Mosiah told his subjects that "it is not expedient that such abominations should come upon you" (Mosiah 29:24).

The remedy for this potential abuse from wicked rulers was to choose judges by popular vote. King Mosiah assumed that the majority of the people would uphold the traditional Nephite laws given to righteous kings by God:

> Choose you by the voice of this people, judges, that ye may be judged according to the laws which have been given you by our fathers, which are correct, and which were given them by the hand of the Lord. Now it is not common that the voice of the people desireth anything contrary to that which is right; but it is common for the lesser part of the people to desire that which is not right; therefore, this shall ye observe and make it your law — to do your business by the voice of the people. (Mosiah 29:25-26.)

The ultimate check on the popular voice of the people was the justice of God: "If the time comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then is the time that the judgments of God will come upon you; yea, then is the time that he will visit you with great destruction even as he has hitherto visited this land" (Mosiah 29:27).

Widespread recognition of both the reality of divine punishment, as well as the ability to choose freely to avoid or accept the same, contributed to the people's acceptance of King Mosiah's proposal to create the office of elected judges.

> They relinquished their desires for a king, and became exceedingly anxious that every man should have an equal chance throughout all the land; yea, and every man expressed a willingness to answer for his own sins. Therefore, it came to pass that they assembled themselves together in bodies throughout the land, to cast in their voices concerning who should be their judges, to judge them according to the law which had been given them; and they were exceedingly rejoiced because of the liberty which had been granted unto them. (Mosiah 29:38-39.)

The public commitment of the chief judge was consistent with the vertical values: "He was appointed chief judge and governor over the people, with an oath and sacred ordinance to judge righteously, and to keep the peace and the freedom of the people, and to grant unto them their sacred privileges to worship the Lord their God, yea, to support and maintain the cause of God all his days, and to bring the wicked to justice according to their crime" (Alma 50:39). All of the foregoing illustrates that the rationale for having judges, the establishment of laws, and the ultimate political checks on the administration of these laws were based on vertical assumptions regarding the existence of God and individual accountability to him.

The military policy of the Nephites during this period was founded on the existence of God, communication with God, and protection of those who were faithful to that God. This concept is illustrated by the covenant made in conjunction with the title of liberty as well as by the summary principles of warfare Mormon articulated.

As reported in Alma 46, covenants associated with the title of liberty were premised on the existence of God, free agency in following God's commandments, and enjoyment of the divine blessings of liberty and freedom that would naturally follow. Explicitly, the title of liberty was "in memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives and our children" (Alma 46:12). Moroni covenanted with the Lord regarding the nature of the promised land. It was to be a land of liberty and freedom for those Christians and members of the house of Jacob who would possess the land and keep the commandments of God (Alma 46:13-18, 23-27). This was in accord with prior divine covenants and prophecies regarding the land (see 2 Nephi 1:7; 10:11; Mosiah 29:32; Ether 2:8-12). Those who voluntarily joined Moroni and his cause did so with a covenant to follow the commandments of God.

> Moroni ... went forth among the people, waving the rent part of his garment in the air, that all might see the writing which he had written upon the rent part, and crying with a loud voice, saying: Behold, whosoever will maintain this title upon the land, let them come forth in the strength of the Lord, and enter into a covenant that they will maintain their rights, and their religion, that the Lord God may bless them. And it came to pass that when Moroni had proclaimed these words, behold, the people came running together with their armor girded about their loins, rending their garments as a token, or as a covenant, that they would not forsake the Lord their God; or, in other words, if they should transgress the commandments of God, or fall into transgression, and be ashamed to take upon them the name of Christ, the Lord should rend them even as they had rent their garments.

> Now this was the covenant which they made, and they cast their garments at the feet of Moroni, saying: We covenant with our God, that we shall be destroyed, even as our brethren in the land northward, if we shall fall into transgression; yea, he may cast us at the feet of our enemies, even as we have cast our garments at thy feet to be trodden under foot, if we shall fall into transgression. Moroni said unto them: Behold, we are a remnant of the seed of Jacob; yea, we are a remnant of the seed of Joseph, whose coat was rent by his brethren in many pieces; yea, and now behold, let us remember to keep the commandments of God, or our garments shall be rent by our brethren, and we be cast into prison, or be sold, or be slain. Yea, let us preserve our liberty as a remnant of Joseph (Alma 46:19-24).

The covenant of the Nephite people, then, was not allegiance to a man, such as Moroni, nor to a government position, such as the office of chief judge, held by Nephihah and Pahoran. Instead, the covenants and commitments were made directly to God, to whom the people believed they were personally accountable. Again, this allegiance reflected a deep-seated commitment to the vertical rather than a horizontal tradition based on individual or institutional allegiance.

On occasion the prophet Mormon offers insight through his Nephite history of vertically based principles that governed the people's welfare generally. These insights also presupposed the existence of a God who, in the fullest sense of the vertical tradition, was actively involved in the affairs of men.

Mormon's recounting of select Nephite military history includes observations that illustrate the vertical perspective on certain policies governing warfare. These include the following: (1) Destruction of liberty is contrary to the statutes, judgments, and commandments of God (see Alma 8:17). (2) "The foundation of the destruction of this people is beginning to be laid by the unrighteousness of your lawyers and your judges" (Alma 10:27). (3) Policies could properly govern acts but not belief (see Alma 30:11). (4) "Fighting for their homes and their liberties, their wives and their children, and their all, yea, for their rites of worship and their church," is a "better cause" than "fighting for monarchy [or] power" (Alma 43:45). (5) "Inasmuch as ye are not guilty of the first offense, neither the second, ye shall not suffer yourselves to be slain by the hands of your enemies" (see Alma

43:46). (6) "Ye shall defend your families even unto bloodshed" (Alma 43:47). (7) Do not engage in offensive warfare (see Alma 48:14). (8) Allowing a massacre of one's family by those who had rejected the theistic cultural tradition and joined one's enemies is unacceptable (see Alma 48:24). (9) "We would subject ourselves to bondage if it were requisite with the justice of God, or if he should command us to do so" (Alma 61:12). (10) God "doth not command us that we shall subject ourselves to our enemies, but that we should put our trust in him, and he will deliver us" (Alma 61:13). (11) The purpose of armed conflict is to "retain our freedom, ... rejoice in the great privilege of our church, and in the cause of our Redeemer and our God" (Alma 61:14).

General principles that govern divine intervention in behalf of the faithful in times of peace and war and that accept a divine perspective as relevant include the following: (1) Prayers of the righteous save society from divine destruction (see Alma 10:22-23; 62:40). (2) God allows righteous people to be destroyed so that his judgments will be just (see Alma 14:11; 60:13). (3) Divine deliverance in battle occurs "because of our religion and our faith in Christ" (Alma 44:3). (4) "God will support, and keep, and preserve us, so long as we are faithful unto him, and unto our faith, and our religion" (Alma 44:4). (5) "God shall not suffer that we, who are despised because we take upon ourselves the name of Christ, shall be trodden down and destroyed, until we bring it upon us by our own transgressions" (Alma 46:18). (6) God will bless those who "come forth in the strength of the Lord, and enter into a covenant that they will maintain their rights, and their religion" (Alma 46:20; see 60:16). (7) God will prosper the faithful and "warn them to flee, or to prepare for war, according to their danger; ... [and] whither they should go to defend themselves against their enemies" (Alma 48:1516). (8) Quarrelings, dissensions, iniquities, intrigues, contentions, murderings, plunderings, idolatries, whoredoms, and abominations bring wars and destructions (see Alma 50:21; 51:16; 53:8-9). (9) Formulation and implementation of policies that negate a basic belief in God in the name of remedying perceived political wrongs are espoused with "a perfect knowledge of [their] fraud" (Alma 55:1; see 54:15-24). (10) Those who fulfill their oaths to God in time of warfare will not suffer more because of their faithfulness (see Alma 56:8). (11) If one does not doubt, God will deliver him in time of warfare (see Alma 56:4748; 57:26). (12) Assurances from God of divine deliverance are manifested by his speaking "peace to our souls," "grant[ing] unto us great faith," and "caus[ing] us that we should hope for our deliverance in him" (Alma 58:11). (13) God can deliver the faithful, notwithstanding the weakness of their armies (see Alma 58:37). (14) Those who do not use resources available to defend liberty will be held guilty before God (see Alma 60:21-23). (15) Exceeding faith and patience in tribulation will provide the strength and blessing of God that "none other power can operate against them" (Alma 60:25-26). (16) The "spirit of freedom" is the "Spirit of God" (Alma 61:15). (17) God will "deliver ... all those who stand fast in that liberty wherewith God hath made them free" (Alma 61:21). (18) During the same armed conflict, some will become more hardened against God (see Alma 24:27-30; 62:41), while others will become more humble (see Alma 24:21-26; 62:41).

Observations that explain the consequences of armed enforcement of specific policies include the following: (1) "Were priestcraft to be enforced by the sword among this people it would prove their entire destruction" (Alma 1:12). (2) Those whose political and military policies are in open rebellion against God bring upon themselves their own condemnation (see Alma 3:18-19). (3) Killing incapacitated soldiers will bring injustice upon one's self and cause (see Alma 55:19). (4) "The Lord will not suffer that ye shall live and wax strong in your iniquities to destroy his righteous people" (Alma 60:31). All of the foregoing principles manifestly demonstrate a cultural heritage in which the people accept theistic assumptions as valid and legally, if not practically, binding.

Evidence of Rejection of Vertical Assumptions in Lamanite Culture and Various Components of Dissenters from Nephite Society

The Lamanite culture and Nephite dissidents rejected the theistic assumptions of the Nephite vertical tradition. Dissident Nephites also promoted agnostic or horizontal influences in the educational system of the Nephites. The gradations of religiosity among these dissidents and those who followed them seem similar to those personal dispositions described by Nephi respecting our own day (see 2 Nephi 28:5-11, 20-22).

The first chapter of Alma recounts the story of Nehor, who preached a personal version of the "word of God" against the established church. His doctrines included a paid ministry and universal salvation, redemption, and eternal life. Gideon, a leader among the believers, challenged Nehor's preaching. Nehor responded by killing Gideon. Alma, the chief judge, condemned Nehor to death. Alma found that (1) this was the first time priestcraft had been introduced among the Nephites; (2) were priestcraft to be enforced among the Nephites, it would lead to their destruction; and (3) the Nephites would be accountable for the blood of a righteous person if Nehor was not slain. The law of Mosiah, acknowledged by the people and therefore binding on them, required Nehor to be put to death, which he was. Nevertheless, the prophet-historian Mormon observes that this did not put an end to the spread of priestcraft through the land — many loved the vain things of the world, and they went forth preaching false doctrines; and this they did for the sake of riches and honor (see Alma 1:16). During the next sixteen years, evidently many of Nephite society chose to follow the "order and faith of Nehor" (Alma 14:16) rather than the "order of the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father" (Alma 13:9). Regardless of Nehor's personal beliefs, certain practices of the order of Nehor seem to be cast in an agnostic or relativistic framework.

The reported practices and philosophies of the order of Nehor were contrary to the traditional, theistic practices in Nephite society. They advocated that (1) priests and teachers were to be popularly supported rather than self-sufficient (cf. Alma 1:3 with 1:26), (2) armed force was appropriately used to destroy rather than preserve either the church of God or its adherents (cf. Alma 2:4 with 46:10), and (3) holding or teaching a theistic perspective after "the order of the Son of God" was sufficient grounds for death or banishment (cf. Alma 4:2-19 with 35:3-11).

While those who followed the order of Nehor did not completely deny concepts of "God" and "Devil," their perceptions of those beings differed significantly from the Nephite perspective. King Lamoni's father indicated that the Amalekites had taught him there was a "God," and he allowed them to build sanctuaries to worship him (see Alma 22:7). However, followers perceived the doctrines of the church, especially those relating to Christ, as "foolish traditions" (Alma 8:11; see 21:8). The hard-hearted and stiffnecked people in the land of Ammonihah attributed the righteous exercise of power to the devil (see Alma 15:15). Past and present prophesy of "things to come" was not believed (see Alma 9:4; 14:14; 21:8). Neither life after death in a resurrected, immortal state nor repentance of sins was accepted (see Alma 12:20-21; 15:15). God was to save all people (see Alma 21:6).

Mormon chose to record evidence of the armed conflict led by those who espoused the philosophy of Nehor. This conflict was present in both Nephite and Lamanite societies. In Nephite society, during the reign of the judges, the conflict with the Amlicites in the fifth year (see Alma 2) and the destruction of the righteous of Ammonihah in the eleventh year (see Alma. 14:8-17) were representative of such conflict. In Lamanite society, during the same period, there occurred (1) the destruction of Anti-NephiLehies and other Lamanites who believed in Christ, under the direction of dissident Amalekites and Amulonites (see Alma 24-25); (2) the Lamanite destruction of Ammonihah (see Alma 16; 25:1-2); and (3) the burning of converted Lamanites by the remnant of the priests of Amulon (see Alma 25:3-6). The fact that these conflicts pervaded both Lamanite and Nephite society is evidence that the fundamental issue at stake was not national or political classification. Rather, it was the competing worldview—vertical or horizontal— that governed the Nephite and Lamanite societies. Both the philosophies and armed conflicts of the order of Nehor were contrary to the vertical tradition of the Nephites.

To better understand the educational traditions of the Lamanites during the first thirty-one years of the reign of the judges, one must first understand educational practices reported in the book of Mosiah. This book contains a description of King Noah, who openly apostatized from the ways of his overzealous, but vertically minded father, Zeniff (see Mosiah 11:1). Among other things, Noah "put down all the priests that had been consecrated by his father, and consecrated new ones in their stead, such as were lifted up in the pride of their hearts" (Mosiah 11:5).

The prophet Abinadi described the attitudes and perspectives of these teacher-priests when he spoke in the court of King Noah. They professed to teach the law of Moses (see Mosiah 12:28), but without the "spirit of prophesying" (Mosiah 12:25). The priest's "hearts," or dispositions, had not been "applied ... to understanding" (Mosiah 12:27). Instead, they had "studied and taught iniquity the most part of [their] lives" (Mosiah 13:11). Their conduct was not wise (see Mosiah 12:27); they knew that Abinadi spoke the truth (see Mosiah 12:30). Considering their perspective, it is not surprising that the priests encouraged the burning of Abinadi (see Mosiah 17:6, 12). Alma, the only priest who responded positively to Abinadi's message, was driven from King Noah's court under threat of death (see Mosiah 17:3-4).

Eventually, in fulfillment of the prophecies of Abinadi, the Lamanites overran the transplanted Nephite colony in the land of Nephi. At the time of attack, the priests followed the command of King Noah and fled into the wilderness, leaving behind their own wives and children. The men who retreated with the royal court eventually mutinied, and then they burned King Noah. Their efforts to slay the priests of the court in a similar manner were frustrated by the priests' escape further into the wilderness (see Mosiah 19:9-26). Subsequent to these events, those who remained in the land of Nephi returned to their families and, after repentance, ultimately escaped from the bondage imposed by the Lamanites and returned to the land of Zarahemla (see Mosiah 20-22).

The priests of King Noah, however, never returned to the land of Nephi or the main Nephite body in Zarahemla. Mormon records that they were "ashamed" and "fear[ed] that the people would slay them" (Mosiah 20:3). They did not, therefore, return to their wives and children. Instead, they laid in wait and captured twenty-four Lamanite daughters and carried them into the wilderness (see Mosiah 20:4-6). After the main body of Nephites escaped from the land of Nephi, Lamanite troops seeking their daughters discovered the priests of King Noah at a place called Amulon, named after their leader (see Mosiah 23:30-32). Amulon and the kidnapped Lamanite daughters successfully pled for the lives of the priests, and the group joined the Lamanite forces (see Mosiah 23:33-35).

In time, Amulon obtained the Lamanite king's favor. He was made a ruler over the land of Helam (see Mosiah 23:39). This was the land to which Alma, the repentant priest of King Noah, and his followers had fled (see Mosiah 23:38). Amulon and his associates were appointed teachers over the people and established an educational program in the lands of Shemlon, Shilom, and Amulon (see Mosiah 24:1). The Lamanite king eventually "appointed teachers of the brethren of Amulon in every land which was possessed by his people" (Mosiah 24:4).

Mormon observes that the educational doctrines Amulon and his associates taught in this instructional system were agnostic insofar as they pertained to Jesus Christ. The educational system did not include the vertical heritage of Nephite culture, which was manifested by theistic assumptions, morally based law, and the revealed words of the past and present prophets.

> The language of Nephi began to be taught among all the people of the Lamanites. And they were a friendly people one with another; nevertheless they knew not God; neither did the brethren of Amulon teach them anything concerning the Lord their God, neither the law of Moses; nor did they teach them the words of Abinadi; but they taught them they should keep their record, and that they might write one to

another. And thus the Lamanites began to increase in riches, and began to trade one with another and wax great, and began to be a cunning and a wise people, … delighting in all manner of wickedness and plunder, except it were among their own brethren. (Mosiah 24:4-7.)

In the land of Helam, Amulon followed the practice of others affiliated with the order of Nehor in that "whosoever should be found calling upon God should be put to death" (Mosiah 24:11). Thus began the development of an agnostic or horizontal perspective among the Lamanite educational system. Indeed, "although Mormon does not *detail* the relationship between Amulon's school and the rise of the order of Nehor in the Nephite society he does make the connection (Alma 21:4; 24:28-29)."[8]

While the early accounts of the order of Nehor are either agnostic, or at least apostate from the Nephite version of God, clearly some, such as Korihor, are atheistic in nature (see Alma 30:28, 37-38). While Korihor could also be classified as agnostic (see Alma 30:48), it is not clear that those dissident Nephites involved in opposition to the title of liberty adopted the philosophical extremes of Korihor. Amalickiah cursed God when he learned of his army's defeat at Ammonihah and Noah (see Alma 49:27). Ammoron, his successor, maintained that belief in God, the devil and hell "matter[ed] not" (Alma 54:21-22). In light of this possible confusion as to the presence of agnostic or atheistic perspectives, the ideological frameworks during the title of liberty conflicts will be classified simply as being vertical and horizontal in nature.

Policies Affecting Armed Conflict Reflect Practical Ramifications of the Vertical and Horizontal Traditions

Most of the armed conflicts the book of Alma reports can be classified as extensions of policies driven by two conflicting ideologies – vertical and horizontal.[9] First, there were conflicts led by educational, legal, and military leaders seeking to impose by force a horizontal philosophy on a people and culture that accepted a vertical tradition as valid and legally binding. The affiliation of the order of Nehor with these conflicts has been reviewed previously. Second, there were conflicts led by those seeking power, the elimination of the Church, and destruction of the "foundation of liberty which … God had sent upon the face of the land for the righteous' sake" (Alma 46:10). Inasmuch as the lower judges of the land favored these objectives (see Alma 46:4), those associated with the order of Nehor may have at least influenced, if not corrupted, the legal society of the Nephites at large. We do know that an angel from God told Alma that those who followed the order of Nehor in Ammonihah were actively studying to "destroy the liberty of the [Nephite] people" (Alma 8:17). The second kind of conflict arose during the time of Moroni and his title of liberty. Together, these two general groups of conflicts offer insight as to the effect and impact of the radical shift in assumptions of cultural and philosophical heritage and the war policies that the prophet-historian Mormon reports in the book of Alma.

There are at least eleven armed conflicts associated with the promulgation and defense of the title of liberty. These battles include the following: (1) in the nineteenth year, the internal conflict with the Amalickiahites and Captain Moroni s title of liberty (see Alma 46); (2) in the nineteenth year, the Lamanite attack on Ammonihah and Noah (see Alma 49); (3) in the twenty-fifth year, the king-men conflict (see Alma 51:1-21); (4) in the twenty-fifth year, the Lamanite invasion in the northeast quadrant led by Amalickiah and the subsequent capture of the cities of Lehi, Morianton, Omner, Gid, and Mulek along the seashore (see Alma 51:22-37); (5) in the twenty-fifth year, in the southwest quadrant, the Lamanite capture of Manti, Zeezrom, Cumeni, and Antiparah (see Alma 53:8-9; 56:9-15); (6) in the twenty-seventh year, the Lamanite defeat near Antiparah (see Alma 56:29-54); (7) in the twenty-eighth year, Helaman's recapture of Antiparah and Moroni's of Mulek (see Alma 57:1-4; 52:19-26); (8) in the twenty-ninth year, the Nephite recapture of Gid, Cumeni, and Manti (see Alma 55:3-24; 57:6-36; 58:1-28); (9) in the thirtieth year, Moroni's recruiting and restoration of Pahoran's rule by defeating the Nephite forces of Pachus

at Zarahemla (see Alma 62:1-11); (10) in the thirty-first year, various battles and Pahoran and Moroni's recapture of Nephihah (see Alma 62:12-29); and (11) in the thirty-first year, a final effort by Moroni, Lehi, and Teancum that defeats the Lamanite forces by driving them to the land of Moroni (see Alma 62:30-39) .

Various aspects of these eleven conflicts illustrate at least two challenges associated with administering armed conflicts in a nontotalitarian society. These fundamental challenges deal with the recruitment and retention of armed forces.[10] Retention of armed forces includes not only maintaining a fighting force but also insuring that military forces follow the decisions of civilian leadership. Mormon's recounting of historical events associated with the title of liberty offers unparalleled examples of differences between vertical and horizontal perspectives in the recruitment and retention of military forces in order to implement political policy.

Recruitment of Armed Forces

The actions and policies Moroni and Amalickiah used in recruiting vary distinctly according to their vertical or horizontal perspectives. As noted previously, Moroni recruited by calling for those who would "come forth in the strength of the Lord, and enter into a covenant that they will maintain their rights, and their religion, that the Lord God may bless them" (Alma 46:20). Those coming forward not only made a covenant to keep the peace (see Alma 46:31), but also covenanted with God regarding their involvement in the war (see Alma 46:21-22). Those of the rising generation whom Helaman recruited and led "covenanted that they would never give up their liberty, but they would fight in all cases to protect the Nephites and themselves from bondage" (Alma 53:17). They did "think more upon the liberty of their fathers than they did upon their own lives" (Alma 56:47). They went forth, assured by their mothers that "our God is with us, and he will not suffer that we should fall" (Alma 56:46). They did "not doubt [their] mothers knew it" (Alma 56:48).

Amalickiah, on the other hand, followed recruiting patterns that did not include any of the vertical assumptions dominant in the Nephite perspective. When he was among the Nephites, he flattered many "that if they would support him and establish him to be their king that he would make them rulers over the people" (Alma 46:5). In Lamanite society, Amalickiah "did stir up the Lamanites to anger against the people of Nephi, insomuch that the king of the Lamanites" issued a call for war against the Nephites (Alma 47:1). He then resorted to tactics of deception and murder to gain initial control of the Lamanite troops and the favor of the Lamanite queen (see Alma 47). Thereafter, he again relied on massive propaganda to win the hearts and minds of the people.

> As soon as Amalickiah had obtained the kingdom he began to inspire the hearts of the Lamanites against the people of Nephi; yea, he did appoint men to speak unto the Lamanites from their towers, against the Nephites.... Therefore he had accomplished his design, for he had hardened the hearts of the Lamanites and blinded their minds, and stirred them up to anger, insomuch that he had gathered a numerous host to go to battle against the Nephites. (Alma 48:1-3.)

This type of recruiting was not based on vertical assumptions. It motivated action by generating hate rather than covenanting with God.

Simply stated, the recruiting issues in the title of liberty conflicts were based on perspectives regarding political freedom. From a vertical or theistic perspective, the purpose of the conflict was to preserve freedom of choice in maintaining a personal relationship with God through religious expression. Recruitment was merely public expression of a private covenant with God. From a horizontal or nontheistic perspective, the purpose of the conflict was to insure freedom from a designated enemy for whom hatred is built through public propaganda. By

whatever means the armed forces were recruited, retention of reliable troops was necessary to achieve their armies' objectives in warfare.

Commitment of Armed Forces in Time of Conflict

Like recruiting, retention of forces (or the continued adherence to the cause for which one has taken up arms) differed markedly between the Lamanite and Nephite societies because of their differing perspectives. The practical results of the two perspectives are demonstrable in the conduct of the armed forces in two different ways: (1) commitment during times of conflict and (2) adherence to political policy directing the conflict. Comparing the performance of the fighting forces of Amalickiah and Moroni illustrates these variances.

The armed forces affiliated with the Lamanites, with their horizontal perspective, revealed a lack of commitment in following political directives and engaging in conflict. Amalickiah was faced with unreliable forces in both Nephite and Lamanite contexts. First, Amalickiah's Nephite forces were unreliable when confronted with the forces of Moroni. Amalickiah saw that not only were Moroni's forces greater, but that "his people were doubtful concerning the justice of the cause in which they had undertaken" (Alma 46:29). Second, when he first sought to incite the Lamanite army to battle, the majority of the Lamanite forces mutinied and refused to obey a royal command to go to battle against the Nephites. Notwithstanding the Lamanite soldiers' fear of displeasing their king, "they also feared to go to battle against the Nephites lest they should lose their lives. And it came to pass that they would not, or the more part of them would not, obey the commandments of the king" (Alma 47:2). Amalickiah himself assumed command of all the rebellious forces. Thereafter, he used Zoramites as chief captains because of their superior geographical knowledge of Nephite territory (see Alma 48:5). One can only wonder whether the previous instability of a majority of the Lamanite officer corps contributed to the significant replacement of Lamanite officers with Zoramites.

The marked difference between Amalickiah's preparation of armed forces and that of Moroni seems to have been obvious to Mormon. He observed that

> while Amalickiah had thus been obtaining power by fraud and deceit, Moroni, on the other hand, had been preparing the minds of the people to be faithful unto the Lord their God. Yea, he had been strengthening the armies of the Nephites, and erecting small forts, or places of resort; throwing up banks of earth round about to enclose his armies, and also building walls of stone to encircle them about, round about their cities and the borders of their lands; yea, all round about the land. And in their weakest fortifications he did place the greater number of men; and thus he did fortify and strengthen the land which was possessed by the Nephites. And thus he was preparing to support their liberty, their lands, their wives, and their children, and their peace, and that they might live unto the Lord their God, and that they might maintain that which was called by their enemies the cause of Christians (Alma 48:7-10).

The Nephite forces under Moroni's command had a different motivation than simple obedience to governmental edicts. The loyalty of the forces rose beyond defense of liberty and families. In the final analysis, it was premised on their faith in the fulfillment of divine promises. "Nevertheless, they could not suffer to lay down their lives, that their wives and their children should be massacred by the barbarous cruelty of those who were once their brethren, yea, and had dissented from their church, and had left them and had gone to destroy them by joining the Lamanites. Yea, they could not bear that their brethren should rejoice over the blood of the Nephites, so long as there were any who should keep the commandments of God, for the promise of the Lord was, if they should keep his commandments, they should prosper in the land" (Alma 48:24-25).

Actions of the 2,060 sons of Helaman in later battles demonstrate that the Nephite forces who were most reliable in battlefield performance were those who were the most consistent in basing their personal perspective and life-style on vertical, religious principles centered on Jesus Christ (see Alma 56-58). This apparent consistency in Nephite forces contrasts sharply with the unreliability in future performance of those king-men forced to swear allegiance to the title of liberty on pain of death (see Alma 46:35). Their failure to perform contributed to significant victories of the Amalickiahites and Lamanites (see Alma 51:5-7, 13-27). Thus, even with the cultural heritage that offered a vertical rationale for consistency in commitment, apparently forced allegiance will, ultimately, produce unreliable performance.

Adherence to Political Policy in Time of Conflict

Implementation of political policy by armed forces may lead to two major challenges. First, the actual motives behind the policy may not be clearly understood. Second, failure to understand the policy may lead to actions that, while in accord with the stated policy, may actually defeat the objectives it was designed to achieve. Conversely, understanding the motivating force of the policy as well as the actual policy can lead to an effective use of military force. Mormon's account of the Lamanite and Nephite military forces illustrates these principles.

Those charged with implementing the military policy of Amalickiah were faced with unusual challenges. First, the principles behind the policies of Amalickiah were not clearly expressed. Those who fought under Amalickiah initially did not understand his motivating force to obtain power over the Lamanites and Nephites. He intentionally disobeyed the commands of the Lamanite king who sent him forth to regain troops disloyal to the king (see Alma 47:16). He and his brother Ammoron advanced a political theory that the war was being fought to "avenge [Lamanite] wrongs, and to maintain and to obtain their rights to the government" (Alma 54:24) rather than to reveal Amalickiah's true intent of bringing the Nephites into bondage (see Alma 48:4), destroying the church of God (see Alma 46:10), and ruling over all of the land (see Alma 48:2).

Not only was the policy unclear, but the failure to understand that policy undercut the effective use of Lamanite forces in the field when not under Amalickiah's direct command. During the initial forays, the Zoramite chief captains retreated from the fortified city of Ammonihah and marched to Noah to attack. The "chief captains came forward and took an oath that they would destroy the people of that city" (Alma 49:13). Unknown to the captains, the city of Noah was extremely well fortified and was commanded by Lehi, whom they "feared … exceedingly" (Alma 49:17). (He had previously defeated the Lamanites near the river Sidon; see Alma 43:35-40.) When the captains arrived at Noah, they began an attack only because "they had sworn with an oath to attack the city" (Alma 49:17). The outcome of the conflict was that fifty Nephites were wounded, more than a thousand Lamanites were killed, and all of their Zoramite chief captains were slain (see Alma 49:23-24). Had the actual war policies of Amalickiah been what he publicly proclaimed them to be, there would have been no need for unquestioned adherence to military objectives that undermined the Lamanite government's ability to achieve its actual policies.

In contrast, the Nephite forces defending the title of liberty appear to have understood both the true nature and announced position of their government's political policies. Moroni expressed his policies with clarity, and all who chose to align themselves voluntarily with the title of liberty understood them. As a result, Nephite commanders and forces could modify their military actions so as to defend more effectively the underlying objectives of their nation's political policies. Two examples illustrate this point.

While the forces under Moroni were sworn to keep the peace (see Alma 46:31), they were not averse to employing force in resolving internal conflicts to compel the allegiance of the king-men (see Alma 51:5-7, 13-27),

to prevent the departure of the dissenting Nephites of Morianton (see Alma 50:25-35), or to "cleanse the inner vessel" after the betrayal of Pachus and other king-men (Alma 61-62). Moroni's perceptions of the true nature of warfare and divine intervention allowed him to maintain proper priorities, even though he, too, was bound by an oath regarding military conflict. "He had sworn with an oath to defend his people, his rights, and his country, and his religion" (Alma 48:13). Second, while the Ammonites had taken a covenant not to bear arms in war (see Alma 24), they did not impose it on their children. Eventually their children relied on the faith of their parents and their own obedience to God to help preserve the Nephites (see Alma 56-58). Their children's contribution to the Nephite cause fulfilled Helaman's belief that "God would strengthen us, insomuch that we should not suffer more because of the [parents'] fulfilling the oath which they had taken" (Alma 56:8).

Conclusion

An examination of the accounts of warfare Mormon selected for inclusion in the book of Alma reveals shifting assumptions in the cultural and political policies directing warfare during the first thirty-one years of the reign of the judges. Policies that were ideologically motivated characterized conflicts in both Lamanite and Nephite society during the first eighteen years of the reign of the judges. Armed conflict arose between those who professed allegiance to the agnostic, nontheistic order of Nehor and those who believed, taught, or lived in accord with the theistic perspectives of the Nephites. This perspective was based on the gospel of Jesus Christ and manifested itself in their law, military policy, and religion. The nontheistic order of Nehor, championed by apostate or dissident Nephites, was a mainstay of the Lamanite educational system. Further, influences of the order of Nehor fostered in the Nephite setting may have led to the corruption of Nephite law. The angel's instructions to Alma regarding Ammonihah and the attitudes of lower Nephite judges evidences this.

This ideological corruption contributed to the internal and external armed conflict in Nephite society over the title of liberty. The conflict arose from internal dissension created by those who sought to impose a rule of kings and destroy the church of God, as well as from external Lamanite attacks under the command of Amalickiah and Ammoron. Recruiting policies, retention of troops, and adherence to military policies during the time period illustrate the practical consequences of the basic theistic and non-theistic assumptions underlying political policies for the use of military force.

These matters have practical significance for us today. Modern Gentiles have inherited the promises made to the inhabitants of the Americas following the appearance of Christ (see Mormon 5:19). Their promised land remains under the curses and blessings God pronounced upon the Nephites (see Alma 45:11-20). In recent times, many thinkers and leaders in education, law, and the military have adopted agnostic ideas reminiscent of Korihor and the order of Nehor. Some of the intellectual and social implications of these agnostic ideas are contrary to divine principles. Those who are committed to the divine principles illustrated in the Book of Mormon thus face an important challenge in defending those principles in modern society.

Notes

1. A sample bibliography treating this theme in various disciplines during the past half century could include J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1923); Walter Lippmann, *A Preface to Morals* (New York: Macmillan, 1929); John C. Ranson, *God without Thunder: An Unorthodox Defense of Orthodoxy* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965); Daniel Kulp II, *Educational Sociology* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1932); C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (London: G. Bles, 1962); W. W. Wager, *World Views: A Study in Comparative History* (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1977); David Ehrenfeld, *The Arrogance of Humanism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Mary Lystad, *From Dr. Mather to Dr. Seuss* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980); Malcolm Muggeridge, *The End of Christendom* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1980); Daniel Yankelovich, *New Rules: Searching for Self-Fulfilltnent in a World Turned Upside Down* (Westminster, Maryland: Random House, 1981); Marvin Harris, *Why*

America Changed (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981); Peter D. Hall, *The Organization of American Culture 1700-1900: Private Institutions, Elites, and the Origins of American Nationality* (New York: New York University Press, 1982); A. J. Reichley, *Religion in American Public Life* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1985); G. Roche, *A World without Heroes: The Modern Tragedy* (Hillsdale, Michigan: Hillsdale College Press, 1987).

2. See "Flavius Josephus against Apion," *The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus*, tr. William Winston (Chicago: John C. Winston, 1936), 1:26; Dio Chrysostom, *Oration on the Knowledge of God* XII, 15; Hugh Nibley, "Three Shrines: Mantic, Sophic, and Sophistic" (unpublished paper, retyped mss., Brigham Young University, 1987).

3. Erwin R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period,* 13 vols. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), 1:8-22.

4. James L. Thrower, *The Alternative Tradition: Religion and the Rejection of Religion in the Ancient World* (The Hague: Mouton, 1980); J. H. Randall, *The Making of the Modern Mind* (New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1926); F. L. Baumer, *Religion and the Rise of Skepticism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1960); James Turner, *Without God, without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

5. As quoted in Hugh Nibley, *The World and the Prophets*, vol. 4 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1987), 3.

6. H. Curtis Wright, "The Central Problem of Intellectual History," *Scholar and Educator* 12/1 (Fall 1988): 52.

7. High Nibley, "The Pearl of Great Price" (unpublished mss. belonging to Brigham Young University, Department of Continuing Education, 1987), Lecture 21; see also Robert Graves and Raphael Patai, *Hebrew Myths: Book of Genesis* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), 100-103.

8. Neil Flinders, "Teach the Children: An Agency Approach to Education" (unpublished manuscript, 1989), 9.

9. There are two armed conflicts reported in Alma that do not offer sufficient information to be clearly classified in either category. The first is the conflict between Teancum and Morianton in the twenty-fourth year of the reign of judges near the land of Desolation (see Alma 50:25-36). The second is an abbreviated account of a major conflict between the Lamanite forces motivated by Nephite dissenters and the forces of Moronihah in the thirty-ninth year of the reign of judges (see Alma 63:14-15).

10. We are indebted to Dr. Philip Flammer for the identification of these two concepts.

Nephite Captains and Armies

A. Brent Merrill
Background

The Book of Mormon makes thirty-eight references to "captains," thirty-one of which are "chief captains."[1] These references are related to Nephite or Lamanite command positions over military units varying in size from at least fifty to tens of thousands of men. The descriptions of these captains and chief captains are quite consistent with information available concerning ancient Near Eastern and Mesoamerican armies. Military science was highly developed in the Near East at the time of Lehi, ca. 600 B.C. Most notably, the Assyrians and Persians maintained an extremely efficient military system.[2]

The early Israelites, at least from the time of their exodus from Egypt (see Deuteronomy 1:15), also maintained an organized military system. At the time of Lehi and King Zedekiah, the forces of Israel were still formed in tactical divisions of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens — each commanded by a captain. These then combined to form an "army" (KJV "host"), sometimes numbering up to several hundred thousand men.[3] There was a "chief of all the captains of the host" (1 Chronicles 27:3).

In ancient Mesoamerican historical sources, numerous cases also mention captains in connection with military units or armies, but nothing indicates that any of the source documents were available to Joseph Smith prior to publishing the Book of Mormon.[4] One such source is the *Works of Ixtlilxochitl*, which was written in Mexico around the closeof the sixteenth century. Ixtlilxochitl, the author, was an Aztec prince who claimed to derive his material from records (hieroglyphic writings) received from his ancestors. More than two hundred years passed before this history was first published.[5]

In speaking of events, ca. A.D. 350-61, Ixtlilxochitl refers to "five minor leaders or captains."[6] Later he speaks of two large armies ca. A.D. 880-900, one of which "a great captain" called Huihuitenuxcatl commanded.[7] Two other sources describing events in the ancient Yucatan area also mention military "captains."[8]

This type of structure continued into the Spanish conquest era. Accounts of the battle between the Guatemalan kingdom of the Quiché Maya and the army of Pedro de Alvarado, and accounts of the Tlascalan armies that faced Cortez help illustrate this point. In 1524 Cortez sent Alvarado south to subdue the Quiché. Tecum, "Captain of the Armies of the Quiché" and grandson of the king, met the Spanish forces in battle.[9] The Quiché report of this battle states that there were so many Quiché warriors that they could not be counted. The chronicle further states: "The head of his horse (Alvarado's) was taken off by Captain Tecum [with a lance].... Tecum was pierced [and killed]."[10] The site of this battle was later called Quezaltenango in memory of the quetzal feathers worn by Tecum in his hair and "because a great captain died."

The encounter of Cortez with the Tlascalan armies reveals additional insights concerning the role of Mesoamerican captains. According to the report of Bernal Diaz, when the Tlascalan armies appeared on the battlefield, there were five "great chiefs" or "captains," each with his ten thousand men. Each group carried its unique flag or standard, and "each captain had a different device [insignia]."[11] Moreover, each captain decided

separately when his group was to fight. In addition, Mesoamerican captains led forces composed of men in their own kin groups, often coming from a single region and sometimes speaking a single dialect.[12]

This basic understanding of ancient Near Eastern and early Mesoamerican military organizations makes it possible to analyze more closely the Book of Mormon's claims concerning Nephite armies. Reason suggests the Nephite system was derived through adaptation to the Mesoamerican setting. Some of this adaptation would logically result from Nephite awareness of the need to adjust to new environmental, political, economic, and social conditions in the New World, and some could result from adopting patterns already existing in the Americas.

When using the Book of Mormon as a source for the study of military history, we must bear in mind that the Book of Mormon provides very few details concerning Nephite military practices, claiming to contain less than "a hundredth part" of the Nephite-Lamanite wars (Helaman 3:14). Most of what is available comes during the period ca. 100 B.C.-A.D. 34, which accounts for only about thirteen percent of the entire Nephite history. Even here, military details are relatively sparse since the Book of Mormon is simply an abridgment of a lineage history of the Nephites, in essence a priestly record, "emphasizing what happened to one group of people, put in their own ethnocentric terms, in the midst of other peoples, each with its own version of events."[13] As a result, most conclusions regarding Nephite military organization and practices must remain tentative.

The Nephite Armies

The Book of Mormon suggests that the Nephite military structure was based on the decimal system, similar to that in use in the vicinity of ancient Palestine and in many other regions. There are references to units of fifty (see Mosiah 11:19), thousands (see Alma 43:5; 60:22; 3 Nephi 3:22), and ten thousand (see Mormon 6:10-15). The only Israelite-sized units not specifically mentioned in Nephite-Lamanite organizations are formations of tens and hundreds. Possibly these too existed among Book of Mormon people but were not mentioned because of their relative unimportance and because they comprised part of other units, like fifties and thousands.

Units of ten thousand are most frequently mentioned in the Book of Mormon, at least after the time of the judges (ca. 91 B.C.). Use of the larger units may have resulted from increasing population and hence the increased ability or need to support larger armies. The earlier battles speak of units of fifty and thousands (see Mosiah 11:19; Alma 43:5), while later battles speak more of thousands and tens of thousands (see 3 Nephi 4:21). Whatever the case, units of ten thousand became more common as Nephite history continued, and their wars evolved into larger and more complex campaigns.

In referring to basic Nephite military units, caution should be exercised to avoid oversimplifying the structure outlined above. Scholars in recent decades have become increasingly aware that the Book of Mormon is an elaborate record and not always what it may first appear to the casual observer. Nephite military organization again provides a case in point, for although the book contains ample evidence of units ranging in size from fifty to a thousand to ten thousand, there are also exceptions to this rule. Some variations are common in most military organizations, with the pressures of combat forcing armies to modify the normal standard. Actual unit manning often does not match exactly with the official designated size. In some cases, special types of units are created in response to unusual circumstances not in conformance with the normal, established pattern.

Helaman's band of "two thousand stripling soldiers" (Alma 53:22; 56:5) may be such an exception. In this case the sons of the people of Ammon desired to support the Nephite war effort by creating their own fighting force, which they asked Helaman to command. This was no ordinary military unit created in response to a governmental levy,

but instead it was a special group of people who wanted to serve their adopted nation. After organizing and arming themselves, Helaman's troops marched to join the army of Antipus, which through combat had been reduced to about six thousand soldiers (see Alma 56:10). Two thousand more men from the land of Zarahemla later joined them, thus bringing their total strength up to ten thousand (see Alma 56:28). Later, after being reinforced by sixty more soldiers, Helaman speaks of his "little band of two thousand and sixty" (Alma 57:19). This was not a typical Nephite unit of a thousand men, but in most other respects functioned as such. The "band" was under his direct command; the soldiers were organized according to a kinship framework and were considered Helaman's "sons" (see Alma 56:10);[14] and though somewhat autonomous, the band fought in conjunction with a larger Nephite army.

There are also references to other odd-sized units, such as armies of six thousand men (see Alma 62:12-13), but these do not appear to be main fighting units. They are instead reinforcements sent to augment existing field armies. In another case, Mormon claims to have commanded a Nephite army of forty-two thousand against a Lamanite army of forty-four thousand (see Mormon 2:9). While he had overall command responsibility, some of these forces evidently belonged to other captains, who in turn commanded units of thousands and ten thousands (see Mormon 6:11-12).

The foregoing discussion further suggests that one must be careful when interpreting references to Nephite field armies normally composed of ten thousand men. To illustrate this point, the army of Antipus mentioned earlier almost certainly numbered about ten thousand when originally deployed. Through casualties and capture, this number was reduced to about six thousand. If, however, the Nephite reference to "ten thousand" was a form of unit designation — an organizational title — then one might properly say that, although his forces were seriously depleted, he still commanded an Army of Ten Thousand. An example of this can be seen in early Roman military organization. A unit called a "century," meaning one hundred, originally consisted of one hundred soldiers commanded by a "centurion." Later, because a unit of one hundred men was too large for a single officer to control readily, the size varied from sixty to eighty men, but the designation "century" was retained.[15] In other words, it is not certain whether Nephite armies of "ten thousand" always maintained this number of troops. There could have been more, or less, depending on battlefield attrition or evolving Nephite usage of this description as an organizational title. The phrase "ten thousand" might not always be an accurate count of manpower.

The only type of standing army or police force mentioned in the Book of Mormon appears to have been the elite guards assigned to protect key political-religiousmilitary leaders. This is consistent with ancient military custom. There is very little detailed information about these guards. They protected key leaders while in the city (see Mosiah 7:10-11, 16), while traveling (see Alma 47:21), or while in battle (see Alma 2:32). This in part explains how kings and chief captains were generally protected in battle, despite the fact that they nearly always led in the front of their troops (see Mormon 6:11). These elite guard units were probably commanded by a captain.

Another interesting feature of Nephite armies is that, for the most part, they seem to have been formed from a militia mobilized from the general population (see Alma 16:3) and were not part of a standing army. The militia formed from lineage groups apparently established the real basis for Nephite armies. These may have been based on the seven major branches or lineage groups recognized within Nephite-Lamanite culture, i.e., Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites (see Jacob 1:13; 4 Nephi 1:36-38).[16] The bulk of the armed forces was probably drawn from the lower classes and was organized in ranks with fathers and brothers in similar units (see Mosiah 9:2) and organized at times by age (see Mosiah 10:9). The captains likely were individuals with some special privileges. The chief captain over all the Nephite armies seems usually to have

been of the tribe of Nephi.[17]The militia was organized in response to a levy or request from the central government (see Alma 60:1-2).

Men as young as sixteen to twenty-five years old were eligible to participate in, and even lead, the armed forces (see Alma 43:17; Mormon 2:2).[18] This would force the remaining population "to take over the jobs vacated by the national levy and to help the elders and women keep up their farms, workshops, and other enterprises."[19] Those not called for military service provided material and moral support for the armies. Kin groups and local communities sponsoring military units in the field were expected to provide provisions when necessary (see Alma 56:27-28). At other times, living off the land almost certainly provided provisions, in particular from subject cities on the line of march, as was done by later Aztec armies (cf. Mormon 2:4, where the Nephite army took "possession of the city" of Angola). Those not willing to support their nation, or those actively opposing the government, could be executed according to Nephite law (see Alma 62:9-10).

The Nephite militias were equipped with a variety of weapons, including darts, javelins, slings, stones, axes, clubs, spears, bows and arrows, swords, and cimeters. Again care must be taken in interpreting how these weapons were employed. For instance, Alma 49:22 speaks of a Lamanite attack against a fortified Nephite city (fortifications were well known in Mesoamerica) and states that "stones and arrows ... were thrown" at the attackers. Whether the stones were thrown by hand or propelled by slings or some other means is not clear. Nor is it clear whether the arrows were shot from a bow or an *atlatl*-type device.[20]

What is also uncertain is who provided these armaments. The Book of Mormon suggests in almost all cases that weapons were personal property of the soldiers, that is, "their weapons" (Alma 56:5). Such a custom was common in ancient armies. This practice generally resulted in wealthy leaders obtaining the best weapons and protective armor. In most cases in the Book of Mormon, this body armor consisted of "thick clothing" (Alma 43:19). This corresponds well with Ixtlilxochitl's description of armor in ancient Mesoamerica and Spanish accounts of Mayan armor during the Conquest period. In fact, according to Spanish records, the thick cotton armor worn by the Maya was "so effective that the Spaniards themselves used it."[21] The story of Ammon defending King Lamoni's flocks may also illustrate the advantage Ammon had (as the son of King Mosiah) in receiving superior military training and weapons (see Alma 17:7—Ammon was extremely well armed when he started his journey; see also Alma 17:3637). In the ancient Near East, only privileged leaders owned and used protective metal armor. For this reason a leader was often able to defeat the common soldiers he encountered, and this fact helps explain why a leader was frequently required to defy another leader in battle.[22] This was possibly true for Nephite captains (see Alma 2:31-32).

When a Nephite army was on the march, it was on foot (consistent with Mesoamerican warfare). There is no indication that armies used animals to carry men or supplies into battle. Although there are seven references to Nephite-Lamanite chariots (see 2 Nephi 12:7; Alma 18: 9, 10,12; 20:6; 3 Nephi 3:22; 21:14), members of the elite upper class appear to have used them exclusively in a very limited manner, and they are never mentioned in combat.[23]

During military campaigns, Nephite-Lamanite armies were frequently deployed for extended periods of time. As a result, the Book of Mormon states that armies often had to pitch their tents (see Alma 2:20; 47:9; 51:32; Mormon 6:4) and set up camp in the field. John Sorenson has pointed out that "it is nearly unbelievable that the entire Lamanite army referred to in Alma 51 lugged collapsible tents on their backs through tropical country hundreds of miles from the land of Nephi. Far more likely they erected shelters of brush or whatever other materials could be

found in the vicinity, referring to those or any other temporary shelters by the traditional word for tent."[24] This practice was continued up to the time of the Spanish conquest. In other cases, however, the Book of Mormon states the Nephites actually "took their tents" with them into the wilderness (Mosiah 18:34-35).

The text gives no clear indication as to how these camps were laid out. Possibly the commander's tent was placed somewhere near the center of the camp, perhaps in a manner similar to that in ancient Israel.[25] If this were the case, then Chief Captain Teancum's exploit of stealing into the Lamanite camp to kill the Lamanite leader, Amalickiah, becomes even more significant (see Alma 51:34), providing several insights into Nephite-Lamanite warfare and culture. One interesting feature of this attack is that it was consistent with ancient custom. Hugh Nibley has noted that in ancient warfare, since set combat was usually forbidden after sundown, "the wee small hours were reserved for the standard attack on the rival's tent, a vital maneuver, since once the tent had fallen, the enemy's morale, and often his resistance, was broken…. The ultimate in heroic gestures for the Arab was a night-raid on the tent of a chief."[26]

Another note of interest about this event is that it occurred on the last night of the Nephite-Lamanite year. Throughout Mesoamerica, "omens were regularly ... tied to events of the last, or first, day…. To awaken on the first day of a new year to find their leader dead would have been far more unnerving to their omen-conscious feelings than we moderns may appreciate."[27] Not surprisingly then, "when the Lamanites saw this they were affrighted; and they abandoned their design in marching into the land northward, and retreated with all their army" (Alma 52:2). Additionally, when the Nephites or Lamanites lost their captains, confusion could result; and because strange commanders could not easily replace the fallen lineage leaders, the armies would often retreat (see Alma 49:25; 56:51).

The Book of Mormon gives few details concerning Captain Teancum's background, but this episode and others indicate he was a man of great courage, with a strong and independent spirit. His name may suggest (albeit quite tentatively) a Mulekite-Jaredite influence in his life.[28] Incidentally, there is a strong resemblance between the name of Captain Teancum and that of Captain Tecum mentioned earlier as a great Quiché Mayan military leader. Furthermore, Captain Tecum lived in Guatemala, probably near the site of the city of Nephi mentioned in the Book of Mormon.[29]

The Book of Mormon further reveals that the same complex human conditions and attitudes that have existed throughout history caused these wars,[30] with primary impetus coming from economic, political, and religious factors. According to one study of Book of Mormon wars, "seven were economically motivated, six were politically motivated, and four were religiously motivated."[31] Nephite scribes generally treat these causes in moralistic terms, that is, as the results of wickedness, greed, personal ambition, selfishness, pride, and so on.[32]

A common objective of Lamanite warfare was to bring the Nephites into captivity. Nephites living under Lamanite control were normally required to pay tribute (see Mosiah 19:15), and when captured in battle, they were usually taken back to become slaves or to be sacrificed (see Alma 16:2-4; 60:17; Mormon 4:14, 21; Moroni 9:7-10). Nephite chief captains were especially valued as war captives of the Lamanites (see Alm 56:12), and on both sides, warfare had significant ritual overtones. All of this is characteristic of what is known about the nature of ancient Mesoamerican warfare.[33] Nephite objectives, on the other hand, were usually much different, at least as long as the people were living righteously. The Book of Mormon states, "[They] were inspired by a better cause, for they

were not fighting for monarchy nor power but they were fighting for their homes and their liberties, their wives and their children, and their all, yea, for their rites of worship and their church" (Alma 43:45).

The Nephites were additionally taught "never to give an offense" (Alma 48:14; see 43:46). This teaching had practical, moral, and spiritual value. Note that the Nephites were always far fewer in number than the Lamanites. In about 120 B.C., the people of Nephi and the people of Zarahemla together were not half as numerous as the Lamanites (see Mosiah 25:3). If anything, this situation probably grew more severe over the years because of Nephite desertions.

As a result, it was imprudent for the Nephites to initiate hostilities and to rely much on offensive operations. Instead, the Nephites became more adept at using fortifications to achieve local economy of forces and maintained a grand strategy of protecting the land north (of the narrow neck of land). Fortifications, which needed relatively few men to man, became force "multipliers," by means of which the Nephites could extend a combat front, and served as a base of maneuver for mobile field forces. This was an effective use of one principle of war, the economy of forces.[34] Even in situations where the Nephites may have faced an enemy of more equal numbers, they were counseled not to strike first. An opportunity of this type arose in about A.D. 17 when the Nephites considered initiating a preventive war against the Gadianton robbers,[35] but the chief captain and "great commander of all the armies of the Nephites" directed his people not to attack (3 Nephi 3:17-21). When the Nephites violated this principle, they usually suffered defeat (see Mormon 4:4).

Another consequence of this Nephite emphasis on defensive strategy was that almost all battles took place within their own territory. It is therefore easy to see why the rewards and motivation for victory were quite different for Nephites than for Lamanites. Nephite forces were probably compensated with not much more than a basic subsistence allowance for their military service, while at least some Lamanite soldiers were probably promised a share in the spoils of war in return for their participation in the armed forces. Nevertheless, Nephite captains found that, by reminding their soldiers that they were fighting to preserve their family groups and entire social structure, they were usually more successful in motivating troops than were the Lamanite captains.

Chief Captains of the Nephite Armies

Prior to about 150 B.C., very little information is available describing the Nephite and Lamanite military organizations and the roles of war captains, except that Nephite kings (beginning with the first Nephi) led their people in battle (see 2 Nephi 5:14; 6:2; Jacob 1:9-10; Jarom 1:7; Words of Mormon 1:13-14). By approximately 200 B.C., war casualties could be as high as three to four thousand (see Mosiah 9:18-19).

Quite possibly during the time from ca. 590-150 B.C., the Nephites began formulating a military organization somewhat similar to that seen in later years. Population constraints probably limited single units to not more than a thousand men, although these could have been combined to form larger armies. Units of fifty men were likely common, being first mentioned in conjunction with Laban's position in Jerusalem (see 1 Nephi 3:31; 4:1).[36] Units of fifty are not mentioned again in Nephite-Lamanite military history until about 145-122 B.C. (Mosiah 11:19), while the first specific reference to a Nephite captain is found in Mosiah. 20:17 where Gideon is called "the king's captain."

Kings Mosiah (see Omni 1:12), Benjamin (see Omni 1:24; Words of Mormon 1:13), and the second Mosiah (see Mosiah 6:3-4) also directed military campaigns. But around 91 B.C., a change in governmental structure occurred that affected Nephite military organization to a degree. At that time, the Nephites instituted a system of judges in

place of the monarchy, with the younger Alma being selected as the first chief judge and serving as the presiding high priest (see Mosiah 29:42). Elimination of the monarchy and the establishment of a hierarchy of judges (see Mosiah 29:28-29) created pressures for some corresponding reorganization within the armed forces. One obvious change involved the senior military command position since the king was no longer available to direct the Nephite armies. The initial solution to this problem was to have the chief judge lead the armies (see Alma 2:16).

Perhaps the best single description of Nephite military organization during the reign of the judges is found in Alma 2:13. This verse states that the Nephites "appointed captains, and higher captains, and chief captains, according to their numbers" —meaning according to the number of men each type of captain commanded. This all sounds very similar to the statements reported earlier by Ixtlilxochitl and other sixteenth-century writers about Mesoamerican captains. These accounts speak of "captains," "five minor leaders or captains," and "great" captains or "chiefs."

Confirming how many men each captain, higher captain, or chief captain supervised is impossible with the data currently available. It is tempting to say each chief captain commanded a unit of ten thousand, but the Book of Mormon text does not always support this assertion. Some chief captains commanded all the armies of the Nephites while others almost certainly commanded units smaller than ten thousand (see Alma 52:19, 27-28; 55:23; 56:12; 57:29). It seems impossible that every chief captain mentioned in these verses had ten thousand troops under his command. Battle conditions and casualty reports do not support such a conclusion.

Most likely the term "chief captain" was part of a title for commanders with units of one thousand or more: "chief captain of a thousand," "chief captain of ten thousand," or "chief captain of the armies of the Nephites." If these assumptions are correct, then "higher captains" possibly commanded formations of one hundred or more men; and "captains" (as used in Alma 2:13) might have commanded units of fifty or fewer. The Nephite scribes, through common usage, probably shortened the titles "captain" and "chief captain," similar to the way the term "general" is commonly used today in the U.S. armed forces. Even though there are "brigadier generals," "major generals," "lieutenant generals," and "generals" (four stars), only the shorter term "general" is normally used when referring to an individual holding one of these ranks.

The first man mentioned as the "chief captain over the armies of the Nephites" is Zoram, ca. 81 B.C. (Alma 16:5). A need to relieve Alma the Younger of this responsibility may have prompted Zoram's appointment, and thenceforth, a chief captain rather than the chief-of-state commanded Nephite armies. Zoram's name suggests he may have been a Zoramite — a group of people frequently mentioned as fierce warriors. He was evidently a righteous man with sufficient faith to inquire of the Lord through Alma the Younger regarding where the Nephite armies should search for the Lamanites. One of his sons, Lehi, may have been the same Lehi later to serve another commander of the Nephite armies named Moroni (see Alma 16:5; 49:16).

Chief Captain Moroni was appointed to command all of the Nephite armies when he was "only twenty and five years old" (Alma 43:16-17). The use of the term "only" indicates he was considered a young commander, even by Nephite standards. No information is given regarding his early years, but few leaders have ranked with him in terms of devotion, courage, and strength of character. The later Prophet Mormon was undoubtedly so impressed with Captain Moroni's example that he gave his own son the same name. Moroni took command of the Nephite armies in approximately 74 B.C. This marked the beginning of a new era in Book of Mormon warfare. Apparently many of the practices introduced at this time continued throughout the remainder of Nephite history, and even up to the time of the Spanish conquest.

The first references to Lamanite captains and chief captains (see Alma 43:6, 44) with a "second leader" (see Alma 47:17) to the "chief leader" are found during this time, although these positions almost certainly existed much earlier (as with the Nephites). Interestingly, these references indicate that Nephite dissenters were often appointed to be captains over the Lamanites. Evidently the Lamanite armies were not as dependent on actual lineage leaders at this time as were the Nephites. This could imply that "Lamanites" included populations other than those solely related to Lehi, Ishmael, or Zoram, although these three groups were apparently the most dominant. Something like this can be seen in the history of the people of Zarahemla ("Mulekites"). When the Nephites and Mulekites united, the Nephites immediately assumed the key leadership positions even though the Mulekites outnumbered the Nephites (see Omni 1:12-19; Mosiah 25:2). The Lamanites may very well have done the same thing when they came into contact with other Mesoamerican populations, such as the Maya. Patterns of this type have been found elsewhere in ancient Mesoamerican societies. Also during this period (ca. 65 B.C.) the first reference is found to a Nephite army of "ten thousand" (Alma 56:28).

Space will not permit this study to explore in detail the principles and techniques of warfare developed under Captain Moroni.[37] Suffice it to say that during the command of Moroni the Nephite armies seem to have exhibited, to some degree, every one of the following principles of war: objective, offensive, security, mass, economy of force, maneuver, simplicity, unity of command, surprise, and flexibility (mobility).[38] Examples of many of the principles and tactics Moroni used can be found particularly in Helaman's epistle to Moroni in Alma 56-58. These chapters appear to be a verbatim translation of all, or at least most of Helaman's report, rather than an abridgment. Two of Moroni's favorite tactics seem to have been the use of decoys and several forms of envelopment — both were extremely common in ancient warfare. In addition, the Book of Mormon implies Nephite armies were predominantly composed of infantry.

To conduct his military operations, Captain Moroni evidently received considerable authority, but his power was certainly not absolute. Although Moroni was empowered to resettle segments of the population and execute individuals for rebellion against the government (Moroni even threatened to remove the chief judge from office because he believed Pahoran had been negligent in his support for the Nephite armies), he probably was still limited to a degree in his ability to commit individual Nephite armies to battle.[39] There is some indication that major military decisions were arrived at jointly with other chief captains, with each captain having some say in where, when, and how his forces were to be employed. These decisions were made in a "council of war" (Alma 52:19).

Undoubtedly, military decisions of this type were based on available intelligence concerning enemy troop movements, concentrations, objectives, and so on. Sending spies into the field to monitor and relay information concerning enemy activity was common for Moroni and other Nephite commanders to obtain the best intelligence possible (see Alma 43:29-30). They may have functioned in a manner similar to the Aztec intelligence service Montezuma used after the landing of Cortez, sending numerous reports complete with illustrations on invading forces.[40]

But Moroni's greatness in Nephite society goes beyond the fact that he was a brilliant strategic thinker, organizer, and leader; it also stems from his faith and trust in the Lord. For this reason, he did not rely on spies and armies alone to assist him. As with his predecessor Captain Zoram, Moroni willingly sought advice and spiritual insight from the Nephite high priest (see Alma 43:23). This pattern was characteristic of most great Nephite captains until the demise of their civilization in approximately A.D. 385.[41]

Moroni yielded command of his armies to his son Moronihah ca. 57 B.C. He died at the relatively young age of forty-two at his home about one year later (see Alma 63:3). Many of the Nephite leaders may have lived to be 70-90 + years old.[42] It therefore seems a little unusual that Captain Moroni lived only about forty-two years. We can only speculate that the strains of seventeen years of war, coupled with wounds suffered in battle (see Alma 52:35), could have brought a premature end to his life. Moroni had fought bravely for some seventeen years, and his career marked a major turning point in Nephite-Lamanite warfare. He faced enormous trials in attempting to preserve the lives and freedom of the Nephites against a foe that far outnumbered his own people. He clearly recognized the need for constant vigilance, and even directed his people to prepare extensive and expensive military defenses during times of "peace" that they might be better protected from possible attack (see Alma 50:1-15). The great Nephite captains who followed inherited much of the tradition, structure, and strategic thought introduced by Chief Captain Moroni.

Moronihah commanded in his father's stead for at least the next twenty-seven years (until about 30 B.C.). During this period, there were repeated dissensions among the Nephites that left them vulnerable to attack from the Lamanites. In about 51 B.C., the Lamanites launched one of their most daring thrusts into the center of Nephite territory and succeeded in capturing the capital of Zarahemla. A fierce counterattack by the armies of Moronihah and Captain Lehi slew the Lamanite commander and forced his army to surrender (see Helaman 1:27-33). As a result, Zarahemla was recaptured and returned to Nephite control.

Sixteen years later another major war broke out. The Lamanites managed again to take "possession of the land of Zarahemla; yea, and also all the lands, even unto the land which was near the land Bountiful" (Helaman 4:5). This was by far the most severe setback the Nephites had suffered to date. Moronihah was forced to refortify his key cities and armies on a defensive line aimed at preventing any further Lamanite penetration into the north country (see Helaman 4:7). Gradually the vastly superior number of Lamanites were overwhelming the Nephites. Beginning in about 30 B.C., the best that Moronihah's forces could do was to maintain those parts of the land then under Nephite control. Converted Lamanites eventually returned some of the other lands to the Nephites (see Helaman 5:50-52).

The next Nephite chief captain mentioned in the Book of Mormon is Gidgiddoni, ca. A.D. 17. As with his predecessors, Gidgiddoni was appointed to command the Nephite armies because he possessed "the spirit of revelation and also prophecy" and was therefore recognized as "a great prophet" (3 Nephi 3:18-19). The method of warfare Gidgiddoni followed appears to have been similar to that introduced earlier by Captain Moroni, and the Nephites "did march forth by thousands and by tens of thousands" (3 Nephi 3:22). The major differences, however, were that now the principal threat came not from the Lamanites, but from Gadianton robbers, and that Gidgiddoni essentially used a "scorched earth" strategy to deprive the robbers of their means of subsistence (see 3 Nephi 3:24-26; 4:2-4).[43] When the robbers were finally forced to meet the Nephites in open battle, the armies of Gidgiddoni managed to defeat them and inflict great casualties on the robber units, "cutting them off by the thousands and by tens of thousands" (3 Nephi 4:21). These battles with the Gadianton robbers are described as "great and terrible ... insomuch that there never was known so great a slaughter among all the people of Lehi since he left Jerusalem" (3 Nephi 4:11).

The text does not specify how many soldiers took part in these battles and what the actual number of casualties were for each side. This is because the reference to "thousands" and "tens of thousands" being cut off is an imprecise indicator (compare to Alma 28:2; note the reference to "slain *and* scattered"). For example, it is unclear whether this refers to actual casualties, or whether it just indicates that units of "thousands" and "tens of

thousands" were defeated. What is clear is that Nephite wars were gradually becoming larger and more destructive than those of the preceding six centuries.

At this point, note that Nephite historians possibly exaggerated some accounts of large armies—a common practice in ancient history. Examples can be found in Alma 2:27 and Helaman 1:14. The first passage describes the Lamanite and Amlicite armies as "being as numerous almost ... as the sands of the sea." The second episode claims the "Lamanites had gathered together an innumerable army of men." These verses are obviously hyperbole and simply indicate that relatively large bodies of soldiers were involved. An analysis of Nephite wars in the book of Alma actually suggests Nephite armies (during the reign of the judges) usually numbered between 30,000-50,000 in the field at a given time.[44] These numbers are less than the armies of 60,000-200,000 on a side that apparently fought in highland Guatemala shortly before the time of the Spanish conquest.[45]

Of course the greatest battle recorded among the Nephites and Lamanites occurred during the final days of Chief Captain-Prophet Mormon, the last great commander of the Nephite armies. During the final great struggle near the Hill Cumorah (almost certainly located in Mesoamerica),[46] apparently over 230,000 Nephite soldiers (organized in units of 10,000 each) were killed (see Mormon 6:10-14). This figure does not include their wives and children (see Mormon 6:7) and Lamanite casualties. When combined, this likely means that somewhere near 600,000 people may have died in the bloody conflict. It is not certain how long the battle lasted.[47] Although it brought an end to Nephite civilization, it did not eliminate all "Nephites" (see Moroni 1:2; 9:24).

Casualties on the scale of those accompanying the battle at Cumorah were clearly the exception rather than the rule in Mesoamerican warfare.[48] Mormon's account of the wars between about A.D. 322 and 346 clearly indicates Nephite-Lamanite armies usually numbered between 30,000 to 50,000 (see Mormon 1:11; 2:9, 25). The passage in Mormon 1:11 is interesting because it shows the Nephites considered an army of 30,000 to be "a great number of men." Furthermore, as discussed above, the Nephite armies of ten thousand fighting in the last wars possibly refers to a technical term for units rather than the actual number of men.

Another point commonly overlooked concerning Book of Mormon warfare is that there were also extended periods of peace, the most notable of which occurred between about A.D. 34 and 322 (See 4 Nephi 1:4, 18; Mormon 1:8). Such an accomplishment is possibly unmatched in world history and covered a period longer than the entire history of the United States.

Captain Mormon was evidently born during the end of this extended era of peace, ca. A.D. 310-11, somewhere in or near the land northward (see Mormon 1:6). He was a descendant of Nephi, and "in all likelihood he was the senior male in the senior branch of the [Nephite] line."[49] When he was about ten years old, Mormon states he "*began* to be learned somewhat after the manner of the learning of [his] people" (Mormon 1:2; italics added). This statement corresponds extremely well with what is known about later Aztec society. Among the Aztecs (who claimed to have inherited the mantle of earlier Toltec political preeminence), by the age of ten most boys *began* "to attend either their wards' military schools, *telpochcalli*, or particularly if they belonged to the nobility [as was probably the case with Mormon], schools connected with the temples, *calmecac*, where they received a more religiously oriented education that explicitly trained them for the priesthood or to be leaders in their communities."[50] Possibly under such circumstances, Ammaron recognized Mormon's potential for greatness and therefore instructed the youth that someday he should obtain the sacred Nephite records (see Mormon 1:3).

When Mormon was fifteen years old, he "was visited of the Lord" (Mormon 1:15), and in his sixteenth year, he was appointed to lead the Nephite armies (see Mormon 2:2). This was the beginning of a military career that was to span approximately fifty-eight years. As a historian, prophet, and military leader, the world has produced few men to equal him. He was a man of tremendous spiritual and physical strength. Mormon possessed great ability and opportunity but did not seek power or glory. At one point he became so distraught over the wickedness of his people that he "did utterly refuse" to be their commander and leader (Mormon 3:11). He willingly gave up a position of great authority because he could not, in good conscience, lead a nation into battle whose sole purpose was to wreak vengeance on its enemies (see Mormon 3:14-16).

About thirteen to eighteen years later, Mormon's desires for the welfare of his people caused him to return to public service as commander of the Nephite armies; but he was "without hope" regarding the final outcome of their struggle (see Mormon 5:1-2). He nevertheless felt an obligation to serve his nation to the best of his ability. Earlier, Mormon had led the Nephites in many clashes with the Lamanites. He also helped frame a peace treaty with the Lamanites and Gadianton robbers that lasted ten years (see Mormon 2:28-29; 3:1), during which time he recognized the need to continue preparing the Nephites to defend against possible attack (see Mormon 3:1). Mormon was truly a realist with high ideals.

Something of Mormon's stature as a leader is indicated when Mormon resumed command. The Nephites "looked upon [him] as though [he] could deliver them from their afflictions" (Mormon 5:1). But Mormon resumed leadership at a time when the Nephites could no more prevail against the Lamanites. Furthermore, this was apparently a time of substantial political and economic strain on Nephite society. During the previous one hundred and fifty years, their society had existed as a coalition of tribal/lineage groups consisting primarily of Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, and Zoramites, while the Lamanites were a combination of three additional lineage groups — the Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites (see 4 Nephi 1:3638; Mormon 1:8).

During much of Mormon's lifetime, the prevailing conditions are described as "one complete revolution throughout all the face of the land" (Mormon 2:8). Food may also have been in short supply during this time due to the tremendous disruptions caused by warfare (see Moroni 9:16). These factors and others resulted in an environment where perversion and brutality became common among both Nephites and Lamanites (see Moroni 9:5-20). For example, rape, torture, human sacrifice, and ritual cannibalism are mentioned (see Mormon 4:14, 21; Moroni 9:710). Later Mesoamerican history saw an even fuller development of these practices. Groups like the Aztecs and even some tribes of North American Indians believed that "torture had overtones of religious sacrifice.... Eating a bit of the body was a way to get some of the fortitude of an especially courageous sufferer."[51] Glimpses of these scenes are described in the Book of Mormon with the intense feeling one would expect from a man who was an eyewitness. Mormon's lamentation over the senseless demise of his beloved people is full of pathos (see Mormon 6:16-22).

Prior to these last events in Nephite history, Mormon tried desperately to change the Nephite course — one similar to that followed by the earlier Jaredite nation (see Moroni 9:4, 23) — but to no avail. The people would not listen to his urgings, and his armies no longer responded to many of his commands (see Moroni 9:18). There was little left for him to do, except to write an epistle to the Lamanite king requesting that he be permitted to gather the Nephites near the Hill Cumorah in order to give final battle (see Mormon 6:2; cf. Mormon 3:4).

Prior to the encounter at Cumorah, Mormon "hid up in the hill Cumorah all the records" that had been entrusted to him, except a few plates that he gave to his son, Moroni (Mormon 6:6). Although wounded, Mormon survived the final battle long enough to help record the results of that historic day, ca. A.D. 385. The emotions and thoughts

Mormon displayed as he later surveyed the battlefield littered with bodies of his kindred reveal true anguish, as well as a depth of character seldom found among men. Among the last words of advice this great Nephite captain recorded and preserved for those who would later find his sacred record are these: "Know ye that ye must lay down your weapons of war, and delight no more in the shedding of blood, and take them not again, save it be that God shall command you" (Mormon 7:4).

Following the death of Mormon —resulting either from his wounds at Cumorah or from being hunted down by Lamanite warriors (see Mormon 8:3-5) — Moroni continued his father's record. For at least the next thirty-six years, Moroni apparently wandered alone over vast parts of the North American continent.[52] During this time, he made several substantial contributions to the sacred plates. In about A.D. 421, Moroni deposited the plates, which largely contained Mormon's abridgment of Nephite history, in a hill in upstate New York. Among many other things, his record indicates that subsequent to the Nephite destruction, extensive warfare continued among the Lamanites. The history of Mesoamerica does in fact suggest that warfare became increasingly common in the post-Book of Mormon era. There are also historical and archaeological indications that significant movements of Mesoamerican people and ideas eventually penetrated as far north as what is now the Arizona-New Mexico area and into the lower and mid-Mississippi Valley and southeastern states region.[53] For instance, "by about A.D. 700 a vibrant, well-organized way of life called the Mississippian culture arose … with a strongly Mexican flavor to its arts. This culture transformed the east during the 1,000 year Temple Mound period."[54] These people also constructed large pyramidal hills, usually around a central plaza, with temples on the flat summits. Other similarities, such as depictions of ceremonies resembling Mexican sacrificial rites, are likewise present among the Mississippian culture.

Implications for Today

Writing about war in the Book of Mormon, Hugh Nibley says:

> It is real war that we see here, a tedious, sordid, plodding, joyless routine of see-saw successes and losses — brutally expensive, destructive, exhausting, and boring, with constant marches and countermarches that end sometimes in fiasco and sometimes in intensely unpleasant engagements. The author writes as one would write — as only one *could write* who had gone through a long war as a front-line observer with his eyes wide open. Everything is strictly authentic, with the proper emphasis in the proper place.[55]

The Book of Mormon tells of many great men, and among them were many of the Nephite captains. They appear as real people from the pages of history as one carefully reads the accounts of their lives. Some possessed superior qualities, but they also made common, human mistakes. Further, the military-historical setting provided for these men appears authentic. It seems illogical to assume that anyone writing in the relatively peaceful world of Joseph Smith in the 1820s could have created the wonderfully complex, consistent, and accurate picture of ancient Mesoamerican warfare found in the Book of Mormon. Most of what is known about this milieu was not even known in Joseph Smith's day.

Perhaps the greatest advantage of all in recognizing and accepting the veracity of Book of Mormon warfare is that modern man may thereby learn from the mistakes of the past. In many ways the Nephite-Lamanite environment may have parallels in today's world.

To better confront the challenges we face, perhaps we should emulate the qualities Nephite leaders like Chief Captain Moroni possessed:

Moroni was a strong and a mighty man; he was a man of a perfect understanding; yea, a man that did not delight in bloodshed; a man whose soul did joy in the liberty and the freedom of his country, and his brethren from bondage and slavery; yea, a man whose heart did swell with thanksgiving to his God, for the many privileges and blessings which he bestowed upon his people; a man who did labor exceedingly for the welfare and safety of his people. Yea, and he was a man who was firm in the faith of Christ, and he had sworn with an oath to defend his people, his rights, and his country, and his religion, even to the loss of his blood…. If all men had been, and were, and ever would be, like unto Moroni, behold, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever; yea, the devil would never have power over the hearts of the children of men. (Alma 48:11-13, 17.)

Notes

1. According to R. Gary Shapiro, comp., *An Exhaustive Concordance of the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City: Hawkes, 1977), s.v. *captain* and *captains:* 2 Nephi 13:3; Mosiah 20:17; Alma 2:13, 16; 16:5; 43:6, 16, 17, 44; 48:5; 49:5, 11, 13, 17, 21, 23, 25; 52:19, 28, 38; 55:23; 56:12; 57:29; 58:25; 59:12; 60:36; 61:2; Helaman 16:6; 3 Nephi 3:17, 18, 19.

2. John Warry, *Warfare in the Classical World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), 38. On the Assyrian army, see T. Kendall, "Warfare and Military Matters in the Nuzi Tablets," Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1975; and F. Malbran-Labat, *L'Armée et organisation militaire de l'Assyrie d'après les lettres des Sargonides trouvées î Ninive* (Geneva-Paris: Librairie Droz, 1982). For a brief overview of the Achaemenid Persian army, with bibliographic references to other studies, see J. M. Cook, *The Persian Empire* (London: Dent, 1983), 101-12, and passim.

3. Chaim Herzog and Mordechai Gichon, *Battles of the Bible* (New York: Random House, 1978), 156-57.

4. On sources available to Joseph Smith, see Milton R. Hunter and Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon* (Oakland, California: Kolob, 1959), 3-11.

5. Alfredo Chavero, ed., *Obras historicas,* 2 vols. (Mexico: Oficina Tip de la secretaria de fomento, 1891-92); cf. Hunter and Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon,* 1-6.

6. Ibid., 357-58; Chavero, *Obras historicas,* 25: "Cohuatzon, una de las cinco cabezas ó capitanes inferiores."

7. Hunter and Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon,* 383.

8. Ibid., 67; and "The 'Historical Recollections' of Gaspar Antonio Chi," ed. and tr. M. Wells Jakeman (Provo: Brigham Young University, 1952), 39.

9. George E. Stuart and Gene S. Stuart, *The Mysterious Maya* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1977), 120. The complete account is in Robert M. Carnack, *Quichean Civilization: The Ethnohistoric, Ethnographic, and Archeological Sources* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 39, 283, 303, 341.

10. Stuart and Stuart, *The Mysterious Maya,* 120; see Adrian Recinos, *Cronicas Indigenas de Guatemala,* 2nd ed. (Guatemala: Academia de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala, 1984), 90.

11. Bernal Diaz del Castillo, *The Bernal Diaz Chronicles,* tr. and ed. Albert Idell (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1956), 106, see 103-11.

12. John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of* Mormon (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1985), 263– 64.

13. Ibid., 55.

14. Ibid., 264.

15. On the Roman army, see Graham Webster, *The Rotnan Imperial Army* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1969).

v16. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 313; cf. John A. Tvedtnes, "Book of Mormon Tribal Affiliation and Military Castes," in this volume.

17. Compare ibid.

18. On Aztec military service, see Ross Hassig, *Aztec Warfare: Imperial Expansion and Political Control* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma, 1988), 27-47.

19. Herzog and Gichon, *Battles of the Bible*, 162-63.

20. Compare William J. Hamblin and A. Brent Merrill, "Swords in the Book of Mormon"; Paul Y. Hoskisson, "Scimitars, Cimeters!"; and William J. Hamblin and A. Brent Merrill , "Notes on the Cimeter (Scimitar) in the Book of Mormon," in this volume.

21. Stuart and Stuart, *The Mysterious Maya*, 118; see also William J. Hamblin, "Armor in the Book of Mormon," in this volume.

22. Warry, *Warfare in the Classical World*, 14.

23. Compare William J. Hamblin, "The Importance of Military Matters in the Book of Mormon," in this volume.

24. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 161.

25. Herzog and Gichon, *Battles of the Bible*, 172-73.

26. Hugh Nibley, "Tenting, Toll, and Taxing," *Western Political Quarterly* 19 (1966): 618.

27. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 275. Research by David A. Palmer, "Warfare in Nephite America," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report, 1985, 7, has shown that most Nephite wars started near this time, probably because many of the warriors were also farmers. In Mesoamerica, large military operations were usually seasonal, primarily transpiring during the slack period at the end of the rainy season when crops were ripening. This means Mesoamerican warfare was generally confined to October through February (Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 246, 275; see John L. Sorenson, "Seasonality of Warfare in the Book of Mormon and in Mesoamerica," in this volume).

28. Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites*, vol. 5 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1988), 242.

29. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 47.

30. A. Brent Merrill, "The Causes of War," *Military Review* 62 (July 1982): 45-52.

31. Palmer, "Warfare in Nephite America," 2-4; see John W. Welch, "Why Study Warfare in the Book of Mormon?" in this volume.

32. Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 240.

33. See Bruce W. Warren, "Secret Combinations, Warfare, and Captive Sacrifice in Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon," in this volume. For an example of ritual, see Hugh Nibley, "A Strange Order of Battle," in *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, vol. 6 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1988), 209-21. This discusses some of the circumstances concerning Moroni and his title of liberty.

34. Trevor N. Dupuy, *The Evolution of Weapons and Warfare* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1980), 35; see also Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 261, for a brief description of Nephite fortifications.

35. According to ancient Near Eastern law, a thief (usually a local person who stole from his neighbor) was dealt with judicially; whereas a robber (usually an outsider, like a brigand or highwayman) was dealt with militarily. This ancient legal and linguistic distinction is meticulously observed in the Book of Mormon (see "Thieves and Robbers," F.A.R.M.S. *Insights*, July 1985, 2; and John W. Welch, "Law and War in the Book of Mormon," in this volume.

36. Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*, 97-98.

37. For a summary of Moroni's military career, see Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, 2nd ed., vol. 7 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1988), 292-329.

38. David Zook, Jr., and Robin Higham, *A Short History of Warfare* (New York: Twayne, 1966), 29; see Hugh Nibley, "Warfare and the Book of Mormon," in this volume.

39. See John W. Welch, "Law and War in the Book of Mormon," in this volume.

40. Hassig, Aztec Warfare, 49-52.

41. See Stephen D. Ricks, " 'Holy War': The Sacral Ideology of War in the Book of Mormon and in the Ancient Near East," in this volume.

42. Sidney Sperry, *Book of Mormon Chronology* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 13.

43. See n. 38.

44. Estimates regarding the size of Nephite armies were conducted by the author using the conclusions discussed earlier about Nephite military organization and references to key Nephite commanders. They are only rough approximations and do not include other possible members of the population living near fortified areas (see also Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 193-94).

45. On the numbers in Aztec armies, see Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, 55-60, who concludes that Aztec armies could have numbered several hundred thousand.

46. Sorenson, Ancient American Setting, 44.

47. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mortnon*, 302.

48. For statistics from Aztec times, see Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*— on any size, 55-60; on casualties, 111-17.

49. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 164; cf. Tvedtnes, "Book of Mormon Tribal Affiliation and Military Castes," in this volume; cf. also Mormon 1:5. Mormon's life story has interesting parallels to Ixtlilxochitl's account of an ancient historian-prophet-captain named Huematzin (Hueman) (Hunter and Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon*, 337).

50. On Aztec religio-military training, see Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, 30-37.

51. Jules B. Billard, ed., *The World of the American Indian* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1974), 129; see Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 346); Warren, "Secret Combinations, Warfare, and Captive Sacrifice in Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon," in this volume.

52. Moroni's writings imply he may have experienced "Survivor Syndrome"; see "The Survivor Syndrome," F.A.R.M.S. *Insights*, June 1984, 3; Lisa Bolin Hawkins and Gordon C. Thomasson, "I Only Am Escaped Alone to Tell Thee: Survivor-Witnesses in the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report, 1984.

53. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 93, 105.

54. Billard, *The World of the American Indian*, 64.

55. Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, 292.

Book of Mormon Tribal Affiliation and Military Castes

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This article demonstrates that military and political leadership among the Nephites and related peoples was often a responsibility inherited from one's father. The acceptance of this thesis makes it possible to understand certain aspects of Book of Mormon social structure, the conduct of war, and the martial viewpoint of the book's abridger, Mormon. We begin with an examination of what appears to be a tribal structure among Book of Mormon peoples. For this purpose, we define the tribe as it is known today among the Arabs, whose social structure is akin to that of the ancient Israelites.

The Arab tribe is a quasi-political unit of considerable size whose members are, for the most part, genetically related. To be sure, Middle Eastern tribes such as those found among the Arabs often include "retainers," whose loyalty is to a larger kinship group to which they (or their ancestors) have attached themselves. But most tribal members claim a common ancestor. The primary kinship unit is the *hamula* or extended family, which also demands primary loyalty. The tribe is secondary except when specific privileges or positions of honor are based on descent from a remote ancestor.

In ancient Israel, tribal affiliation generally determined one's political loyalties to one or another of the two kingdoms that dominated the land of Israel during much of its biblical history. Thus, for example, the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Simeon, and, to a large extent, Levi, comprised the kingdom of Judah. The other tribes comprised the kingdom of Israel. In the Book of Mormon, we have a similar situation with two nations (Nephites and Lamanites), each of which was really a confederation of tribes.

Book of Mormon Tribes

As early as the second generation in the New World, descendants of Lehi's colony were calling themselves Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites, after the founders of their lineage groups. Jacob, however, preferred to call them by the collective terms Nephites and Lamanites, according to their political allegiance (see Jacob 1:13-14). We should note the wording of Jacob 1:14: "Those who are friendly to Nephi I shall call Nephites, or the people of Nephi, *according to the reigns of the kings*" (italics added). It has been noted that descendants of Lehi's party are consistently divided into the same seven tribes, always listed in the Book of Mormon in the same order. Dividing the polity into seven groups may correspond to the seven churches Alma set up in the land of Zarahemla (see Mosiah 25:23), which groups are perhaps the "large bodies" into which the people assembled at the time these ecclesiastical units were organized (Mosiah 25:15).[1]

Despite the paucity of genealogical details in the Book of Mormon, clearly the people were very concerned about their tribal affiliation. For example, Book of Mormon personal names containing such Semitic patronymic elements as *Abi-* ("father") and *Ami-* ("paternal kinsman/clan") fit the biblical pattern and are evidence for a strong patrilineal kinship system. Note the names Abinadi, Abinadom, Aminadab, and Aminadi.

Another evidence for the concern with tribal affiliation is that the ancestry of certain individuals is specified, indicating that they either kept genealogical records or that they had family traditions. For example, we learn that Ammon was a descendant of the Mulekite leader Zarahemla (see Mosiah 7:3), that Alma was a descendant of Nephi (see Mosiah 17:2), and that Amulek of the "Nephite" city of Ammonihah had to take pains to specify that "I am a Nephite" (Alma 8:20). He subsequently spoke of his descent from Nephi and even from Joseph who was sold

into Egypt (see Alma 10:2-3). Lamoni, king of the land of Ishmael (see Alma 17:19), was said to be a descendant of Ishmael (see Alma 17:21) though his father lived in the land of Nephi (see Alma 22) and was king over all the Lamanite lands (see Alma 20:8). Even Mormon, who lived centuries after the coming of Christ, made a point of his descent from Nephi (see Mormon 1:5) and specified that he was a "pure descendant of Lehi" (3 Nephi 5:20) — an idea his son Moroni repeated (see Mormon 8:13).[2] As late as ca. 20 B.C., the second Nephi spoke of "the seed of Zedekiah [who] are with us" (Helaman 8:21).

Mulekites and Nephites

A good example of the importance of tribal affiliation is the relationship between the Nephites and the Mulekites. The two peoples united under the first Mosiah soon after they met, in the middle of the second century B.C. (see Omni 1:19). But when Mosiah's namesake and grandson assembled his people in Zarahemla together with the followers of Limhi and Alma (groups recently arrived from the city of Nephi), he divided them into two bodies. The text, which states that the Mulekites were more numerous than the Nephites (see Mosiah 25:1-4), implies that these two bodies, the Nephites and the Mulekites, were separated.

The merger of the Nephites and Mulekites is recounted with very little explanation in the Book of Mormon and presents some anomalies. Since Zarahemla, leader of the Mulekites, was descended from Zedekiah, king of Judah (see Omni 1:14-15; Mosiah 25:2; Helaman 6:10; 8:21), we are perplexed by the fact that he acknowledged Mosiah as king over the new confederation. It may be that we are dealing with the age-old leadership conflict between the biblical tribes of Judah (represented by Zarahemla) and Joseph (represented by Mosiah).[3] If the Book of Mormon story is truly analogous to the biblical, we should expect that some of the Mulekites objected to Nephite rule and occasionally rebelled against those in power. There is, in fact, evidence that the rebellious king-men and Nehors may have been Mulekites.

The King-Men

The name Mulek comes from the Hebrew root *mlk* for "king," and it may be that the "king-men" of the Book of Mormon were, in fact, Mulekites (see Alma 51:5). The text informs us that these were people of "high birth" (Alma 51:8), "who professed the blood of nobility" (Alma 51:21), and who felt that they should rule — perhaps because of descent from King Zarahemla or King Zedekiah of Judah. The passage in question dates from the twentieth year of the reign of the judges; hence, twenty-five years after Mosiah announced his retirement and therefore four generations after the agreement made between the earlier Mosiah and Zarahemla, uniting the two peoples.

Moroni was able to crush the rebellion, slaying some four thousand of the king-men and imprisoning their leaders (see Alma 51:17-19). The king-men who survived the war "were compelled to hoist the title of liberty upon their towers, and *in their cities*" (Alma 51:20; italics added). If this means that they were settled in specific cities, then they are more likely a tribal group than a political faction with representation throughout the Nephite lands.

The Order of Nehor

Another group that may have been composed of Mulekites — and that may, in fact, have been the forerunners of the king-men — was named from a certain Nehor, the man who introduced priestcraft into the Nephite nation and who slew one of their heroes, Gideon (see Alma 1). One of the leaders of the order of Nehor was Amlici, who sought to become king (see Alma 2). His name may contain the *mlk* root for "king." Even if the name Amlici does not derive from this root, phonological similarity to the word for "king" makes it possible to establish the tie by

means of folk etymology. The phenomenon is well known from the Bible. Another man whose name may relate to the same root was Amalickiah, a Zoramite whose followers wanted to make him king. (Unsuccessful in his efforts among the Nephites, he later treacherously slew the Lamanite king and took his throne.) Those who supported Amalickiah in his bid for a Nephite throne were lesser judges who wanted higher positions (see Alma 46:4-5). As we shall see later, it was likely that the judgeship was generally inherited, which suggests that all or many of these men may have been Mulekites.

The contrast between Amlicites and Nephites in Alma 2:11 implies that the Amlicites were, in fact, not Nephites. Also of the order of Nehor were the Amulonites and Amalekites, Nephite defectors who dwelt among the Lamanites (see Alma 21:4; 24:28-29). (Though there are better explanations for some of these names, the name Amalekite, like Amlicite, may derive from the Hebrew root for "king.") The judges, lawyers, priests, and teachers (those of the upper classes) of the city of Ammonihah were of the order of Nehor (see Alma 14:16-18; 15:15; 16:11). If they were Mulekites, this would explain why Amulek, who lived in that city, took pains to specify that he was a Nephite (see Alma 8:20; 10:2-3).

Alma's First Mission

The mission of the younger Alma may provide evidence for tribal divisions among the Nephites. Alma resigned as chief judge "that he himself might go forth among his people or among the people of Nephi, that he might preach" (Alma 4:19). The cities he visited may have belonged to specific tribal groups.

Alma taught the Nephites "in their cities and villages throughout the land … first in the land of Zarahemla and from thence throughout all the land" (Alma 5:1 and preface to that chapter). After speaking in Zarahemla (see Alma 5:2), he went to the city of Gideon (see Alma 6:7). Because the town was named after the general who served King Limhi, we may not be amiss in suggesting that immigrants from the land of Nephi settled it. Following a period of rest in Zarahemla (see Alma 8:1), Alma went to Melek (see Alma 8:3-5). The name means "king," suggesting that it may have been a Mulekite settlement.

Alma's next stop was Ammonihah, where the people would not hear his message (see Alma 8:6, 9). This was because they were not members of Alma's church, as were the people in Zarahemla, Gideon, and Melek (see Alma 8:11). As we have noted above, they were of the order of Nehor, and may have been Mulekites.

Lamanite Divisions

In Alma 43:13, we read that the Lamanites were "a compound" of descendants of Laman and Lemuel, the sons of Ishmael, and Nephite dissenters such as the Amalekites, Zoramites, and descendants of the priests of Noah. Despite this, there are indications of a clear separation between some of these elements. For example, we read of the Lamanites, Amalekites, and Amulonites who built the city of Jerusalem, with the notation that many of the Amalekites and Amulonites were after the order of Nehors (see Alma 21:1-4). This group seems to have remained separate from the main Lamanite body, at least in their tribal identification. Despite their political unity, these groups appear to have comprised separate tribal groups within the Lamanite kingdom.

Over these tribal groups, there was a sort of "high king" in the land of Nephi, to whom other kings were subservient. Lamoni, a descendant of Ishmael, was king of the land of Ishmael (see Alma 17:21). His father was "king over all the land, and lived in the land of Nephi (Alma 18:9; see 20:1, 8). Antiomno, king of Middoni, was a friend to Lamoni (see Alma 20:4). But he, like Lamoni, was evidently subservient to the king at Nephi, who promised Ammon that he would release his brethren from prison in Middoni (see Alma 20:27; 22:2). After

Ammon's intervention, Lamoni's father granted his son autonomy in his kingdom (see Alma 20:26; 21:21) and remained king "over all the land save it were the land of Ishmael" (Alma 22:1).

Aaron and his fellow missionaries are said to have converted seven cities/lands of the Lamanites during their stay in the land of Nephi (see Alma 23:8-13, 15). These did not include the cities of the Amalekites and Amulonites and the Lamanites living in the same region (see Alma 23:14), which comprised the lands of Amulon, Helam, Jerusalem, and nearby areas (see Alma 24:1-2). The converted Lamanites took the name Anti-Nephi-Lehies (see Alma 23:16-18) and were attacked by these others. Of the attackers, some were impressed with the sincerity of their brethren and laid down their arms to unite with them. Interestingly, the text informs us that those who joined with them were all descendants of Laman and Lemuel and that none of the Amalekites, Amulonites, or those of the order of Nehor laid down their arms (see Alma 24:29). The separate status of the Amulonites is further indicated by the fact that the Lamanites, angry at their losses, burned the Amulonites who had provoked them to war (see Alma 25:8-12).

The Ammonites

From the Nephite sphere, too, we find that there were clear-cut tribal distinctions. For example, though the Anti-Nephi-Lehies (people of Ammon) were converted to the Nephite religion and came to live with the Nephites, yet they were not left to intermingle with the rest of the people. Rather, they were given a special territory named Jershon (see Alma 27). That they remained separate from the main Nephite body is indicated by the statement that they continued to be called by the name of their mentor, Ammon, "ever after" (Alma 27:26-27).

Though the sons of the Ammonites, who fought under Helaman in the great war, called themselves by the more general term of Nephites (see Alma 53:16), they nevertheless appear to have been segregated from the main Nephite army. Helaman noted that his two thousand Ammonite warriors "were descendants of Laman, who was the eldest son of our father Lehi" (Alma 56:3). This implies that none of them was descended from Lemuel or the sons of Ishmael, who also formed the Lamanite league. It is true that Helaman notes that his two thousand were joined "to the army of Antipus" (Alma 56:10), but they were kept as a separate subunit. Later, six thousand replacement troops were sent from the land of Zarahemla "besides sixty of the sons of the Ammonites who had come to join their brethren, my little band of two thousand" (Alma 57:6). Clearly the Ammonites were united to Helaman's army and did not mingle with the other Nephites. This is further demonstrated by the fact that he then wrote of "my little band of two thousand and sixty" (Alma 57:19-20).

There is a similar incident recorded in Mosiah. The priests of Noah, led by their chief, Amulon, had fled from the city of Nephi into the wilderness, leaving behind their wives and children. They stole Lamanite girls as wives, founded a new city called Amulon, and were thereafter termed "Amulonites." When the rest of the inhabitants of Nephi escaped to Zarahemla and joined with the people of Mosiah, the sons of these priests (by their first wives) "would no longer be called by the names of their fathers, therefore they took upon themselves the name of Nephi, that they might be called the children of Nephi and be numbered among those who were called Nephites" (Mosiah 25:12). This passage implies that the Amulonites' fathers (despite the fact that they lived in the city of Nephi) were, in fact, *not* Nephites, but we cannot be certain of their real origin. The fact that the Amulonite priests, like the Amalekites, were of the order of Nehor (see Alma 24:28-29), and the further fact that they ruled in Nephi under King Noah, may imply that they were Mulekites. That Mulekites accompanied Nephites in their return to the land of Nephi seems more likely when we consider the fact that Ammon, who led the group sent out by King Mosiah to locate them, was himself a Mulekite (see Mosiah 7:3, 13).

Segregation of converted Lamanites from the main body of the Nephites seems to have been standard operating procedure. For example, during the course of the great war of the first century B.C., more than four thousand Lamanite prisoners were allowed to settle with the people of Ammon in the land of Jershon, after making an oath of peace with the Nephites (see Alma 62:15-17, 27-30). At the outset of that great conflict, the servants of the Lamanite king, falsely accused of slaying their monarch, fled to the land of Zarahemla and were sent to join the people of Ammon (see Alma 47:29).

At one point, Moroni had to search among his troops to find "a descendant of Laman" to send on a spying mission (Alma 55:4-5). The implication of the story is that the Nephites either didn't look enough like Lamanites or didn't speak like them and could therefore not have deceived them. This undoubtedly resulted from the geographical separation of the tribes. Since there had been "Nephite" dissenters to the Lamanites, one wonders why Moroni could not have sent someone else. The answer may be that these dissenters were, in fact, always Mulekites or Zoramites, whose physical characteristics or language distinguished them from the Nephites.

The Zoramites

The story of the Zoramites may also indicate the tribal structure of Nephite society. The sect known as the Zoramites was, indeed, led by a man named Zoram (see Alma 30:59). This does not, however, preclude the possibility that they were really descendants of the Zoram of Nephi's time, the original Zoram who went with Nephi when he separated himself from Laman and Lemuel and the sons of Ishmael (see 2 Nephi 5:6). The name of the sect's leader may have been passed down in the family. The fact that the Zoramites all lived in the same geographical area (where Alma and his sons went to preach to them) indicates that they may have been a tribe with religious customs that differed from those of the Nephites. While it is true that they "were dissenters from the Nephites" and "had had the word of God preached unto them" but had fallen away (Alma 31:8-9), one wonders at their sudden reversion to idolatry (see Alma 31:1). It seems more reasonable that an undercurrent of idolatry already existed in the tribe and that Zoram emphasized it to widen the rift between the Zoramites and the Nephites. Indeed, the group may have been practicing idolatry in secret, much as the Marranos or "secret Jews" of Spain practiced Judaism in secret while publicly professing to be Catholics — a situation that continued over several centuries.

That they were not merely a distinct religious group is indicated by the fact that the Zoramites lived on the border with the Lamanites (see Alma 31:3) and separated themselves politically and religiously from the Nephites (see Alma 31:2, 10). This made the Nephites fear that they would ally themselves with the Lamanites, and was, in fact, the reason Alma decided to organize a mission among them (see Alma 31:4-5). The Zoramites are termed dissenters from the Nephites (see Alma 31:8). Ultimately, they did as feared, joining the Lamanites in battle against the Nephites (see Alma 35:101-11; 43:4). Zerahemnah, one of the Lamanite leaders, is the first to have appointed Amalekites and Zoramites as chief captains over the Lamanite armies (see Alma 43:4-6). Jacob, the commander of the Lamanite forces that later occupied the city of Mulek, was a Zoramite (Alma 52:20, 33).

Amalickiah, a Nephite dissenter who, by treachery, took over leadership of the Lamanites (see Alma 48:5), also followed the practice of appointing Amalekites and Zoramites as chief captains. In Alma 49:25, Amalickiah is said to have been "a Nephite by birth," though later, in Alma 54:24, he says, "I am a bold Lamanite," after joining that group politically. Yet his brother and successor, Ammoron, is said to be a descendant of Zoram, Laban's servant (see Alma 54:23). It appears reasonable to assume that the Zoramites appointed as leaders in the Lamanite army were not merely members of a religious sect, but were, in fact, actual descendants of the original Zoram of Nephi s

day. The fact that converted Zoramites went to live with the Ammonites in the land of Jershon rather than mingle with the general Nephite population (see Alma 35:6, 14) indicates that they were a distinct ethnic group.

The Gadianton Robbers

The Gadianton robbers were a secret society that came to the fore in the latter part of the century before Christ and played a role in the destruction of the Nephite nation four centuries later (see Helaman 2). The group seems to have had some dependence on the Jaredites (Helaman 2:13), among whom there were also secret combinations (cf. Ether 8). Such a tie would most logically have come through the Mulekites, who are known to have encountered at least one Jaredite survivor (see Omni 1:20-22). Despite the fact that the Mulekites have left us virtually no records, there are hints of cultural contacts between them and the Jaredites. Hugh Nibley once pointed out that the troublemakers among the Nephites appear to be Mulekites, sometimes bearing Jaredite names.[4] For example, one Coriantumr (a distinctly Jaredite name), a descendant of Zarahemla, dissented from the Nephites and became leader of a Lamanite army (see Helaman 15). John Welch has noted that the name of the "Lamanite" leader Zerahemnah is so similar to the Mulekite name Zarahemla that he was likely a Mulekite.[5]

Earlier we indicated that the order of Nehor may have been a Mulekite organization. This may explain why the name Nehor also appears as that of a Jaredite city (see Ether 7:4, 9). The man Nehor became notorious as the one who killed Gideon (see Alma 1:9), and violence was one of the more noted features of the Gadianton band (see Helaman 2:8; 6:15, 18-19). The order of Nehor shared with the Gadianton band the fact that they sought control of the judgeship in order to get gain (see Alma 11:3, 20; Helaman 7:4-5; 3 Nephi 6:27-30). We are reminded that the king-men were comprised of nobles who sought to establish a king in the land (see Alma 51), while the Gadianton judges and lawyers sought to set a king over the people (see 3 Nephi 6:30). We remember, too, that the lesser judges had backed Amalickiah's bid for kingship (see Alma 46:4-5). The fact that judges were involved in all of these movements reinforces the supposition that the Mulekites were behind each of the attempts to establish a monarch.

If the Mulekites carried on elements of Jaredite culture, the "secret combinations" of Jaredite times may have been preserved in the Gadianton band of the first century B.C. Indeed, the name Gadianton, as well as the name Kishkumen (the first-named member of the band) are Jaredite in form.[6] Another Jaredite-like name is that of Giddianhi, a leader of the Gadianton band ca. A.D. 16. He wrote that he was ready to command his troops to "go down upon the Nephites and destroy them" (3 Nephi 3:3). His words may indicate that the band was not comprised of Nephites. In his epistle to the Nephite governor Lachoneus, Giddianhi demanded the surrender of the government "that this my people may recover their rights and government" (3 Nephi 3:10). These words reflect the same claim made by the king-men several decades earlier. We are tempted to suggest that the king-men and the Gadianton robbers were, in whole or in part, the same group and that they were Mulekites seeking to recover a lost kingship.

About A.D. 30, the central government was dissolved. The fact that all people knew the tribe to which they easily reverted is strong evidence of the basic tribal nature of these people: "The people were divided one against each other; and they did separate one from another into tribes, every man according to his family and his kindred and friends.… And every tribe did appoint a chief or a leader over them; and thus they became tribes and leaders of tribes. Now behold, there was no man among them save he had much family and many kindreds and friends; therefore their tribes became exceedingly great" (3 Nephi 7:24). At the same time, the secret combination "did gather themselves together" and appointed a man named Jacob as their king (3 Nephi 7:9-10). But "they were not

so strong in number as the tribes of the people," who banded against them (3 Nephi 7:11-12). The wording of this statement leads us to believe that the band may also have been a tribe.

Tribalism in the Christian Era

We read in 4 Nephi 1:17 that there were no more "-ites" after the coming of Christ, but that all of the people were united in the kingdom of God. However, this evidently has reference to political factionalism, rather than the abandonment of lineage ties. As noted above, not long before the coming of Christ, the people had dissolved their political ties and retained tribal allegiances (see 3 Nephi 7:2-4). There is reason to believe that these tribal units continued to exist after the time of Christ.

Evidence from Names

Before two hundred years had passed (see 4 Nephi 1:22), in the second generation after Christ, those who rebelled against the church called themselves Lamanites (see 4 Nephi 1:20). Of the 231st year of the Christian era, we read that there were people among the Nephites whom the Lamanites termed Jacobites, Josephites, and Zoramites (see 4 Nephi 1:35-37). Those who rejected the gospel, we are told, were called Lamanites and Lemuelites and Ishmaelites (see 4 Nephi 1:38). "They were taught to hate the children of God, even as the Lamanites were taught to hate the children of Nephi from the beginning" (4 Nephi 1:39). The old enmities followed the reemphasis of tribal affiliation.

In Mormon's day, the Nephites are also said to have consisted of Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, and Zoramites, while the Lamanites consisted of Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites (see Mormon 1:8-9). That the tribal structure had never changed is evidenced by the fact that these groups are named in this same order in 4 Nephi 1:38 (referring to events dating two centuries prior to Mormon's time) and Jacob 1:13-14 (dating to the sixth century B.C.).

I believe that the reversion to the ancient tribal names is more than coincidence. Merely separating into two groups would have been simpler for the people, according to whether they followed or rejected the established religion. Believing that people actually took upon themselves the names of the tribes from which they descended is much more reasonable. This is not to say that there was no intermarriage nor intermingling of tribes. But, following the patrilineal system of their ancestors, it is logical to assume that these Israelites considered themselves to be members of the paternal clan and tribe. One might argue that, since the converted Lamanites left their homeland with Ammon and settled among the Nephites, they no longer had Lamanite ties. But the fact that they were segregated in the land of Jershon from the general Nephite population would have helped retain their tribal identity. The Lamanite king of Mormon's time was named Aaron (see Mormon 2:9). This may have been a family name originally adapted from Aaron, brother of Ammon, who had converted the Lamanite king (see Alma 22). If so, then the Lamanites of Mormon's time can be tied to those of the time of Ammon.

Geographical Considerations

When war broke out between the two main groups of Mormon's time, it was, significantly, "in the borders of Zarahemla, by the waters of Sidon" (Mormon 1:10), which was the old border between Nephites and Lamanites, where wars had begun in earlier days (see Alma 22:27). Apparently, people tended to live where their ancestors had dwelt.

The subsequent history of war between Nephites and Lamanites further demonstrates that the people still lived within their ancient borders. Because the Lamanites chased the Nephites northward (see Mormon 2), obviously the Lamanites still dwelt south of the Nephite homeland, as in the days prior to the coming of Christ (e.g., see Alma 22:27-34). The fact that, during Mormon's time, both the Nephites and the Lamanites had become apostate (see 4 Nephi 1:43, 45) indicates that the distinction was tribal and not religious (that is, "believer" vs. "nonbeliever"). That the Lamanites of Mormon's day were more numerous than the Nephites (see Mormon 4:13, 17; 2:3, 25; 5:6) is further evidence of continuing tribal identity. This had been true in earlier generations also (see Jarom 1:6; Alma 43:51; 58:2; Helaman 4:25).

Political Entities of Mormon's Day

Readers of the Book of Mormon tend to oversimplify matters when it comes to the wars in the days of Mormon. They see two great opposing forces, Lamanites and Nephites. They forget, for example, that the inhabitants of some of the "Nephite" cities did not join the retreating Nephites and were wiped out (see Mormon 5:5). If they were of different tribes, they may have thought they were not part of the war. Another point is that there are three main groups, not two. The third comprised the Gadianton robbers who, Mormon informs us, lived among the Lamanites (see Mormon 1:18). Indeed, at one point the Nephites made a treaty with the Lamanites and the Gadianton robbers (see Mormon 2:27-28).

The Gadianton robbers were a secret society who had, at an earlier stage, infiltrated both Nephite and Lamanite society, but who were ultimately driven into the hills. They sought wealth and power and we have suggested that they may have been the Mulekites or king-men, who had laid claim to the government in the time of the first Moroni.

Destruction of the Nephites

That the Nephites who were destroyed by the Lamanites in the fourth century A.D. were literal descendants of the group led by Nephi—and not just a religious group taking his name—is evidenced by prophecies made centuries before the event. The Lord had told Nephi that the Lamanites would "be a scourge unto thy seed ... and inasmuch as they will not remember me, and hearken unto my words, they shall scourge them even unto destruction" (2 Nephi 5:25). Nephi also saw the history of his people in vision. He noted that, following the fourth generation after Christ's appearance, he "saw the multitudes of the earth gathered together. And the angel said unto me: Behold *thy seed,* and also the seed of thy brethren. And it came to pass that I looked and I beheld the people of *my seed gathered together in multitudes* against the seed of my brethren; and they were gathered together to battle" (1 Nephi 12:11-15; italics added). "I beheld and saw that the seed of my brethren did contend against my seed; ... the seed of my brethren did overpower *the people of my seed;* ... the people of the seed of my brethren ... had overcome *my seed"* (1 Nephi 12:19-20; italics added). Later, Nephi wrote that after the fourth generation from Christ, "a speedy destruction cometh unto *my people"* (2 Nephi 26:10; italics added).

Samuel the Lamanite, during his address to the Nephites, said that unless they repented, *"this people"* would be destroyed some four hundred years hence (Helaman 13:5-6; italics added). He specifically named the Nephites as those who would suffer this fate (see Helaman 13:8-10). Shortly before the end of his ministry, about seventy years before Christ's coming, Alma prophesied to his son Helaman: "I perceive that *this very people, the Nephites* ... in four hundred years from the time that Jesus Christ shall manifest himself unto them, shall dwindle in unbelief. Yea, and then shall they see wars and pestilences, yea, famines and bloodshed, even until *the people of Nephi shall become extinct"* (Alma 45:10-11; italics added).

Alma further noted (see Alma 45:12-14) that the only Nephites who would survive would be those who would go over to the Lamanites. Mormon, editorializing on the Nephite-Lamanite wars of the mid-first century B.C., noted this as well. He further pointed out that the records kept by the Nephites had been handed down among them to the time they were destroyed as a people (see Helaman 3:13-16). This implies that the Nephites retained their tribal identity as late as Mormon's time. Moroni later wrote that the Lamanites "put to death every Nephite that will not deny the Christ" (Moroni 1:1-2). This is reflected in Doctrine and Covenants 10:45-48, where we read that the Lord had promised to the ancient Nephite scribes that the gospel would be preached to "the Lamanites, and also all that had become Lamanites because of their dissensions." Enos was one of those who had received this promise (see Enos 1:13), and modern revelation confirms that the record he and others kept will come to the "Nephites, and the Jacobites, and the Josephites, and the Zoramites, ... the Lamanites, and the Lemuelites, and the Ishmaelites" (D&C 3:16-20).

These passages make it clear that the Lamanites and Nephites who fought the great battles leading to the dissolution of the Nephite nation (but not the annihilation of every single Nephite) were, in fact, the ancient tribal confederacies known by those names in the days before Christ.

Hereditary Offices

Other evidence for the importance of tribal/family descent in the Book of Mormon is found in the fact that some of the offices seem to be hereditary. We refer particularly to the offices of king, high priest, judge, and chief captain. Originally, all of these offices seem to have been centered in a single individual — the king. He was civil ruler, military leader, and prophet/priest[7] to his people. As such, he kept the sacred implements of religion (the Liahona and the scriptures) and of war (the sword of Laban), turning them over to the next king when he abdicated. For example, when Limhi, king of the land of Lehi-Nephi, turned over the twenty-four Jaredite plates found by his people to the second Mosiah, this may have been a sign of political submission or abdication of royal rights (see Mosiah 28:11). It may have been an act similar to Zerahemnah turning over his weapons as a sign of military submission (see Alma 44:8). Then, when Mosiah retired, he turned his position as civil ruler over to Alma, who had been chosen as the first chief judge. Alma had also inherited the position of high priest from his father, whom Mosiah had earlier appointed to this post (see Mosiah 25:14-24).

Alma was also a Nephite military commander and led an army against the Amlicites (see Alma 12:16), personally fighting with Amlici (see Alma 2:29), who was seeking to be king and hence probably saw the chief judge as his personal rival for political power. As time went by, Alma relinquished some of his responsibilities to others. Around 83 B.C., he appointed Nephihah, an elder of the church, as chief judge, but retained the high priesthood (see Alma 4:16-20). Two years later, we find a man named Zoram leading the Nephite army as its chief captain (see Alma 16:5). Still, there was some overlapping. For example, Helaman, who succeeded his father Alma as high priest, served for a time as captain of a military force of two thousand young men (see Alma 53:18-22).

Gideon, one of the "strong men" of King Noah (see Mosiah 19:4), had evidently been in charge of the Nephite army in the land of Nephi (see Mosiah 19:18, 22), where he later served as advisor to Noah's son, Limhi (see Mosiah 20:17-22; 22:3-10). He became a teacher in the church in Zarahemla and was killed by the apostate Nehor (see Alma 1:7-9; 2:1, 20).

The King

The first Mosiah appears to have been the Nephite king when his group encountered the people of Zarahemla, who accepted him as their ruler. This is evidenced by the fact that his son, King Benjamin, possessed the records handed down by the earlier Nephite kings (see Words of Mormon 1:10-11; Jarom 1:14; Omni 1:11). Benjamin's son Mosiah succeeded him on the throne when Benjamin gave him "charge concerning all the affairs of the kingdom" and turned over to him the records, the sword, and the Liahona, or ball or director (Mosiah 1:15-16). The throne was later offered to Mosiah's sons, each of whom declined the honor (see Mosiah 28:10; 29:1-6). Mormon noted that although the people of Zarahemla were part of the Nephite nation, kingship was reserved to the descendants of Nephi (see Mosiah 25:13).

The High Priest

The elder Alma had been offered the kingship by his original followers, but he declined. Instead, he served as high priest in the land of Helam (see Mosiah 23:1-11, 16) and was later appointed to that post in the land of Zarahemla by King Mosiah (see Mosiah 25:19-21; 26:7).

Alma the younger was appointed high priest by his father and was chosen chief judge by the voice of the people (see Mosiah 29:25-26, 42, 44) after the new governmental system had been established by King Mosiah (see Mosiah 29:11). Mosiah turned over to him the "interpreters" and all of the plates containing the Nephite and Jaredite records (see Mosiah 28:11, 20). The guardians of the records and the "interpreters" evidently also kept the sword of Laban, for Moroni showed it to the Three Witnesses along with the plates and the breastplate containing the Urim and Thummim (see D&C 17:1). When he resigned as chief judge in favor of Nephihah, Alma retained the high priesthood (see Alma 4:16-20). He also kept the records because Nephihah had declined to take them (see Alma 50:37-38).

Alma then went on a mission to the Zoramites and took with him his sons Shiblon and Corianton, leaving Helaman behind (see Alma 31:7), evidently to supervise the church in the land of Zarahemla. Later, he turned the records over to Helaman, who became high priest in his father's stead (see Alma 37:1; 45:20; 50:38). The high priesthood then passed, in succession, to Helaman's brother, Shiblon (see Alma 62:52-63:1), then to Helaman, son of Helaman (see Alma 63:10-11; Helaman 3:37). Next came Nephi, son of the younger Helaman (see Helaman 5:4), then his son Nephi (see 3 Nephi 1:2), his son Nephi (see 4 Nephi 1:1), his son Amos (see 4 Nephi 1:19), his son Amos (see 4 Nephi 1:21), and his brother Ammaron (see 4 Nephi 1:47-49). At this point, the records and the priestly/ prophetic responsibility passed from Ammaron to Mormon, a descendant of the original Nephi (see Mormon 2:17), who passed the authority to his son Moroni (see Mormon 6:6).

The Chief Judge

When King Mosiah retired, chief judges were chosen in the place of the kings, but even this office was quasi-hereditary. The first chief judge was Alma, the high priest (see Mosiah 29:25-26,42,44). When Alma resigned as chief judge, he retained the high priesthood, but chose Nephihah, an elder of the church, as chief judge, giving "him power according to the voice of the people" (see Alma 4:16-20; 8:12).

Pahoran succeeded his father, Nephihah, as chief judge (see Alma 50:37-40). When the king-men demanded that the question of kingship be put to a vote, the voice of the people favored the freemen, "and Pahoran retained the judgment-seat, which caused much rejoicing among the *brethren of Pahoran* and also many of the people of liberty" (Alma 51:7; italics added). The rejoicing among Pahoran's family was probably due to the fact that the position undoubtedly brought with it a measure of prestige — and perhaps wealth — to the family.

When Pahoran died, the people had to choose between his three sons, of whom Pahoran was selected. His brother Pacumeni accepted the decision, but another brother, Paanchi, revolted and had Pahoran slain. Pacumeni was then appointed chief judge, "according to his right" (see Helaman 1:1-13). After Pacumeni, the position of chief judge reverted to the family of Alma, so that Helaman, son of Helaman and grandson of Alma (see Helaman 2:2), and his son Nephi (see Helaman 3:37) served as both high priest and chief judge. Nephi delivered the judgment-seat to Cezoram (see Helaman 5:1), who was succeeded by his (unnamed) son (see Helaman 6:15). The next chief judge was Seezoram, whose name is so similar to Cezoram that he was probably a member of the same family — perhaps another son (see Helaman 9:23). Seezoram was slain by his own brother, who perhaps coveted the throne (see Helaman 9:26). After a period of unnamed judges, we encounter Lachoneus (see 3 Nephi 1:1), who was succeeded by his son Lachoneus (see 3 Nephi 6:19; 7:1), in whose day the central government was broken up.

From this information, we can see that the most important offices in Nephite society — including military positions, as we shall see in the next section— were de facto hereditary. This is evidence that clan and tribal affiliation were important in determining one's social status.

The Nephite Military Caste

A comment made by one of my students in a Book of Mormon class prompted part of the investigation represented by this paper. He suggested that Mormon, the father of the abridger of the Nephite record, was a professional soldier. As evidence, he noted that the younger Mormon was eleven years of age when his father took him into the "land southward" (Mormon 1:6) and that "in this year there began to be a war between the Nephites ... and the Lamanites.... The war began to be among them in the borders of Zarahemla, by the waters of Sidon" (Mormon 1:8, 10). The family's departure into the war zone hints at a military transfer. In light of this possibility, I suggest that the historian/general/prophet Mormon was, in fact, from a line of army leaders who belonged to a military caste.[8]

Military Castes in Mesoamerica

Typically, Mesoamerican peoples had six basic classes or occupations: peasants, merchants, warriors, priests, judges, and government officials.[9] Among the Aztecs, all of these were directly involved in war. For example, the merchants formed, when necessary, their own military units. Warriors and priests replenished the ranks of the judges and other government officials and most priests began their service for a time in special military units. Aztec boys destined for a military career were dedicated for the task at birth by their parents and trained at an early age. This fact of Mesoamerican life is reflected in the youth of the Nephite chief captains. It would explain how Mormon came to command the Nephite armies at the tender age of sixteen (see Mormon 2:1-2).

Also of significance was the fact that the Aztec war lord, though elected to his position, was generally a blood relative of the Chief Speaker (king).[10] Among the Maya, the town governor *(batab)* was a hereditary office with judicial and military functions, much like those exercised by the earlier Moroni in the Book of Mormon. There was also a war captain *(nacom)* who was elected for three years, but during all-out war, the *batab* was expected to lead the army.[11] Though not identical to the Nephite military organization, there are obvious similarities.

General Moroni

Moroni, who had commanded the Nephite armies some five centuries before Mormon, was also a relatively young man when he became chief captain at the age of twenty-five (see Alma 43:17). Moroni had given up the command

of the armies to his son Moronihah (see Alma 62:43), which implies that the position was inherited. Moroni himself became chief captain in the eighteenth year of the reign of the judges (see Alma 43:3) and his son Moronihah in about the thirty-first year (see Alma 62:39). If Moronihah was born when his father was twenty years of age, he would have been only eighteen when he succeeded him.

The prophet Mormon was so impressed with the faith, the military genius, and the character of the earlier Moroni that his praise of the man seems almost an exaggeration (see Alma 48:11-13,16-18).[12] He likely named his own son Moroni after the earlier general. Mormon's son was also a military captain, leading ten thousand at the great battle at Cumorah under his father (see Mormon 6:12). Like the other military leaders, he appears to have been quite young. If, for example, he was sixty years of age when he buried the plates in about the 421st year after Christ (see Moroni 10:1), he would have been twenty-five years old in the 385th year, when he fought at Cumorah (see Moroni 6:5).

I suggest that Mormon's admiration for the earlier Moroni derives not only from the man's character, but also from the fact that he may have been one of Mormon's paternal ancestors. This reason alone would be sufficient to explain why he would call his own son by the same name. By the same token, Moronihah who, along with Moroni, commanded a group of ten thousand under Mormon, may have been named in honor of the earlier Moronihah, son of Moroni, and may have been a member of the same family (see Mormon 6:14). If Mormon belonged to a military caste, we have a possible explanation of why, after having refused to continue in his position, he was later readily accepted as chief captain once again (see Mormon 5:1) — that is, it was an inherited right and responsibility that he had assumed in his youth.

Origin of the Nephite Warrior Caste

There appear to be two distinct warrior castes in the Book of Mormon. The first was that of the Zoramites, who were appointed chief captains by the Lamanites, as we have noted previously. The Zoramites had likely been military leaders among the Nephites prior to their defection to the Lamanites. We learn that Amalickiah appointed Zoramites as chief captains because they were "the most acquainted with the strength of the Nephites, and their places of resort, and the weakest parts of their cities" (Alma 48:5). When they led the Lamanite armies against Nephite cities fortified by Moroni, they "were astonished exceedingly" because of the changes (Alma 49:5). In the same account, we learn that it was the Zoramite chief captains who had introduced shields, breastplates, and armor (thick clothing) to the Lamanites. These implements had aided the Nephites during previous battles against the Lamanites (e.g., Alma 43:19-21).

In the days of Alma, a man named Zoram was appointed chief captain over the Nephite armies (see Helaman 16:5). Note that his appointment does not preclude his being part of a hereditary military aristocracy from which such choices were made. His two sons, Lehi and Aha, were also military leaders (see Alma 16:5, 7). The names of Zoram's sons may have military significance too. Lehi (also Ramath-Lehi) was the site where the great warrior Samson slew a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass (Judges 15:9-17). And Aha may derive from Egyptian *h3*, "warrior," which is generally rendered "Aha" in the English transliteration of the name of the first Egyptian king. Lehi later played a prominent military role in the days of General Moroni (see Alma 43, 49, 52-53, 61-62; Helaman 1:28). The family may have descended from Zoram, the servant of Laban.[13] In the battle to recapture the town of Mulek from the Lamanites, we find Lehi pitted against the Zoramite general, Jacob (see Alma 52). If we are correct in stating that at least some of the Zoramites formed a military caste, then we perhaps have the irony of two Zoramite generals fighting on opposite sides of the fence.

The other warrior caste comprised men such as the earlier Moroni and Moronihah and probably Mormon and his father Mormon, as well as his son Moroni and another Moronihah. It may not be out of line to suggest that this caste descended from the ancient kings. Nephi was the one who had taken the rather special sword from Laban in Jerusalem (see 1 Nephi 4:9). Using it as a pattern, he made other swords (see 2 Nephi 5:14) and personally wielded the sword of Laban in the defense of his people (see Jacob 1:10). In this, he appears to have been following the ancient Near Eastern practice of the king being commander of the army. Saul, Israel's first universally acknowledged king, is called in the earlier parts of Samuel by the term *nagîd*, "commander" (KJV "captain"), indicating his role as leader of the army (see 1 Samuel 10:1; cf. 1 Samuel 11). David's troubles began when he neglected personally to lead the army of Israel in battle (see 2 Samuel 11, esp. v. 1). From Egyptian, Assyrian, and Babylonian records, we learn that kings typically accompanied their armies into the field. Jarom noted that the Nephite kings led their people in battle (see Jarom 1:7, 14).

The sword of Laban appears to have been a relic possessed by the kings. We read that King Benjamin (who, in Omni 1:24, leads the Nephites against the Lamanites) wielded the sword in battle (see Words of Mormon 1:13). He passed the weapon to his son Mosiah at the time Mosiah became king (see Mosiah 1:16), about 130 B.C. It is not impossible that this was the sword used by the king's son, Ammon, against the Lamanite raiders some forty years later (see Alma 17:37-39). Possibly his training in the use of such weapons resulted from his royal status.[14]

In any event, the sword was evidently passed down and was kept with the plates and the breastplate shown by Moroni to the Three Witnesses (see D&C 17:1).

The earlier Moroni, who was Nephite chief captain when the war with the Lamanites broke out about 74 B.C., was almost certainly not the son of either Mosiah or any of his sons (who had only recently returned from their fourteen-year mission). But he may have been a descendant of King Benjamin or the first Mosiah, and hence of the royal seed. This would give more meaning to the claim of Mormon to be a "pure descendant" of Nephi (see 3 Nephi 5:20; also Mormon 1:5), since only descendants of Nephi were chosen as kings (see Mosiah 25:13), clearly making it necessary to keep genealogical records.

A *Military Record*

If these assumptions are correct, then we can more readily understand Mormon's approach to the writing of his people's history, which, while comprising only a small portion of the Nephite history (see Words of Mormon 1:5), is essentially a war record. Mormon's first recorded words in our English Book of Mormon tell of the destruction of his people in the last great war with the Lamanites (see Words of Mormon 1:1-2). Much of the account in his own record (see Mormon 2, 4-6) discusses this war, while in another place (see Alma 43-62), he devoted twenty chapters to the war in the time of the first Moroni. In the latter, he placed great stress on military strategy, descriptions of fortifications, and the like (see esp. Alma 48:7-9; 49:4, 13, 18, 22; 50:1-5). His listing of war casualty statistics in his own time and during earlier periods (e.g., Mosiah 9:1819; 29:19; Alma 3:26; 24:21-22, 24-27; 51:19; Mormon 6) seems to be a waste of precious space on the plates.

Not only did Mormon spend more time describing battles than any other topic, but he also dwelt on such things as the physical stature and prowess of various Nephites and Lamanites. If Mormon's military profession was the result of a longstanding family tradition, then we can better understand his "blood-and-guts" approach to the history of his people. Ammon's slaying of the Lamanite sheep raiders (see Alma 17:25-39), the lengthy and detailed account of the war led by Moroni (see Alma 43-62) and even Mormon's admiration for the "large and mighty" Lamanite leader Coriantumr (see Helaman 1:15-16), attest to Mormon's special interest in the subject of warfare

and physical strength. When describing the battle scene, he was usually very careful to specify exactly what kinds of weapons were used by each of the armies and the kinds of armor they wore (e.g., Alma 43:18-21). He placed great stress on the bones of the dead Jaredites that lay strewn across the land, along with their weapons, and on the fact that the bodies of the Lamanites were often heaped up or thrown into the river to be washed to sea (e.g., see Alma 3:3; 43:37-38, 44; 44:12-14).

Moroni wrote from the same background as his father. His account of the Jaredite history, aside from the religious comments that he inserts in the form of personal testimony of Jesus Christ, is essentially a military history. Logic and textual evidence would dictate that the Jaredites did, in fact, enjoy many years in which battles were not waged. They could not have grown to number over two million people (see Ether 15:2) had they not lived most of their time in peace and tranquility, growing crops and raising families. Yet, of the small part of Ether's history that Moroni chose to write (see Ether 15:33), virtually all of it concerns the wars of the Jaredites.

Men of Peace

Despite the emphasis on martial history in the Book of Mormon, both Mormon and Moroni were great lovers of peace. To them, military might was to be used only for defending righteous principles. Negotiations and reliance on the Lord were preferable to fighting. As a prime example, we note that the main reason given for the mission of King Mosiah's sons to the Lamanites was to ensure peace between the Nephites and Lamanites (see Mosiah 28:1; Alma 23:16-18; 24:6, 12-13, 15; 28:9).[15] Even in later times, Mormon noted that converted Lamanites laid down their weapons of war and returned captured Nephite lands (see Helaman 5:51-52).

Mormon tied the cycle of alternating evil and righteousness to the cycle of alternating war and peace (see Helaman 12). From prosperity came wealth and then pride, which brought about decadence and war. When the Nephites and Lamanites lived in peace for a couple of centuries following the visit of Christ, it was because there was no pride resulting from wealth (see 4 Nephi 1:1-18). On moral grounds, the Book of Mormon sees defense as justifiable and aggression as unacceptable (see 3 Nephi 3:20-21). War, especially in the time of the first Moroni, was justified only when the Nephites fought for their homes, liberty, families, and religion (see Alma 43:45-47; 46:72; 48:10-14). Moroni and his people, we read, did not delight in the shedding of blood (see Alma 48:11, 16, 23).

By contrast, the Nephites of Mormon's day did not fight the Lamanites for a righteous cause. When they lost battles, they sorrowed, cursed God, and died in rebellion against him (see Mormon 2:11-15). When they won, they boasted in their own strength and swore revenge and destruction on the Lamanites (see Mormon 3:9-16; 4:8, 15). Unlike their ancestors, they delighted in the shedding of blood (see Mormon 4:10-11). Mormon urged them to stand and fight for their families and homes (see Mormon 2:2324), but, because they remained unrepentant, at one point he resigned in despair as their chief captain (see Mormon 3:9-16). Mormon, then, whose family likely belonged to a military caste, was a righteous man who fought when necessary and whose perspective of Nephite history was military in nature.

Notes

1. See Ross T. Christensen, "The Seven Lineages of Lehi," *New Era* 5 (May 1975): 40-41; John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1985), 310-13; and "Seven Tribes: An Aspect of Lehi's Legacy," F.A.R.M.S. *Update,* November 1987.

2. Mormon may have meant that he had no Mulekite, Zoramite, Jaredite, etc., ancestry, or, at least, that his patrilineage was exclusively Nephite. Also, of course, he possibly meant to exclude people of Asiatic stock from his ancestry. Either way, Mormon's ancestors had kept track of their lineage for many centuries.

3. The subject is treated in a manuscript I am preparing titled "A History of Kingship in Ancient Israel."

4. Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites*, vol. 5 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1988), 242-43; for evidence that the Mulekites preserved some Jaredite names, see John A. Tvedtnes, "A Phonemic Analysis of Nephite and Jaredite Proper Names," in *Newsletter & Proceedings of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology*, No. 141 (Dec. 1977), reprinted by F.A.R.M.S. in 1977.

5. In unpublished notes on Book of Mormon names.

6. The evidence for the Jaredite origin of such names has been compiled in a separate paper being prepared for publication.

7. During his famous speech, King Benjamin recounted a revelation he had received for his people (see Mosiah 3). The fact that his son Mosiah possessed the "interpreters" (see Mosiah 8:13-18; 28:13-17) is further evidence that the king was a prophet.

8. In this paper, the word *caste* has been used in its more general meaning, that is, to denote a lineage group to which certain leadership privileges were attached. It is not to be understood as the term is applied to Hindu groups. William Hamblin has recommended the term "hereditary military aristocracy," which is certainly more accurate but too unwieldy for our purposes. The reader may, however, substitute this term wherever *caste* appears.

9. For an overview of military organization among the Mesoamerican peoples, see Victor W. von Hagen, *The Aztec: Man and Tribe* (New York: Mentor, 1962), 48, 170; and *World of the Maya* (New York: Mentor, 1963), 117.

10. Von Hagen, *The Aztecs*, 170.

11. Von Hagen, *World of the Maya*, 117.

12. Mormon also praised another early Nephite warrior, Gideon (see Mosiah 19; Alma 1:13).

13. Nibley cited evidence that Laban was a high-ranking military officer in Jerusalem (*Lehi in the Desert*, 97-99). His servant Zoram may also have been a soldier. (This is not precluded by the fact that he was a "servant" of Laban. By the time of Lehi, the Hebrew term ^{c}*ebed* was most often used in reference to government officials.)

14. As one trained in both military and political affairs, Ammon would have known the importance of both military might and diplomatic means of establishing peace. For a discussion of the role of Mosiah's sons in establishing peace through their missionary efforts to the Lamanites, see my article, "The Sons of Mosiah: Emissaries of Peace," in this volume.

15. See ibid.

Swords in the Book of Mormon

William J. Hamblin,
A. Brent Merrill

Man is perfectly capable of fighting and killing with his bare hands. However, he has found it useful to use specially designed tools for fighting known as "weapons" because, in a number of ways, they increase his capacity and efficiency in fighting. They increase the range at which an enemy can be injured and the degree of injury that can be inflicted. A soldier with a knife can damage vital internal organs that would remain relatively safe from his hands alone. Furthermore, using weapons defensively can help protect the soldier from harm. A warrior can use weapons not only to parry the attacks of an enemy, but also, by hitting an enemy with a club, to protect the hand from injury.

With the introduction of advanced types of weapons, ancient warfare took on a new complexion. In a conflict between two unarmed men, victory tends to go to the strongest or fastest. When using Pre-Modern weapons, however, victory often goes to the soldier who is better armed or trained. Because many ancient weapons were expensive or difficult to make, military systems relying on relatively sophisticated weapons (a sword instead of a club, or a spear instead of a rock) began to bring about the increasing militarization of society. Some people began to specialize in making weapons, while others spent their time learning the special skills required to use those weapons effectively. Still other members of society were required to provide extra food and other necessities for those who specialized in warfare. Societies thus tended to become increasingly militarized, specialized, and complex.

Such an explanation, of course, does not necessarily imply an evolutionary or mechanistic interpretation of society. There were clearly cycles of declining and increasing military specialization in ancient societies. Furthermore, there were dozens of significant nonmilitary factors involved in the relative sophistication and specialization of an ancient society. In general development, however, the above simplified model seems to hold true: militarization was a key element in the origins and development of civilization.[1]

There are a large number of factors that influenced the types of weapons and techniques for using those weapons an ancient army could employ, and there are no clear criteria for determining the absolute superiority or inferiority of a specific type of weapon. Technology, available raw materials, climate, military theory and practice, the weapons of the enemy, relative cost, and martial skill all influenced the development of which "weapons system" a civilization would adopt at given time. For example, French and Italian infantry adopted the crossbow as their major missile weapon beginning in the twelfth century A.D., and it continued in widespread use until the rise of effective gunpowder weapons in the sixteenth century. On the other hand, the English preferred the longbow, while the Muslims adopted a recurved composite bow. Each weapon has its advantages and disadvantages: the English longbow required extensive training in archery but had a long range. The crossbow required little training to use effectively but had a slow rate of fire. The composite bow was expensive and difficult to make but was powerful and could be shot from horseback. Each army adopted a different weapon and adapted its military system to that weapon's effectiveness and limitations.[2]

Many of these elements concerning the relationship between weapons technology, society, and warfare are clearly reflected in the Book of Mormon and lead naturally to such questions as, What weapons did the armies in the Book of Mormon use? What was the nature and function of these weapons? How do they relate to known weapons of the Middle East and Mesoamerica?[3] For this study and the subsequent studies in this section,

weapons will be broadly classified into two categories: melee weapons, which a soldier holds in one or two hands for face-to-face combat; and missile weapons, which a soldier throws or propels at an enemy from a distance. There are a large variety of different types of weapons in each of these two categories, and weapons of both types mentioned in the Book of Mormon will be discussed in detail.[4]

The sword is a weapon consisting of a four-to-ten-inch handle or hilt and a blade that can measure in length from a foot to as much as five feet. Sword blades can be single or double edged and either straight or curved. The points of swords may be sharp, for thrusting, or blunt, where only the blade edge is used for cutting. Some swords are designed only for cutting or for thrusting, while others can be used with both techniques. Although in one sense *sword* is a common English word, in reality a vast variety of weapons with many different characteristics exist that can be categorized as swords.[5] Thus a sword in one age or language might be totally different in size, design, construction, and use from a sword of another age, even though we might not normally think of one or both as swords. An excellent example of this is the *gladius*. The original classical Latin *gladius* was a technical term for a short sword, only about 18-22 inches long, used by Roman infantrymen (it was an unsuitable cavalry weapon).[6] By the Middle Ages, however, the *gladius* had become a generic term used to designate any of the many types of swords European knights and soldiers used, some of which — in contrast to the short Roman *gladius* — could be as tall as a man.

Sword Usage in the Book of Mormon

The Book of Mormon mentions the sword 156 times, more than any other weapon. For the sake of discussion, we have divided its usage into two categories: literary or metaphorical and military-technical. We have classified seventy-eight instances as metaphorical and seventy-eight as technical (though many occurrences are ambiguous and could fall in either category). There are four major types of sword metaphors used in the Book of Mormon: fighting or warfare in general, violent death, military vigilance, and divine power. The book metaphorically describes fighting in battle with eighteen different sword phrases, violent death with seven major metaphors, military preparedness with two phrases, and divine power with five metaphors — all listed in the following tables:

Sword Metaphors for Fighting in Battle

Phrases	References
"take ['raise,' or 'lift'] up the sword"	8 instances: 2 Nephi 12:4; Alma 27:29; 48:14; 60:16, 28; 61:11; 62:5; Helaman 15:9
"fall upon with the sword"	2 instances: Alma 58:18; Mormon 6:9
"smite with the sword"	2 instances: Alma 51:20; 60:30
"pestilence and the sword"	2 instances: Alma 10:22, 23
"visit with the sword"	3 instances: 2 Nephi 1:18; Helaman 13:9; 3 Nephi 3:6
"contend with swords"	2 instances: Alma 44:17; Ether 15:24
"resist them with our swords"	1 instance: Alma 61:14
"struggle with the sword"	1 instance: Mormon 2:14
"fought with the sword"	1 instance: Ether 15:29
"deliver … out of bondage by the sword"	1 instance: Mosiah 22:2
"let fall the sword"	1 instance: 3 Nephi 3:8
"enforce it by the sword"	1 instance: Alma 1:12
"preserved from swords"	1 instance: Alma 44:9
"swords of their own hands fall upon their own heads"	1 instance: 1 Nephi 22:13
"run upon swords"	1 instance: Alma 57:33
"pestilence of the sword"	1 instance: Helaman 11:14
"beating swords into plowshares"	1 instance: 2 Nephi 12:4 = Isaiah 2:4

"famine and the sword"	1 instance: 2 Nephi 8:19

Sword Metaphors for Violent Death

1 instance: Alma 60:17

Phrases	References
"fall by the sword"	18 instances: 2 Nephi 13:25 = Isaiah 3:25; 23:15 = Isaiah 13:15; Omni 1:17; Alma 24:24; 43:38; 44:18; 56:51; 58:39; 60:5, 8, 12, 22; Mormon 6:15; Ether 14:4, 24; 15:23, 29; Moroni 9:2
"perish by the sword"	4 instances: 1 Nephi 1:13; Alma 24:23; 50:22; Ether 15:28
"slain by the sword"	4 instances: Alma 1:9; Helaman 10:18; Ether 13:18; 15:2
"destroyed by the sword"	3 instances: Alma 57:23; Helaman 11:4, 5
"hewn down by the sword"	1 instance: Alma 51:19
"murder with the sword"	
"slaughters with the sword"	1 instance: 1 Nephi 12:2

Sword Metaphors for Military Preparedness

Phrases	*References*
"sleep upon swords"	4 instances: Alma 57:9; Ether 15:20, 22, 24
"guard them, swords in hand"	1 instance: Alma 57:15

Sword Metaphors for Divine Power

1 instance: Alma 54:6

Phrases	References
"sword of justice"	6 instances: Alma 26:19; 60:29; Helaman 13:5; 3 Nephi 20:20; 29:4; Ether 8:23
"sword of vengeance "	1 instance: Mormon 8:41
"sword of almighty wrath"	
"sword of destruction"	1 instance: 3 Nephi 2:19
"mouth like a sharp sword"	1 instance: 1 Nephi 21:2 = Isaiah 49:2

Of course, some of these occurrences might represent technical statements that someone was actually killed by or was fighting with a sword rather than metaphors that he was killed by violence or fought in battle. However, when such stock literary phrases are employed, determining whether the intended meaning was technical, metaphorical, or both is often impossible. An excellent example of a sword metaphor being employed literally is Alma 1:9, where Nehor "was wroth with Gideon, and drew his sword and began to smite him…. Therefore he was slain by the sword." Here the phrase "slain by the sword" describes the fact that Gideon was actually killed by a sword rather than to say that he was killed by generic violence, as the phrase is often used metaphorically elsewhere.

It is possible to get a relatively good idea of the technical nature of the Book of Mormon sword from the usage of the word in military situations, unlike most other weapons in the Book of Mormon, which are simply mentioned in passing but never described in detail. There are several important incidents in which the use and nature of the Book of Mormon sword can be analyzed.

The first detailed description of the use of the sword in the Book of Mormon is the famous beheading of Laban (see 1 Nephi 4:7-19, ca. 590 B.C.). Here Laban's sword fits nicely into the pattern of a high-quality Middle Eastern weapon — a sheath, gold hilt, fine workmanship, and "blade … of the most precious steel" (1 Nephi 4:9; see fig. 1).

Nephi's method of beheading Laban by grasping his hair to pull up the head and expose the neck is a common technique (see fig. 2). Grasping the hair of the victim also insures that the head remains a stable target for the swordsman.

The second major incident involving swords is the story of Ammon and the brigands at the waters of Sebus (see Alma 17:26-39, ca. 90 B.C.). While defending the flocks of King Lamoni, Ammon was attacked by a band of brigands who had been marauding in the region. He killed a number of them at long range with his sling, after which "they came forth with clubs to slay him. But behold, every man that lifted his club to smite Ammon, he smote off their arms with his sword; for he did withstand their blows by smiting their arms with the edge of his sword" (Alma 17:36-37). This incident is important since it clearly indicates that Nephite swords were edged weapons used for cutting. Thrusting or stabbing with swords is rarely mentioned in the Book of Mormon.[7] The weapon is generally "raised" and is used to "smite," which imply a cutting action, as explicitly described in the incident with Ammon.

Ammon's sword technique deserves some attention. The text reads, "Every man that lifted his club to smite Ammon, he smote off their arms with his sword." Actually severing an enemy's forearm or hand with a sword is a difficult task. What will generally occur is that the sword will cut into the flesh until it reaches the bone, partially severing or cracking it. However, since the victim's arm is free to rotate at the shoulder, the sword will simply push the limb away in the direction of the blow rather than cut deeper into the limb. Thus, in most situations one would expect a sword to make a deep gash but not actually to sever the arm. In order to sever an arm with a sword, the sword must be extremely sharp, must be swung swiftly, and must strike against a limb that is either somehow fixed, or that is moving toward the sword blade.

Thus Ammon's sword technique makes perfect military sense. He waits for the enemy to attack him with his club. As the club is raised and brought down swiftly toward Ammon, Ammon swings his sword in a fast powerful blow aimed at the forearm. The combination of the attacker's swing *toward* Ammon and the force of Ammon's own swing is sufficient to sever the forearm. Thus, according to the Book of Mormon, Ammon waited for precisely the right moment to initiate his arm-severing sword technique with maximum efficacy against his enemy.

The final major incident involving swords occurred at the surrender of Zerahemnah after the battle at the river Sidon (see Alma 44:8-15, ca. 74 B.C.). After Moroni had defeated him, the Lamanite chief captain Zerahemnah "delivered up his sword and his cimeter, and his bow into the hands of Moroni" (Alma 44:8) in token of surrender. However, when Zerahemnah refused to take an oath of peace, Moroni did not accept his surrender, and Zerahemnah's weapons were ritually returned. This type of ritual disarming as part of surrender is a well-known and universal military custom. From a modern perspective of total warfare, returning weapons to an enemy after he has surrendered is unthinkable. However, Moroni and Zerahemnah were enacting a ritual of surrender, and Moroni ritually returned the weapons to show the Nephite soldiers who were watching that the surrender and truce were not in effect and that they should be on guard for further conflict.

Zerahemnah then attempted to kill Moroni, but was stopped by one of Moroni s personal guards. The guardsman "smote it [Zerahemnah's sword] even to the earth, and it broke by the hilt" (Alma 44:12). Apparently Zerahemnah swung his sword at Moroni, but the sword of a watchful guardsman parried the blow. The force of the parry knocked the sword from Zerahemnah's hand and broke it at the hilt. Swords are designed to be held by the hilt, which is generally the only part of a sword that is not sharp. Hilts are usually made of a separate material from the blade (wood, bone, leather, stone). The joint between hilt and blade is therefore often structurally the weakest point of the sword.[8] Thus if Zerahemnah's sword were to break, there would be a high probability that it would

break at the hilt,[9] just as described in the Book of Mormon. Possibly Moroni's guardsman was attempting a sword parry similar to Ammon's described above, but perhaps he missed the forearm, hitting the sword instead. Moroni's guardsman then aimed a blow at Zerahemnah's head, but succeeded only in scalping him. A light glancing sword blow against the head could scrape across the skull and succeed in slicing off a portion of the scalp. The scalp of the unfortunate Zerahemnah was then "laid" on the point of the guardsman's sword, raised aloft, and paraded before the Lamanites.[10]

There are a number of other cases in the Book of Mormon that mention a sword in a technical military context, but these incidents do not shed additional light on the nature or use of the sword.[11] The biblical image of cherubim and the flaming sword (see Genesis 3:24) is mentioned in Alma 12:21; 42:2, 3, but it is undoubtedly based on the account of the Garden of Eden in the brass plates of Laban (see 1 Nephi 5:11).

Near Eastern and Mesoamerican Swords

Does the sword of the Book of Mormon correspond with contemporary weapons known in the Old and New Worlds? The sword was a common weapon in the Near East during Nephi's time. Figures 1 and 2 show examples of Near Eastern swords perhaps similar to Laban's sword, which Nephi brought with him to the Americas.[12]

From the Mesoamerican perspective, the most likely candidate for the Book of Mormon sword is the weapon known in Nahuatl (Aztec) as the *macuahuitl* or *macana* (see figs. 3-4). The *macuahuitl* was constructed from a long staff or large paddle-shaped piece of wood. Sharp obsidian flakes were fixed into the edges of the wooden blade, giving it a deadly cutting edge.[13] There are numerous representations of the *macuahuitl* in Mesoamerican art, the earliest dating back to the Pre-Classic era.

However, due to the paucity of artistic remains in Mesoamerica, there are actually only a few representations of the use of the *macuahuitl* in Pre-Classic times. The earliest artistic example of which we are aware is shown in figure 3, which depicts a *macuahuitl* in the standard pattern of later Maya weapons, with multiple obsidian blades on both edges of the weapon. Although early artistic evidence is sparse, these examples, combined with the clear evidence of the widespread obsidian blade industry, indicate that some type of the *macuahuitl* sword was known and used in Book of Mormon times. Mesoamerican art from the Classic and later periods provides many additional examples of the widespread use of the *macuahuitl* sword, continuing on until the Spanish conquest (see fig. 4).[14]

Does the Mesoamerican *macuahuitl* correspond with the descriptions of the nature and use of the sword in the Book of Mormon? The first question is whether the *macuahuitl* can be considered a "sword." This is really a question of semantics, and although some scholars prefer to call it a war club, others call it a sword, and some even use both terms.[15] The real question is not what modern scholars choose to call it, but whether the weapon matches the description of swords in the Book of Mormon.

The story of Ammon's battle at the waters of Sebus demonstrates that the cutting edge of the Book of Mormon sword was capable of severing arms. The cutting power of the obsidian edge of the *macuahuitl* was renowned at the time of the Spanish Conquest. An obsidian edge was even as sharp as that of surgical steel.[16] In one famous incident, a Maya warrior cut off the head of a Spaniard's horse with one blow of a *macuahuitl*.[17] Thus Ammon's feat of cutting off human arms would have been easily possible for a man armed with a *macuahuitl* sword.

The *macuahuitl* was clearly a cutting rather than a thrusting weapon, which causes some potential difficulty in the story of Moroni's guard raising Zerahemnah's scalp "upon the point of his sword." Although most later representations of *macuahuitl* swords do not show the weapon with a point, one of the earliest examples of the weapon, reproduced in figure 3, shows a triangular obsidian blade inserted in the top of the weapon, giving it a point that could be used for thrusting. Zerahemnah's scalp could easily have been laid upon the point of such a weapon.

Another possible problem in equating the *macuahuitl* with the Book of Mormon sword is the mention of the hilts of the swords (see Alma 44:12; Ether 14:21; 1 Nephi 4:9, having reference to Laban's Near Eastern sword; Mosiah 8:11, which will be discussed below). Mesoamerican *mcuahuitls* show no evidence of a hilt made of special material, but rather are constructed of wooden shafts into which obsidian blades were embedded. However, structurally, the *macuahuitl* does have a hilt. The lower portion of the weapon lacks obsidian blades so it can be held, which thus functionally distinguishes the handle or hilt from the blade. If a *macuahuitl* were to be broken when struck by another weapon, one expected place for such breakage would be where the obsidian blades did not protect the wood of the shaft, leaving the wood directly exposed to the blades of the other sword. Note that Zerahemnah's sword breaks at the hilt (Alma 44:12). Possibly a hilt in the Book of Mormon could also refer to the wooden shaft of the *macuahuitl* as a whole, distinguishing it from the obsidian blades. Thus, although there is a slight semantic difficulty associating "hilts" with the *macuahuitl* sword, on close examination, it does not prove to be significant.

An interesting incident in the Book of Mormon involves the staining of swords with blood (see Alma 24:12-15, ca. 90 B.C.). The Lamanites who had been converted by Ammon refused to take up arms, giving the following argument: "Since God hath taken away our stains, and our swords have become bright, then let us stain our swords no more with the blood of our brethren" (Alma 24:12; cf. Alma 24:13, 15). Two separate metaphors are used here: first, that the swords had been stained with blood, and second, that they had been made bright again by God.

Although today we speak of "stainless steel," in Joseph Smith's day, metals were not generally thought of as becoming stained. Staining was a term that generally applied to wood, cloth, or other substances subject to discoloration.[18] Reference to staining swords with blood is not found in the Bible. Thus, although not impossible, the metaphor of staining metal swords with blood is somewhat unusual. However, if the Nephite sword were the Mesoamerican *macuahuitl* with a wooden shaft, blood would naturally stain and discolor the wood when an enemy was wounded. Furthermore, if a metal weapon becomes bloody, the blade can be easily wiped clean. Removing a bloodstain from wood is virtually impossible since the blood soaks into the fibers of the wood. Thus the metaphor of the great mercy of God in removing bloodstains from the swords becomes much more powerful and understandable if it refers to wood stained with blood, which only a miracle would remove, rather than if it refers to metal stained with blood, which a piece of cloth could clean. As to the second metaphor of making the swords bright again, brightness can refer to any object that shines — metal, stars, or stone.[19] Many types of obsidian have a fine luster and the stone edges of the *macuahuitl* could easily be described as bright. Thus, although the "bloodstained-to-bright" sword metaphor could apply to either metal- or stone-edged swords, it is actually a more powerful image if the sword referred to was a *macuahuitl*.

A possible difficulty with interpreting the *macuahuitl* as the Book of Mormon sword concerns the five references in the Book of Mormon to drawing a sword (see 1 Nephi 4:9; Mosiah 19:4; Alma 1:9; 19:22; 20:16). The clearest instance occurs in 1 Nephi 4:9, where Nephi saw Laban's sword, "and … drew it forth from the sheath thereof." The sword referred to here, however, is Laban's standard Near Eastern sword, which generally was carried in a sheath.

Significantly, in the other four cases of drawing a sword in the Book of Mormon, sheaths are not mentioned. In 145 B.C., Gideon "drew his sword, and swore in his wrath that he would slay the king" (Mosiah 19:4). According to Alma 1:9 (91 B.C.), Nehor "drew his sword and began to smite him." Alma 19:22 reports that one of the brigands at the waters of Sebus "drew his sword and went forth that he might let it fall upon Ammon." In Alma 20:16 (90 B.C.), King Lamoni "drew his sword that he might smite [Ammon]." These references could describe grasping or brandishing a sword before combat rather than actually "drawing" it from a sheath.

We are unaware of any example of a scabbard or sheath for the Mesoamerican *macuahuitl*. However, there is a case of several weapons being carried in a bag from which weapons would have to be drawn for combat.[20] A sheath or scabbard served three major functions. Most importantly, it protected the soldier and his companions or mount from being accidentally cut or jabbed by an exposed blade or point. Second, it served to protect the blade from corrosion or from scratches or damage. Finally, weapon sheaths were often decorated and ornamented to serve as symbols of the bearer's wealth and rank. All of these functions were important in early Mesoamerican society. In addition to carrying bags such as that mentioned above, early Mesoamericans could have had some type of protective covering for valuable weapons from which the *macuahuitl* sword would need to be "drawn" in preparation for combat, as described in the Book of Mormon. In the *Popol Vuh*, there are examples of wrapping special royal insignia in cloth or skins.[21]

The final and perhaps most significant difficulty with associating the Book of Mormon sword with the Mesoamerican *macuahuitl* is references to metal swords and to Nephi making swords patterned after Laban's. Second Nephi 5:14 states that "Nephi did take the sword of Laban, and after the manner of it did make many swords." The sword of Laban was undoubtedly a normal Near Eastern-style sword, and according to 1 Nephi 4:9, the blade was made of steel.

If Nephi patterned the swords he made after Laban's sword, we would expect that they too had metal blades, which might seem to contradict the *macuahuitl* theory. There are several aspects to this important question. First, it should be pointed out that the text does not say that Nephi instructed his people how to make swords, but rather that he made the swords himself. This may indicate that the metallurgical technology of the Nephites, following the pattern of many ancient societies, was the monopoly of a specific family or clan.[22] If such a small clan were to die out somehow from war, disease, famine, or natural accidents, the metallurgical skills would also be lost.

The instance mentioned above is the only reference to making swords after the pattern of Laban's.[23] After 2 Nephi 5:14, the Book of Mormon mentions Laban's sword three times: in Nephi's old age — "having wielded the sword of Laban in their defence" (Jacob 1:10); in a description of King Benjamin's fighting at the head of his armies (see Words of Mormon 1:13); and in King Mosiah's accession to the throne, where King Benjamin gave him charge of the records, the compass, and the sword of Laban (see Mosiah 1:15-16). Such use suggests that the weapon was not only well known, but also unique, wielded by kings, with no comparable weapons being used by others.

In view of the evidence of archaeology, it seems possible that after the Nephites moved inland away from the land of first inheritance, they may have been unable to discover adequate sources of ore. Without access to the ore necessary to train the new generation in extensive metal-making skills, their metallurgical technology in some fields could have been lost after a single generation had passed. The Nephites would have had to adopt or develop lithic technology. From that point on, they would have made most, if not all, of their weapons from stone and wood rather than metal. As a hypothetical scenario, then, it can be posited that the swords Nephi made in the early sixth

century B.C. were originally metal weapons based directly on the pattern of Laban's sword, but that eventually the metallurgical technology was somehow lost, and *macuahuitl*-style swords replaced the original metal ones.[24]

On the other hand, Nephi may also have written in a general sense: he made the Nephites' weapons on the general pattern of Laban's sword—a hand-held weapon with a double-edged long blade — rather than exactly copying its structure and material in every detail. And in a general sense, the *macuahuitl* has many parallels to a typical sword.

The overall question of the use of metals by Book of Mormon cultures is an important topic that deserves detailed attention.[25] Here only the question of metal weapons will be analyzed. There are five explicit references to metal weapons and armor in the Book of Mormon. Two are references to Near East weapons: "the blade [of Laban's sword] was of the most precious steel" (1 Nephi 4:9), and Nephi's bow was made of "fine steel" (1 Nephi 16:18). The existence of steel (that is, carburized iron) weapons in the Near East in the early sixth century B.C. has been clearly demonstrated. Robert Maddin writes, "To sum up, by the beginning of the seventh century B.C. at the latest, the blacksmiths of the eastern Mediterranean had mastered two of the processes that make iron a useful material for tools and weapons: carburizing and quenching."[26]

Aside from Jarom 1:8 (see note 23), this leaves two cases of metal weapons, both of which, interestingly enough, are from Jaredite times. The Jaredites "did molten out of the hill, and made swords out of steel" (Ether 7:9). On returning from their expedition into the lands of the Jaredites (ca. 121 B.C.), a band of Nephite explorers "brought breastplates, which are large, and they are of brass and of copper, and are perfectly sound. And … they have brought swords, the hilts thereof have perished, and the blades thereof were cankered with rust" (Mosiah 8:10-11).[27] The steel-sword episode occurred during the civil war between Shule and Corihor. Although Jaredite chronology is very uncertain, John Sorenson has tentatively dated this period of Jaredite history to around 2800 B.C., putting it well before the beginning of the Iron Age in the Middle East.[28]

In light of contemporary conditions in Mesoamerica, one can understand this passage a number of ways. Although the blades of most *macuahuitls* in Mesoamerica were made from obsidian, the Aztecs are known to have had war clubs studded with iron instead of the usual obsidian. There are even examples in Mesoamerica of ceremonial *macuahuitls* with feathers replacing the obsidian blades.[29]

Various types of material, including iron, replaced the usual obsidian of the *macuahuitl*, and such a weapon could thus be described as a sword with a metal "blade." Another possibility is to equate this Jaredite steel with the "steel" of the King James translation of the Old Testament, which actually refers to the Hebrew word for "bronze."[30]

Finally, we need to understand that Mosiah translated Ether's plates into social and linguistic concepts with which he was familiar. Mosiah, as king, possessed Laban's sword, a steel weapon that was passed down as one of the insignia of royalty. In translating Ether's record, Mosiah might thus have given the Jaredite kings steel swords, like the one he himself possessed, because in Mosiah's society a king was expected to have a steel sword as his royal weapon.[31]

Although there are some difficulties and obscure points not yet fully understood, none of the Book of Mormon descriptions of swords would exclude the Mesoamerican *macuahuitl* from consideration. Although additional archaeological evidence may eventually show that there were indeed Near Eastern-style swords with metal blades in use among the Book of Mormon peoples, with our present state of knowledge, it seems likely that the

early Mesoamerican obsidian-edged *macuahuitl* was generally the "sword" referred to in the Book of Mormon, with the possible rare use of metal in place of the usual obsidian for special weapons.

Notes

1. See Jonathan Haas, *The Evolution of the Prehistoric State* (New York: Columbia, 1982).

2. On these weapons, see Ralph W. F. Payne-Gallwey, *The Crossbow: Mediaeval and Modern, Military and Sporting* (New York: Bramhall House, 1958; reprint of 1903 ed.); Robert Hardy, The Longbow (New York: Arco, 1977); and J. D. Latham and W. F. Paterson, *Saracen Archery* (London: Holland Press, 1970).

3. This study assumes that Mesoamerica is the land of the Book of Mormon, following John Sorenson's *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1985).

4. The present article discusses swords, clubs, axes, and knives. For other weapons, see Paul Y. Hoskisson, "Scimitars, Cimeters!"; William J. Hamblin and A. Brent Merrill, "Notes on the Cimeter (Scimitar) in the Book of Mormon"; and William J. Hamblin, "The Bow and Arrow in the Book of Mormon," in this volume.

5. One need only examine George C. Stone, *A Glossary of the Construction, Decoration, and Use of Arms and Armor* (New York: Jack Brussel, 1961; reprint of 1931 ed.), 594, fig. 762, to see the many shapes, sizes, and types of weapons that can be classified as swords. See Yigael Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands in the Light of Archaeological Study*, 2 vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), for numerous representations of swords in the ancient Near East.

6. Leonid Tarassuk and Claude Blair, eds., *The Complete Encyclopedia of Arms and Weapons* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1986), 193b.

7. The only major implication of thrusting with Book of Mormon swords is an ambiguous passage in Alma 57:33 (63 B.C.), where the Lamanites "did in a body run upon our swords." Although this passage could imply that the Lamanites rushed against the points of the Nephite's extended swords, this is not necessarily the intent of the passage. It is probably another sword metaphor referring to weapons in general. Second Nephi 24:19 reads, "those that are slain, thrust through with a sword," clearly describing thrusting as opposed to cutting with a sword, but this passage is a quotation from Isaiah 14:19. The significant incident of Zerahemnah's scalp being put on the point of a sword will be discussed below.

8. Of course, as there are many specific methods of attaching hilts to swords, the structural integrity and points of weakness of each type of sword differ.

9. On the question of the nature of the "hilt" of the Mesoamerican *macuahuitl*, see discussion later in the text.

10. The "point" of the Mesoamerican *macuahuitl* will be discussed later in the text.

11. Other than the incidents discussed above, swords are mentioned in Omni 1:2, 10; Mosiah 19:4; Alma 1:9; 2:1, 20, 29, 31; 3:2; 6:7; 18:16; 19:22, 24; 20:14, 16, 22; 24:21; 31:5; 50:26; 60:35; Helaman 1:23; Ether 9:27; 14:1, 2; 15:5, 30.

12. For brief discussions of swords in the Old Testament, see J. W. Wevers, "Sword," in George A. Buttrick, ed., *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 4 vols. plus supplement (New York: Abingdon, 1962-76), 4:469-70, and his "Weapons and Implements of War" in ibid., 4:820-25.

13. For an excellent discussion on the structure and manufacture of the *macuahuitl*, see Prescott H. F. Follett, "War and Weapons of the Maya," *Middle American Papers, Middle American Research Series*, Publication No. 4 (New Orleans: Tulane University, 1932), 385-87.

14. Artistic depictions of the *macuahuitl* are widespread. See Follett, "War and Weapons of the Maya," figs. 15-20; Fray Bernardino de Sahagun, *The Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain*, ed. and tr. Charles E. Dibble and Arthur J. Anderson, 13 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1957-59), Bk. 8, figs. 78-80, Bk. 12, figs. 77, 80, 89, 90, 93, 104, 108-10. Examples could be further multiplied. See also Merle Greene, Robert L. Rands, and John A. Graham, *Maya Sculpture* (Berkeley: Lederer, Street & Zeus, 1972), 308-9, pl. 146.

15. Follett consistently calls the *macuahuitl* a war club. Sylvanus G. Morley and George W. Brainerd, *The Ancient Maya*, rev. by Robert J. Sharer, 4th ed. (Palo Alto, California: Stanford University Press, 1983), 257, call it a sword. Miguel Leon-Portilla, *The Broken Spears* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), alternately calls it a club (xxvi) or a sword (165). It is called a sword in Robert Wauchope, ed., *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, 16 vols. (Austin: University of Texas, 1964-73), 3:671, 969, 976.

16. Nigel Davies, *The Ancient Kingdoms of Mexico* (New York: Penguin, 1983), 96.

17. This event at the battle of Quetzaltenango in 1524 is recounted in George E. Stuart and Gene S. Stuart, *The Mysterious Maya* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1977), 131-33; cf. Robert M. Carnack's translation of the Quiché account, *Titulo C'oyoi* (3839), in his *Quichean Civilization: The Ethnohistoric, Ethnographic, and Archaeological Sources* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 39-41, 283, 303, 341.

18. See *Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter *OED*) 10:774-76. Wood, cloth, glass, hands, stars, earth, water, reputations, and even stones are all stained in abundance in the examples given in this entry. However, Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Johnson Reprint, 1970; reprint of 1828 ed.), vol. 2, s.v. "stain," does mention "armor stained with blood."

19. *OED*, 1:1103a mentions precious stones as being "bright."

20. See the figure from Chichen Itza Temple of the Tigers and Shields, Temple A, in Follett, "War and Weapons of the Maya," 388, fig. 20, showing a warrior carrying *macuahuitls* in a bag on his back, from which the weapons would be drawn.

21. *Popol Vuh*, 205.

22. Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), discusses the origins and cultural significance of metallurgy in ancient societies.

23. 2 Nephi 5:15 reports that Nephi taught his people "to work in all manner of wood, and of iron, and of copper, and of brass, and of steel." There are, however, no later examples of metal weapons specifically mentioned among the Nephites or of swords made after the pattern of Laban's sword. The next mention of weapon-making is two hundred years later: the Nephites had become "rich in gold, and in silver, and in precious things, and in fine

workmanship of wood, in buildings, and in machinery, and also in iron and copper, and brass and steel, making all manner of tools of every kind to till the ground, and weapons of war — yea, the sharp pointed arrow, and the quiver, and the dart, and the javelin, and all preparations for war" (Jarom 1:8). Interestingly, swords are not mentioned here, and the weapons listed could have been made of wood as well as of metal, or with a combination of both (wood shafts with metal tips, for example). Though the passage could mean that the tools and weapons were of iron, copper, and steel, it could also simply mean that the Nephites had the metals mentioned, as well as tools and weapons constructed of unspecified materials (see also John A. Tvedtnes, *Was Lehi a Caravaneer?* F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report, 1984; and "Lodestone and the Liahona," F.A.R.M.S. *Update*, March 1984).

24. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 278-82, discusses this general scenario, providing several references to additional literature on this topic.

25. Sorenson has done some excellent work in this regard in ibid., 277-88; and in "A Reconsideration of Early Metal in Mesoamerica," Miscellaneous Series, University of Northern Colorado Museum of Anthropology, No. 45, 1982 (available as a F.A.R.M.S. Reprint, 1982).

26. Robert Maddin et al., "How the Iron Age Began," *Scientific American* 237 (October 1977): 131 (for a general discussion, 122-31); see also Robert Fisher, *The Epic of Steel* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 5-24; and Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, vol. 7 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1988), 221-23. The question of Nephi's steel bow is discussed in William J. Hamblin, "The Bow and Arrow in the Book of Mormon," in this volume.

27. The possible significance of metal Jaredite armor is discussed in William J. Hamblin, "Armor in the Book of Mormon," in this volume.

28. See Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 116-19, and fig. 1 on p. 118; and "The Years of the Jaredites," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report, 1969.

29. H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races (of the Pacific States)*, 5 vols. (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft, 1882), 2:407-8. For an example of a ceremonial *macuahuitl* with feathers instead of obsidian, from the *Florentine Codex* (sixteenth century A.D.), see Follett, "War and Weapons of the Maya," 386-88, fig. 19.

30. See *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 1:467, s.v. "bronze." The KJV biblical translation of bronze as "steel" is discussed in William J. Hamblin, "The Bow and Arrow in the Book of Mormon," in this volume.

31. For a discussion of the various factors involved in Mosiah's translation of the plates of Ether, see John W. Welch, "Preliminary Comments for Discussion on the Sources behind the Book of Ether," unpublished ms. See Vergil, *Aeneid* II, 333 and 627, for just two examples of anachronistic descriptions of Bronze Age Trojans using iron and steel weapons. References in the Book of Mormon to metals used by the Jaredites may in part be a similar anachronism.

Scimitars, Cimeters! We Have Scimitars! Do We Need Another Cimeter?

Paul Y. Hoskisson

Cimeter is an early variant spelling for the word that has become standardized in twentieth-century English as *scimitar*,[1] meaning a highly curved, single-edged saber, which was usually associated with the Middle East and was used for slicing or hacking.[2] The word *cimeter* appears in the Book of Mormon eleven times, always in a context of weaponry (see Enos 1:20; Mosiah 9:16; 10:8; Alma 2:12; 27:29; 43:18, 20, 37; 60:2; Helaman 1:14). Because the preferred modern spelling is *scimitar,* I will use it throughout this discussion.

Some critics have termed the presence of scimitars in the text of the Book of Mormon anachronistic. They base their claim on the mistaken assumption that scimitars did not exist in the pre-Islamic Old World and therefore could not have appeared among Book of Mormon peoples who claim an Old World nexus with Iron Age II Palestine.[3] This assumption is based no doubt on one or more of the following considerations: (1) the scimitar is not mentioned earlier than the sixteenth century in English texts;[4] (2) the Persian word *samsir* probably provided the etymon for the English word;[5] and (3) the mistaken assumption that the period from A.D. 1000 to 1200 saw the "perfection of the Moslem scimitar."[6] None of these observations asserts the presence or absence of scimitars in pre-Islamic times. Any arguments to the contrary based on these observations are simply arguments from silence and in this case would result in false conclusions.

There can be no question that scimitars, or sickle swords, were known in the ancient Near East during the Late Bronze Period, that is, about six hundred years prior to Lehi's departure from Jerusalem. There have been several early attempts to demonstrate this,[7] but more recently Brent Merrill has convincingly shown that scimitars existed in the Late Bronze Age.[8] In addition to the sources Merrill cited, Othmar Keel, on the basis of artifactual and glyptic evidence, dated the use of the scimitar as a weapon in the ancient Near East from 2400 to 1150 B.C., just a little after the traditional 1200 B.C. closing date for the Late Bronze Age.[9] Robert Macalister found a late Bronze Age sickle sword at Gezer in Palestine (together with a Mycenaean pot), which Maxwell Hyslop dated to the "14th century B.c."[10] Yigael Yadin discussed such swords in the context of warfare in the Near East, including the curved sword in use from Egypt to Assyria during the Late Bronze Age.[11]

These Late Bronze Age scimitars were, of course, different from the later Moslem swords familiar to the Western world. Changes over time must be expected, especially after the end of the Late Bronze Age when technology developed for making iron swords that could be longer, thinner, and stronger than bronze blades. To suppose that the knowledge of scimitars was lost after the close of the Late Bronze Age and needed to be rediscovered in the Islamic period is highly unlikely. That scimitars continued to be used into the Iron Age and later is more probable. In fact, the glyptic and textual evidence for the curved sword in the Iron Age and the Hellenistic period in Palestine is positive and conclusive (see fig. 1), though to the best of my knowledge, an extant Iron Age scimitar has yet to be found (no doubt due to the capricious nature of archaeological discovery). Kurt Galling pointed out in 1966, building on the textual material cited hereafter and based on glyptic materials, that the scimitar is in evidence in the Iron Age from the tenth century B.C. to about 700 B.C.[12]

The textual material centers around the Hebrew word *kîdôn*, [13] known prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls from only eight verses in the Old Testament (see Joshua 8:18, 26; 1 Samuel 17:6, 45; Jeremiah 6:23; 50:42; Job 39:23; 41:21). The context in all eight verses clearly called for a piece of personal martial equipment, but a narrower definition was not possible. The translators and lexicographers of the Hebrew Bible have, until now, only been able to guess the nature of the *kîdôn*, which has been rendered as *dart*, *javelin*, *shield*, *dagger*, and so on. Thus a consensus has been elusive. [14]

The denotation of *kîdôn* was again opened up for discussion when the Qumran text *1QM* appeared. [15] From the content of V:11, 12, and 14, Yigael Yadin wrote that the *kîdônim* of iron in these passages "should apparently be identified with a type of sword." [16] K. G. Kuhn and G. Molin proposed that the *kîdôn* was a specific type of sword, namely, the scimitar. [17] Though some scholars have continued to opt for the more generic "sword," [18] others are certainly more correct in reading "scimitar." Roland de Vaux stated, "More probably, however, the *kîdôn* was a scimitar, a *harpe*. [19] Kyle McCarter called the *kîdôn* a " 'scimitar,' a specific term of which *hereb*, 'sword,' is the generic"; and Othmar Keel, with much evidence and discussion, translated the term without qualification as "sickle sword." [20]

The Israeli scholar M. Heltzer also recently argued from *1QM* V:11, 12, and 14, and from 1 Samuel 17:45, that *kîdôn* cannot be the normal straight sword and, therefore, must be a scimitar. [21] To buttress this argument, Heltzer proposed that *kîdôn* in Hebrew is a loan word from Hurrian, possibly through Akkadian *katinnu*. [22] Heltzer proposed that the textual evidence for *katinnu* suggests a weapon — the curved sword or sickle sword. He went on to suggest that because the Hurrians at one time politically dominated the areas where the texts containing *katinnu* were found and continued to exert cultural influence over these same areas until the end of the Late Bronze Age, they most likely introduced the *katinnu* to the Near East. (Note here that it is precisely in these areas of Hurrian dominance, in addition to Amarna Egypt, that the artifactual evidence appears.) This hypothesis would link the scimitars from Late Bronze Age Palestine, Ras Shamra, Mesopotamia, and Egypt with the Assyrian vocable attested in the Late Bronze Age.

The passage 1 Samuel 17:45 is especially telling, not only because it demonstrates that the *kîdôn* is not a normal straight sword, or *hereb*, but also because a Book of Mormon passage parallels it. In Alma 44:8, Zerahemnah, a Lamanite military leader, surrendered his sword and scimitar to the Nephite leader. This parallels the armament of Goliath and also confirms that people carried both weapons into war, not that some troops carried a sword and others a scimitar, an interpretation that Helaman 1:14 could allow.

With extant Late Bronze Age scimitars (including two from Palestine), with Iron Age glyptic evidence from the ancient Near East, and with an Iron Age and Hellenistic period lexeme for scimitar, there is no room for doubt that Lehi could have known the scimitar. Indeed, Jeremiah, a contemporary of Lehi, placed the *kîdôn* in the hands of the people who would spoil Jerusalem. The scimitar is no more anachronistic in the Book of Mormon than it is in the Bible.

Notes

1. The spellings *cimeter* or *scimitar* depend on when and from which language the word was borrowed. See "scimitar" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter abbreviated *OED*), 9:223c.

2. See John Quick, *Dictionary of Weapons and Military Terms* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), 380, 387. For illustrations of scimitars, see George C. Stone, *A Glossary of the Construction, Decoration, and Use of Arms and Armor* (New York: Jack Brussel, 1961; reprint of 1931 ed.), 550-51 figs. 708-9.

3. See the objections a Mr. Couch raised in an enclosure in a letter from W. E. Riter to James E. Talmage, as quoted in Brigham D. Madsen, ed., *B. H. Roberts, Studies of the Book of Mormon* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1985), 36, see also 42-43. George D. Smith mentioned this objection in " 'Is There Any Way to Escape These Difficulties?': The Book of Mormon Studies of B. H. Roberts," *Dialogue* 17 (1984): 96, citing the as-yet-unpublished material.

4. *OED*, s.v. "scimitar."

5. Ibid., but the etymological origin from Persian *samsir* "agrees in sense but is unsatisfactory as to form." *The American Heritage Dictionary* (1st ed.) derives the word from Persian *samsir* without comment.

6. R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, *The Encyclopedia of Military History from 3500 B.C. to the Present*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), 279. However, none of the works I consulted gave a date or country of origin for this weapon of the Middle Ages, not even Leonid Tarassuk and Claude Blair, eds., *The Complete Encyclopedia of Arms and Weapons* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1986), 416, 419-20, s.v. "shamshir" (with a reference under "scimitar" to shamshir). If the scimitar is not an invention of the Middle Ages, as I argue in this paper, then the origin of the scimitar must be sought in Mesopotamia. See Othmar Keel, *Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen im Alten Testament*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 5 (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1974), 27, n. 2, for the literature.

7. See Madsen, *B. H. Roberts*, 42-43, citing Ralph V. Chamberlain in an enclosure with a letter to Richard R. Lyman; see also the rather poor case made against the anachronism in another letter enclosure on p. 36.

8. I thank John W. Welch for calling my attention to this unpublished and undated paper on file with F.A.R.M.S.

9. Keel, *Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen*, 28, 34-76.

10. Robert A. S. Macalister, *The Excavation of Gezer*, 3 vols. (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1912), vol. 3, pl. 75, no. 16 (the find site, tomb 30, is described in 1:312-13); and R. Maxwell Hyslop, "Daggers and Swords in Western Asia: A Study from Prehistoric Times to 600 B.C.," *Iraq* 8 (1946): 43 (Hyslop discusses the scimitar, his "Type 34," on pp. 41-44, with a line drawing on pl. IV; the entire article comprises pages 1-66 and six plates). Recently an additional Bronze Age scimitar was found in Palestine (see M. Tadmor, "Hepesh Sword and Straight Sword: New Acquisitions at the Israel Museum," *Qadmonioth* 3 [1970]: 63-64).

11. See Yigael Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands, in Light of Archaeological Study*, tr. M. Perlman, 2 vols. paginated sequentially (Jerusalem: International, 1963), 10-11, 206-7, for a short discussion of the curved sword in the Late Bronze Age, together with pictures of similar curved swords from Egypt to Assyria; for other depictions of curved swords (sometimes with discussion), see 134, 136-37, 17273, 195, 204-5, 223, 228, 233, 348-50, 359; see also Claude F.-A. Schaeffer, "Les Fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ugarit, septième campagne," *Syria* 17 (1936): pl. xvii, 2 (plate immediately preceding p. 139) for a photograph of the bronze sword found at Late Bronze Age Ras Shamra. For examples of curved swords and daggers from various times and provenances, see W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Tools and Weapons* (British School of Archaeology in Egypt, 1917; reprint War- minister: Aris & Phillips, 1974), pls. XXVI-XXVII, for what he calls "recurved" and "crook-backed" weapons.

12. Kurt Galling, "Goliath und seine Rüstung," *Vetus Testamentum, Supplement* (Leiden: Brill, 1966), 15:166-67, citing examples from North Syria and Assyria.

13. There is another word in Hebrew that may refer to a curved or sickle sword: "Curved sickle swords, which represented a development from the battle ax and were used for cutting with the edge rather than stabbing, were of importance from the Sumerian period through the early part of the biblical period. There is probably no biblical reference to a sickle sword, except possibly in the otherwise unknown Hebrew term *mdkera"* (Allen C. Myers et al., eds., *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1987], 974).

14. For a summary, see Keel, *Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen*, 22. For examples, see F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 475: dart, javelin; L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Leiden: Brill, 1958), 433: *Wurfspeer*, dart; King James Version: shield; New English Bible: dagger; Luther Bible (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1972): *Spieß*; Zwingli Bible (Zurich: Zwingli-Bible, 1952): *Wurfspieß*.

15. Yigael Yadin published the first full treatment, *Megillat Milhemet bne Or bi-vne Hoshekh mim-megillot Midbar Yehudah* (Jerusalem: Mosad Byaliok, 1955), and again in the English edition *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness*, tr. Batya and Chaim Rabin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962). Earlier publications contained parts of *1QM*. The abbreviation commonly stands for the full name of the scroll, which is identical with the title of Yadin's book.

16. Yigael Yadin, "Goliath's Javelin and the *mnwr 'orgym," Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 86 (1955): 58.

17. K. G. Kuhn, "Der gegenwärtige Stand der Erforschung der in Palästina gefundenen hebräischen Handschriften," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 1 (1956): 30, stated: "Bei dem *kidon* handelt es sich der Beschreibung nach um ein Sichelschwert, wie es aus Funden bereits bekannt ist." G. Molin, "What Is a *Kidon?" Journal of Semitic Studies* 1 (1956): 334-37, came out strongly on p. 336 for a scimitar.

18. Thus Yadin, *The Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness*, 126; J. van der Ploeg, "La Règle de la Guerre," *Vetus Testamentum* 5 (1955): 403: "Dans la Règle c'est clairement l'épée que portent les soldats"; Johann Maier, *Die Texte vom Toten Meer*, 2 vols. (München: Reinhardt, 1960), 2:12-121; Philip R. Davies, *1QM, the War Scroll from Qumran, Its Structure and History*, Biblica et Orientalia 32 (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1977), 37.

19. *Ancient Israel*, 2 vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 1:242.

20. P. Kyle McCarter, *I Samuel*, Anchor Bible (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1980), 292, 294; Keel, *Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen*, 21-76, passim; see also Galling, "Goliath und seine Rüstung," 16569, who, with more caution, opts for *scimitar*.

21. Professor Michael Heltzer, University of Haifa, Israel, made the suggestions concerning the philological evidence for the sickle sword in the ancient Near East at the XXXVe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Philadelphia, July 1988.

22. In cuneiform texts of the Late Bronze Age, the object *katinnu* appears in tablets from the peripheral areas of Mesopotamia, i.e., Nuzi in the east, Alalakh in the northwest, and Ugarit on the Mediterranean coast. The English-language Assyrian dictionary translates *katinnu* simply as "an object or decoration of metal with stone inlay" *(The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, 21 vols. [Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1971],

8:307), while the German-language Assyrian dictionary translates the term with even more caution as "ein Gegenstand" of unknown etymological derivation (Wolfram von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, 3 vols. [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965], 1:466). See also Hyslop, "Daggers and Swords in Western Asia," 9.

Notes on the Cimeter (Scimitar) in the Book of Mormon

William J. Hamblin,
A. Brent Merrill

To what Mesoamerican weapon could the Book of Mormon authors have been referring with the word *cimeter?* Since evidence on this matter is sparse and ambiguous, the following discussion should be viewed as preliminary speculations.

All references except Enos 1:20 mention it in conjunction with the sword, although many passages mention the sword without mentioning the scimitar. Note also that the earliest reference (fifth century B.C., Enos 1:20) is the single case where the cimeter is listed without the sword. The cimeter is here described as a Lamanite weapon, which might indicate that the weapon was of Lamanite origin. If this is true, the Nephites adopted the cimeter some time after the fifth century B.C. The cimeter is not mentioned after 51 B.C., despite the fact that there are references in Mormon 6:9 to swords and bows, the other major weapons of the Book of Mormon. This could be an arbitrary omission, but it could also indicate that the cimeter fell out of use sometime after the first century B.C. There is no detailed indication from the text as to how the cimeter was used or what type of wounds it inflicted, except one instance where "their [the Nephite's] swords and their cimeters … brought death almost at every stroke" (Alma 43:37, ca. 74 B.C.), which could imply that the Book of Mormon cimeter was a cutting weapon.

There are three characteristics that distinguish the scimitar from an ordinary sword: it is sharp only on one side, its blade is curved, and it is used only to cut. Some of the same characteristics that distinguish a scimitar from a sword distinguish several different types of Mesoamerican melee weapons. Indeed, the early Spanish conquistadores and colonists correlated some Mesoamerican weapons with the scimitar. Antonio de Solis y Rivadeneyra relates that the Aztecs "had likewise long Swords, which they used with both Hands, as we do our Scimitars."[1]

One of the earliest Mesoamerican candidates for the Book of Mormon scimitar is found in a Late Pre-Classic sculpture that shows a warrior holding in one hand a *macuahuitl*[2] and in the other a strange curved weapon (see fig. 3, p. 339 in chapter 15). It is impossible to say for certain what this item is supposed to represent. However, a similar weapon is known in India — the *haladi*.[3] Note that this warrior holds both a *macuahuitl* sword and a curved weapon just as Zerahemnah is described in the Book of Mormon as being armed with.

In our opinion, however, the Book of Mormon cimeter should probably be identified with a curved, axlike weapon held by many of the figures in the Temple of the Warriors at Chichen Itza. It appears to be a curved piece of wood in the end of which was inserted obsidian or flint blades (see fig. 1).[4] Although in appearance it is somewhat like an ax, it is structurally different, in that an ax has a straight shaft of wood with a blade mounted on the shaft, while this weapon has a curved shaft of wood with a blade mounted at the tip of the wood.

A final possible interpretation, although somewhat farfetched, comes from the etymology of *samsir*. According to medieval Persian lexicographers,[5] *samsir* derives from *sam*, "claw," and *sir*, "lion," thus meaning, "lion's claw," perhaps so designated because the blade curves like a lion's claw. This Persian term is similar in meaning to the Egyptian word for scimitar — *khopes* — meaning "foreleg."[6] This suggests the Nephite word for scimitar (written in Reformed Egyptian) and reflects the appropriate, modern English term for a type of sickle sword that originated in the Near East several thousand years ago.

There is artistic and literary evidence showing that the early Maya used severed jaguar claws mounted on sticks as weapons (see fig. 2) and fashioned imitation jaguar claws from stone and wood (see fig. 3).[7] Similar weapons made in imitation of tiger claws, called *bagh nakh* (tiger claw) were also used in India.[8] The jaguar claw weapon was in part ceremonial, perhaps being utilized by officers or by members of a jaguar martial society.[9] There is a slight indication that the scimitar may have had a ritual or ceremonial function, for when Zerahemnah surrenders to Moroni, he gives him his sword, scimitar, and bow as token of his surrender (see Alma 44:8), although, of course, he may simply have been disarming himself. As mentioned above, although the scimitar is almost always paired with the sword in the Book of Mormon, there is no clear indication as to the type of wound it inflicted, so that a jaguar claw weapon cannot be precluded.

Notes

1. Cited in Ross Hassig, *Aztec Warfare: Imperial Expansion and Political Control* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 15.

2. On this term, see William J. Hamblin and A. Brent Merrill, "Swords in the Book of Mormon," in this volume.

3. See George C. Stone, *A Glossary of the Construction, Decoration, and Use of Arms and* Armor (New York: Jack Brussel, 1961; reprint of 1931 ed.), 275a, fig. 342.

4. For dozens of examples, see Earl H. Morris, Jean Charlot, and Ann A. Morris, *The Temple of the Warriors at Chichen Itza, Yucatan* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, pub. #406, 1931), vol. 2, p1. 77, 79, and so on.

5. As summarized by Francis J. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), 760a.

6. For a discussion of the scimitar in the Near East, see Paul Y. Hoskisson, "Scimitars, Cimeters!" in this volume.

7. Compare discussion by Prescott H. F. Follett, "War and Weapons of the Maya," *Middle American Papers, Middle American Research Series*, Publication No. 4 (New Orleans: Tulane University, 1932), 388-89, and his figs. 29-33. Other examples can be seen in Merle Greene, Robert L. Rands, and John A. Graham, *Maya Sculpture* (Berkeley: Lederer, Street & Zeus, 1972), 68-69, pl. 28; 334-35, p1. 159; and Sylvanus G. Morley and George W. Brainerd, *The Ancient Maya*, rev. by Robert J. Sharer, 4th ed. (Palo Alto, California: Stanford University Press, 1983), 293, fig. 11.20.

8. See Stone, *Glossary*, 86-87, fig. 109, #7.

9. On the use of the jaguar "claw knife" among the Maya in ceremonial situations, see Morley and Brainerd, *The Ancient Maya*, 292, fig. 11.20 (Temple III, Tikal, ninth century A.D.) and 430, fig. 13.35 (Late Post-Classic ceramic). In Delia Goetz and Sylvanus G. Morley, *Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Ancient Quiché Maya* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950), 205, and in Delia Goetz, tr., *The Annals of the Cakchiquels and Title of the Lords of Totonicapan* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), 177 and 183, jaguar claws are mentioned as part of the royal equipment. On martial societies in Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon, see John A. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1985), 300-309.

The Bow and Arrow in the Book of Mormon

William J. Hamblin

The distinctive characteristic of missile weapons used in combat is that a warrior throws or propels them to injure enemies at a distance.[1] The great variety of missiles invented during the thousands of years of recorded warfare can be divided into four major technological categories, according to the means of propulsion. The simplest, including javelins and stones, is propelled by unaided human muscles. The second technological category — which uses mechanical devices to multiply, store, and transfer limited human energy, giving missiles greater range and power — includes bows and slings. Beginning in China in the late twelfth century and reaching Western Europe by the fourteenth century, the development of gunpowder as a missile propellant created the third category. In the twentieth century, liquid fuels and engines have led to the development of aircraft and modern ballistic missiles, the fourth category. Before gunpowder weapons, all missiles had fundamental limitations on range and effectiveness due to the lack of energy sources other than human muscles and simple mechanical power. The Book of Mormon mentions only early forms of pregunpowder missile weapons.

The major military advantage of missile weapons is that they allow a soldier to injure his enemy from a distance, thereby leaving the soldier relatively safe from counterattacks with melee weapons. But missile weapons also have some significant disadvantages. First, a missile weapon can be used only once: when a javelin or arrow has been cast, it generally cannot be used again. (Of course, a soldier may carry more than one javelin or arrow.) Second, control over a missile weapon tends to be limited; once a soldier casts a missile, he has no further control over the direction it will take. Third, missile weapons are essentially ineffective as melee weapons. A man armed with only a bow cannot easily defend himself against a man with a sword or spear.

A missile weapon's relative effectiveness depends mainly on the weight, speed, and accuracy of the missile; the size and shape of the projectile point; and the strength of the target's armor protection. This statement is based on the assumption that all other variables are equal. Many additional variables can change the relative effectiveness of missiles. These include climatic factors (wind speed and direction, precipitation, and limited visibility due to walls, trees, fog, or dust), mobility (whether the target or the missile shooter are moving or stationary), the relative elevation of target and shooter, and the relative strength and skill of the shooter. With all other variables being equal, the missile with the highest ratio of weight, speed, and accuracy will be the most deadly.

Because of certain principles of aerodynamics, missiles tend to take two major shapes, spherical or cylindrical. There are some specialized exceptions to this general rule, such as certain types of throwing knives, boomerangs, and the discus, but these weapons are not mentioned in the Book of Mormon and have no direct bearing on this discussion. Spherical missiles generally tend toward the shape of a ball, varying mainly in size and weight. In the Book of Mormon, the only spherical-type missile is the stone. Cylindrical missiles come in a much wider variety. Arrows, javelins, and darts are the cylindrical missiles found in the Book of Mormon. This paper will limit discussion to the bow and arrow, leaving other Book of Mormon missile weapons for future study.

Background on Bows and Arrows

Because some parts of the following analysis of bows and arrows in the Book of Mormon involve a somewhat technical discussion, I will begin with a brief overview of the nature of bows, arrows, and archery.[2] At its most basic level, the bow consists of a wooden staff to which a string or cord is attached at both ends. When a soldier draws the string, the two ends of the staff are pulled backwards; when the soldier releases the string, the staff springs

back into its original position, swiftly pulling the string forward. Thus the available energy of human muscle power is first multiplied and stored in the bow and string and then released much more quickly and with more precision than is possible with the human hand and arm alone.

Bows have been made in many different shapes and sizes, from many materials, and with many methods of manufacture and use. The two major bow classifications are based on the method of manufacture: the *self bow* is made from a single piece of wood, and the *composite bow* is composed of many different materials (several types of wood, horn, and sinew) glued together and laminated.

Within these two categories are many specific types of bows, varying widely in relative efficiency. Variations in the bow size, composition materials, the skill of the craftsman, methods of construction, and method of use can all produce significant variation in a bow's relative efficiency. For example, if a bowstring weighs half of an ounce and an arrow one ounce, the string absorbs only about one seventh of the arm's energy. But if the string weighs three ounces and the arrow one ounce (as was the case in ancient Egyptian bows), the string absorbs about one half of the energy produced by drawing and releasing the string. In other words, all other things being equal, the first bow with the light bowstring will be almost twice as efficient (in range and penetrating power) as the second.[3] String and arrow weight are only two of many possible variables that determine the relative efficiency of bows.

Arrows are a special type of missile designed to be propelled by bows. Because of the limits on the size of a bow that can be easily handled by a man, arrows are necessarily much smaller and lighter than the traditional javelin.[4] Most arrows range in length from two to three feet and in weight from about one-half to two-and-a-half ounces.[5] Bows thus fire a missile (arrow) that is lighter than a javelin and would do proportionally less damage to the target were it not for two additional factors. First, bows can propel light arrows at much higher velocities than human arms can propel javelins. This increased velocity gives the arrow additional power on impact, counteracting the javelin's greater weight. Second, efficient bows and arrows have much greater ranges than the javelin. Whereas the range of javelins tends to be under fifty yards, the English longbow achieved a maximum range of about 250-350 yards. Flight arrows (special lightweight arrows designed for distance shooting) shot from composite bows have flown up to 972 yards, the norm being about 300-400 yards.[6]

A final fundamental problem in ancient missile technology is that, to maximize penetration and damage to a target, a missile needs a pointed projectile head. The simplest form of projectile head is the sharpened end of the arrow. Various characteristics of arrow aerodynamics necessitate the use of fletching (that is, feathers attached to the bottom of the arrow shaft to help keep the arrow on a level flight path). Arrows without fletching can only be fired at very short ranges, since their flight path becomes increasingly inaccurate at longer ranges.[7]

Far from being simple weapons, bows and arrows are highly complex tools, with many different forms, qualities, and characteristics. Changes in particular characteristics create corresponding changes in the relative effectiveness of the bow and arrow as a weapon. The next section of this paper examines the question of the specific characteristics of the archery described in the Book of Mormon.

Bows and Arrows in the Book of Mormon

After the sword, the bow is the second most frequently mentioned weapon in the Book of Mormon. Bows are mentioned twenty-two times, arrows twenty-six. In fourteen cases the bow and arrow are mentioned together; in eight cases, the bow is mentioned alone; in twelve, the arrow alone. In most cases, the bow is simply mentioned as

a weapon with no additional details.[8] However, several significant incidents give some indication of the nature and use of the Book of Mormon bow.

The most detailed description comes in 1 Nephi 16. Here Nephi describes the difficulties that his family had in getting food in the wilderness of Arabia. Nephi and his brothers used their bows to hunt animals, but eventually Nephi's fine steel bow broke, and his brothers' bows lost their "springs." Nephi then made a new bow and arrow from some wood in the region, and, with the help of directions from the Liahona, he managed to obtain additional food (see 1 Nephi 16:14-15, 18, 21, 23, 30-31).

In this passage the Book of Mormon suggests five significant characteristics concerning Near Eastern archery in the early sixth century B.C.:

1. There were "steel" bows.

2. Such steel bows could break.

3. Bows could lose their "springs."

4. Bows and arrows could be made from wood.

5. Nephi knew how to make bows and arrows.

Unfortunately, the Book of Mormon provides less detailed information about the nature and use of bows and arrows by the peoples of early Mesoamerica.[9] Chronologically, the bow was used from the time Lehi and his family left Jerusalem (ca. 587 B.C.) until the final battles in which the Nephite culture was destroyed (ca. 385 A.D.).[10] Bows were used by both Nephite and Lamanite cultural groups but are not mentioned as having been used by the Jaredite culture (for Lamanites, see Mosiah 10:8; Helaman 1:14; for Nephites, see Alma 2:12; Mosiah 9:16). As in most ancient societies, Book of Mormon peoples used bows for both hunting and warfare (for hunting, see 1 Nephi 16; Alma 17:7, ca. 80 B.C.; most other instances refer to warfare).

From two major incidents in the Book of Mormon, we can infer some details about the use of bows and arrows in Pre-Classic Mesoamerica. The first incident, occurring in Alma chapters 49-50 (ca. 72 B.C.), is the most detailed Book of Mormon passage describing archery in warfare. During the great wars in the first century B.C., the Nephites, under Moroni, "had dug up a ridge of earth round about" the city of Ammonihah, "which was so high that the Lamanites could not cast their stones and their arrows at them" (Alma 49:4). The Nephites expanded this system of fortifications to protect their cities from Lamanite incursions (see Alma 48:8; 49:13-20; 50:1-6, 10). If the Lamanites attempted to assault a city, the Nephites planned to "destroy all such as should attempt to climb up to enter the fort by any other way, by casting over stones and arrows at them" (Alma 49:19). Such fortifications, "which never had been known among the children of Lehi" (Alma 49:8), confounded the Lamanite strategy, forcing them to retreat into the wilderness (see Alma 49:12).

In assaulting these fortifications the Lamanites attempted a primitive form of siegecraft, trying to "dig down their [the Nephites'] banks of earth," but they were "swept off by the stones and arrows which were thrown at them" (Alma 49:22). The only Nephites who were injured (about fifty) were those who defended the "pass," or gateway of these fortifications, "who had been exposed to the arrows of the Lamanites through the pass" (Alma 49:24). However, the Nephites had been "shielded by their shields, and their breastplates, and their head-plates, insomuch

that their wounds were upon their legs, many of which were very severe" (Alma 49:24). Later the Nephites constructed timber walls, towers, and pickets to strengthen the fortifications, so "that the stones and the arrows of the Lamanites could not hurt them" (Alma 50:4).

This passage provides us with the following important facts concerning archery in the Book of Mormon:

1. Both Nephites and Lamanites were armed with bows and arrows.

2. A large mound of earth negated the effectiveness of Lamanite archery to the extent that no Nephites were killed by Lamanite arrows.

3. In the same battle, Nephite archers, shooting from the top of the earthen fortifications, were quite effective against the Lamanites, managing to kill more than a thousand of them (see Alma 49:19, 22-23).

4. Nephite fortifications are said to have been effective against both arrows and stones (see Alma 49:2, 4; 50:4), implying to me that the stones and arrows had essentially the same range, or that the stone throwers were uniformly at closer range than the archers. However, there is no evidence in the Book of Mormon for this type of special regimentation according to weapons. The text does not say whether the stones were thrown or cast from slings.

5. Lamanite archery was not effective enough to wound Nephites when they wore armor, but could cause "very severe" (Alma 49:24) wounds on unarmored legs.

6. It may be significant that the bow is never mentioned in this passage, only arrows. Some possible implications of this fact are discussed below.

The second major incident involving archery (ca. 6 B.C.) occurred when Samuel the Lamanite was attacked with arrows while preaching from the city walls of Zarahemla. This incident adds no details but confirms the general Book of Mormon archery characteristics derived from Alma 4950. Samuel stood on the wall of Zarahemla, prophesying of the coming of Christ. His words angered some listeners, who "cast stones" and "shot arrows at him" (Helaman 16:2). However, "the Spirit of the Lord" protected Samuel so that the arrows and stones did not harm him (Helaman 16:2, 6). Although the archery's ineffectiveness in this incident is directly attributed to the Lord's miraculous intervention, tactically, the situation mirrors that in the siege of Ammonihah described above. Nephite and Lamanite archery does not seem to have had enough range or penetrating power to severely injure people standing on a high wall. Note also that, as in Alma 49, no bows are mentioned in this incident.

Jarom 1:8 (ca. 400 B.C.) provides another characteristic of Book of Mormon archery. It mentions the "sharp pointed arrow," providing the only specific information about arrows in the Book of Mormon. This passage may imply the use of some type of arrowhead on the arrows, for an arrow can only be "sharp" if it has an edged side to the projectile point.

Finally, the Book of Mormon also refers in two verses to quivers (pouches or boxes designed for carrying arrows or javelins). The first verse, 1 Nephi 21:2, is a quotation from Isaiah 49:2, and thus concerns Near Eastern archery. The second, Jarom 1:8 (ca. 400 B.C.) tells us that the Nephites made "weapons of war — yea, the sharp pointed arrow, and the quiver, and the dart, and the javelin." Neither passage gives any additional details about Book of Mormon archery, but they do represent another aspect of military missile use.

This section has summarized all the information concerning the characteristics of archery found in the Book of Mormon. The following section examines the relation of these characteristics to archaeological and historical knowledge of how archery was practiced in the Near East in the early sixth century B.C. and in Pre-Classic Mesoamerica.

Bows and Archery in the Near East in the Sixth Century B.C.

The fundamental technology for the bow was developed by at least early Neolithic times, and all literate civilizations of the Near East had been acquainted with the bow for several millennia before Lehi was born.[11] The Bible mentions the bow extensively, and anyone who has even briefly examined Egyptian history will be familiar with the many stunning scenes of Pharaohs shooting their bows from their chariots.[12] How do the details about archery as described in the Book of Mormon correspond with the evidence of Near Eastern archery in the sixth century B.C.? I previously discussed the five major assertions the Book of Mormon made concerning Near Eastern archery. I will now examine each of these points in detail.

Characteristic One

There were "steel" bows. Several civilizations have made solid steel bows in the past. Many examples of steel bows are preserved in museums in India.[13] Steel bows were also manufactured in medieval Europe but were usually used as crossbows because of the great strength needed to bend them.[14] However, the earliest examples of pure steel weapons date from the early fourteenth-century-A.D. I am unaware of any evidence of pure steel bows from earlier times. How, then, could Nephi have had a steel bow in the sixth century B.C.?

To answer this question, one must examine the translations of the King James Version of the Bible (KJV) in which the phrase "steel bow" is used (2 Samuel 22:35; Psalm 18:34; Job 20:24). In each reference the phrase has been incorrectly translated and should really read "bronze" (Heb. *nechushah)* bow. From archaeological remains, it is clear that the Hebrew "bronze bow" was not made entirely of bronze but was a term that, as Roland de Vaux notes, "refers to the metal coverings of certain bows."[15] Nephi's "steel bow" could thus likely be Joseph Smith's Jacobean English translation for an original Hebrew "bronze bow," referring to an ordinary wopden weapon decorated or reinforced in certain parts (usually the upper limb, nock, and grip) with bronze. This explanation is supported by the fact that Nephi's "steel" bow is said to have broken, a good indication that Nephi was not referring to a pure steel bow of the fourteenth-century-A.D. type, which would be essentially impossible to break by human muscle power alone.

Characteristic Two

Such "steel" bows could break. Obviously both self bows and composite bows can break under a number of circum-stances.[16] However, composite bows have a specific structural problem that leaves them susceptible to changes in temperature and climate, which may cause the bow to warp and break. Taybugha, a fourteenth-century Arab master-archer, advised that "an archer should never neglect his bow for a single moment, and in extremes of temperature he should inspect it day and night, hour by hour" [17] (see fig. 1). Such care in protecting a composite bow from warping is necessary because "the neck has a natural tendency to lateral displacement.... Should side-warping of this kind not be detected and the bow be drawn the defective limb will be subjected to a most severe twisting strain and possibly break."[18] Thus, if Nephi's bow were of the composite type, his move from the more

temperate climate of Palestine to the dry heat of the Arabian peninsula could have contributed to the risk that his bow might warp and break.[19]

Characteristic Three

Bows could lose their "springs." Bows are delicate weapons that need special care and constant attention. Both medieval and modern archers recognized this fact.[20] To lose its "spring" probably means that the bow had lost some of its elasticity and thereby its strength and efficiency. Longman describes this problem: "All bows will lose both cast [range] and strength if shot with many days running, and they will not readily recover if overshot.... Even in one day a bow will sometimes go down one or two pounds, ... hot weather especially affecting them."[21] Most likely, this is precisely what happened to the bows of Nephi's brothers. The change in climate, the hot weather, and continual hunting progressively weakened the elasticity and draw weight ("springs") of their bows to the point that the bows had insufficient range and penetrating power for effective hunting.

Characteristic Four

Bows and arrows could be made from wood. Making bows from wood is such a widespread phenomenon in history that the question need not be dealt with in detail.[22] However, one point worth examining is the question of wood sources for the bow Nephi made in Arabia.

In the latter Middle Ages, composite bows became the predominant type of bow throughout the Near East. However, Arab scholars of archery preserved traditions of an earlier self bow that Arab bedouins made from a single piece of wood.[23] One medieval Arab toxophilite wrote, "The bows of the Hijazi [west Arabian] Arabs are also of three kinds. One is made of a single stave *(qadib)*; another is made of a stave or two staves divided lengthwise; and the third is backed, or reinforced *(mu^caqqaba)*. All these three kinds are made of the *nab'*, *shawhat*, and *shiryan* wood. The method is that of shaving the wood down.... The bow which is made of a single stave is called *qadib*."[24] The Hijaz is the western coast of central Arabia, the region through which Lehi's party is usually thought to have traveled.[25] Another source states specifically that this single-stave *qadib* bow was "the bow used among the [Arab] bedouins."[26] Thus single-stave bows could be made of several types of wood found in Arabia. Arrows were also made of many different materials, wood and reed being the most common. Taybugha wrote, "The best arrows ... should be roundly hewn (and) be of hard solid wood."[27]

Characteristic Five

Nephi knew how to make bows and arrows. Would an ordinary citizen of the ancient Near East have been able to make a bow from materials available in the Arabian wilderness? By at least as early as the fourteenth century B.C., Near Eastern bow-making technology had become a highly developed and complex skill. The staff bow had been known in Egypt since at least early dynastic times. The Hyksos invaders apparently introduced the composite bow to Egypt in the sixteenth century B.C. We have good evidence of the bowyer's skill in fourteenth-century Egypt both from tomb illustrations and from surviving examples of bows found in Tutankhamun's tomb.[28] McLeod provides the following description of making the simplest Egyptian single-stave self bow. Manufacturing the more complex composite bow was much more difficult.

(1) A billet of the appropriate length was cut off at both ends.

(2) It was roughly dressed with a small adze, which left facets along the stave.

(3) Near the tip, the stave was cored with several transverse grooves on one side.

(4) The tip was bent at the grooves. In other societies, the usual way of achieving this has been to saturate the wood with steam, which makes it soft and pliable.

(5) It was presumably clamped in a frame of the proper shape and left to dry.

(6) A notch was cut on the back at the tip to lodge the string.

(7) The stave was roughly smoothed with a coarse abrasive.

(8) The stave was finished with a polishing block of fine sandstone.[29]

Evidence from Egyptian tombs that show the bow-manufacturing method confirms this procedure's complexity. This Egyptian evidence depicts a process involving many different craftsmen, tools, and materials.[30] Nephi most likely did not have the time, materials, or knowledge to go through this entire process.

However, the above eight steps are necessary only if one wishes to produce an efficient and beautiful war bow. Much simpler processes existed for making inexpensive, less efficient bows that were still useful for some forms of hunting. The Lacandon Maya Indians of southeastern Mexico follow one such method:

> The Lacandon man cuts a long square piece from a felled tree and then smooths it into an elliptical shape by scraping it across a machete…. [He] gradually works the wood into a rough how 1.65 meters long…. After shaping the wood in this fashion, he heats the bow over an open fire for up to half an hour. This step hardens the bow…. [The] Lacandon [then] polishes it with a large whetstone … until the wood surface is completely smooth and regular…. The entire process … takes approximately three days.[31]

The question of the relative strength and efficiency of bows as described in the Book of Mormon will be discussed in detail later.

Though similar to the complex Egyptian method described above, the Lacandon Mayan process is much simpler, takes less time, and can be done by a single man. Many other primitive peoples followed similar simple processes in making bows. The Arab bedouin self bows were also made by "shaving down the wood."[32] The method of hunting with weak self bows is not to attempt to kill an animal outright with the arrow, but to wound the animal and track it relentlessly until it collapses from exhaustion and loss of blood.

Manufacturing efficient arrows is also very difficult and time consuming. Arrows must be cut from a straight, clean piece of well-seasoned wood; they must be rounded; and they must be perfectly straight. Mounting must be prepared for an arrowhead (which also must be procured or made) and for the fletching (feathers).[33] The Book of Mormon states that Nephi "did make out of wood a bow, and out of a straight stick, an arrow" (1 Nephi 16:23). The text here clearly implies that Nephi made only one arrow for his bow at that time. The difficulty and time required to make arrows seems to have limited the number that Nephi could make.[34]

Thus, although manufacturing both bows and arrows was a complex art, one man on short notice could make an inferior quality weapon with short range and minimal penetrating power. In fact, the bows and arrows most primitive peoples use tend to be weak. In Africa, Central and South America, parts of Asia, and the Pacific Islands, the bow tends to be an inferior weapon that, although used in warfare, is not the preferred combat weapon.[35] Evidence discussed in the next section suggests that the bow-making technology of the New World was of this primitive, weak, and inefficient type.

One may conclude, then, that the Book of Mormon's five characteristics about Near Eastern archery in the sixth century B.C. accurately reflect the textual, artistic, and archaeological evidence of the period. The next section will examine a comparison of the descriptions of archery in the Book of Mormon with the evidence of archery in Pre-Classic Mesoamerica.

The Bow in Mesoamerica

Book of Mormon critics have maintained that the bow was not used in Mesoamerica before the Middle Classic period (after 500 A.D.), several centuries after the earliest mention of the weapon in the Book of Mormon. These critics consider the mention of the bow in the Book of Mormon as a significant historical anachronism.[36]

Although it may be true that the bow was not used by every culture or tribe in Pre-Classic Mesoamerica, recent archaeological work and reinterpretation provides good evidence of, as Tolstoy writes, "the limited use of the bow and arrow in central Mexico since early agricultural times"[37] (that is, since well before 600 B.C.). Professor Tolstoy writes:

> THE PROBLEM OF THE BOW AND ARROW IN CENTRAL MEXICO. Vaillant (1931, pp. 301-02),[38] on the basis of point weight distributions and analogies with the Southwestern United States, has argued for the presence of the bow and arrow in the Preclassic of the valley [of central Mexico]. Linne (1934, pp. 147-48)[39] feels that the lighter points at Teotihuacan were used to tip arrows. Kidder (1947, pp. 12-4),[40] departing from similar assumptions of relation of weight and size to function, concludes that arrowpoints were more frequent early than late in the Valley of Mexico sequence.[41] Suhm and Krieger (1954, p. 529)[42] add the implicit criterion of thinness to those of weight and size. To judge from all of these criteria, most of the small but relatively thick points of the valley Preclassic need not have been mounted on arrows. This still leaves the Bassett, Perdiz, and Fresco types of the Preclassic, the Hayes, Bonham, and Gary Small types of the Classic, and the Harrell points of the Aztec times as *prima facie* evidence of the limited use of the bow and arrow in central Mexico since early agricultural times…. The occurrence of a type as unusual and distinctive as the Bassett would seem even here to favor the bow-and-arrow hypothesis.[43]

Recent excavations at Tehuacan Valley confirm that the bow was used as early as the time of Christ.[44] Whether or not the bow and arrow existed in Mesoamerica during Book of Mormon times is an important and controversial topic. I will therefore examine the evidence for the bow in some detail.

The question of the bow and arrow in early Mesoamerica (or any other culture) revolves around the methodology for interpreting textual and archaeological remains. Three main types of evidence would indicate that the bow and arrow were known to a given civilization: first, literary or inscriptional evidence mentioning the words "bow" or

"arrow"; second, artistic evidence depicting bows; and third, the archaeological remains of actual bows or arrows. If evidence of the bow in *any* of these three categories is found at a given site, it is basically certain that the people of that culture knew of the bow and arrow.

Written Evidence

The first form of evidence consists of inscriptions or literary references to archery. Although there can be problems with semantics and dating that might cloud the issue, the mention of a bow or arrow in a literary text is generally accepted as evidence of that weapon's existence. As far as I am aware, Pre-Classic inscriptions in Mesoamerica, which are limited both in number and in topics discussed, do not mention the bow. However, there are not enough extant Pre-Classic inscriptions for us to conclude that a particular item did not exist simply because the known and translated inscriptions do not happen to mention it. Furthermore, since many Mesoamerican hieroglyphic signs have not been fully interpreted, the word for bow may be one of the many glyphs for which the meaning is still unknown.[45] Other than the Book of Mormon, no strictly literary (as opposed to inscriptional) records from the Pre-Classic period exist.

Artistic Evidence

Artistic evidence from the Pre-Classic period is also limited. Nonetheless, there is an important example of a Pre-Classic graffiti from El Corral (south Mexico, second century A.D.) that has been interpreted as representing a man using a bow (see fig. 2).[46]

Here there arises a methodological problem of negative evidence. If the bow was indeed used by Pre-Classic Mesoamericans as I claim, why do we not find extensive artistic evidence of the bow? The answer to this question comprises three aspects. First, the bow-using peoples may have used essentially nonrepresentational art forms. The early Israelites themselves represent the most obvious example of such a culture. Despite the clear use of the bow by the Israelites, there are no extant artistic representations of an Israelite using a bow. Second, although some people used the bow, not all ethnic groups used it, and the bow would thus not necessarily appear in the art of every culture, despite the existence of the weapon. Finally, Mesoamerican art was essentially ritual.[47] If the bow did not play a major *ritual* role in Mesoamerican society, it would not appear in ritual-oriented artwork. A well-known example of this phenomenon is the sword as the major ritual weapon of the medieval Western European tradition and its major ritual role in the Arthurian legendary cycle.

Archaeological Evidence

When we turn to archaeological evidence, we are dealing with a much more complex problem of interpretation. Through archaeology we attempt to find and identify (often two very different processes) remaining fragments of what once had been a bow or arrow. J. G. D. Clark provides three criteria, of which only one must be satisfied, to be certain of the existence of the bow from archaeological evidence alone: first, a recognizable part of a bow (i.e., the nock of the bow) must be found; second, a recognizable part of an arrow (i.e., nock of the arrow); or third, an artistic representation of a bow (as discussed above). Significantly, Clark maintains that when examining projectile points alone, there are no absolute criteria on which to judge whether a projectile point was used for an arrow, dart, or javelin.[48]

Despite the fact that remains of wooden parts of bows or arrows can be expected to survive over 1,500 years only under unusual circumstances, several cane arrow shafts possibly dating from Book of Mormon times have recently

been identified. They date from the late Palo Blanco levels at Tehuacan (ca. 400-700 A.D.), [49] which would fit into the late Book of Mormon period. According to Clark, it is only from the nocks of bows or arrows (i.e., the wooden parts) that a bow's existence can be definitively shown. This leaves projectile points as the main form of evidence to prove the existence of missile weapons, which are often difficult to categorize and interpret. Thousands of such stone projectile points have been recovered from Mesoamerican archaeological digs dating from the Book of Mormon period, proving that some missile weapons were used in Pre-Classic Mesoamerica. But were these projectile points used on arrows, *atlatl* darts, javelins, or spears?

Determining the type of shaft to which a given projectile point was attached and the means of propulsion for that shaft is a very complicated process. Though the question of dating projectile points is often problematic, it will not be of great concern for my analysis. I assume here that the estimated dates of archaeological finds as determined by a combination of stratigraphical analysis, comparative pottery studies, carbon dating, and inscriptions are accurate. However, if the relative datings of some digs were successfully challenged, that could push the dates for some evidence of the bow in certain cultural zones back several centuries into Book of Mormon times. Furthermore, even some of the best-established dates may be accurate within only a century or two.

Archaeologists must guess the type of shaft and the means of throwing it, based on the size, thickness, weight, and shape of the projectile point. Of course, such reconstructions are not merely arbitrary guesses but are based on a careful comparative analysis of many identified projectiles with unidentified or questionable projectile points. Nonetheless, it must be emphasized that there are no absolute criteria to differentiate an arrow projectile point from a javelin or spear projectile point.

What are the main criteria archaeologists use to classify a projectile point as coming from an arrow, javelin, or spear? Size and weight are important factors, but are not necessarily definitive.[50] There are two main problems with this approach. First, discovered projectile points invariably provide a gradual gradation of size and weight, with no obvious or absolute points of differentiation. Second, through modern reconstructions and experimentation, Browne has demonstrated that projectile points ranging in length from 30-67 mm "could have been used on either an arrow or a fore-shafted spear" (see fig. 3).[51] In other words, if judged by size and weight, most projectile points found in Mesoamerica could have been used on bows, javelins, or spears. Most scholars have wisely avoided these problems by classifying such finds as "projectile points," making no attempt to subdivide them according to the type of shaft to which they were attached.

Archaeologists are now concluding that the fundamental criteria for distinguishing arrowheads from javelin or spear points are not the size or weight of the projectile point, but rather the thickness and width of the base of the point where it would be hafted to the missile shaft.[52] Points that exceed a certain (but not precisely defined) width or thickness are too large to have been attached to a relatively narrow arrow shaft (see fig. 4).

The problem of classifying arrowpoints is therefore an open question. Many existing projectile points could be reexamined and potentially reclassified as arrowpoints. With these considerations in mind, Tolstoy and other archaeologists have reevaluated the question of the bow and arrow and have concluded that the bow was in fact known in Mesoamerica by at least the first millennium B.C., precisely as described in the Book of Mormon.

But let us assume for the sake of argument that none of the projectile points that have been discovered were in fact attached to arrows. This assumption would still not be conclusive evidence that the bow and arrow were not used. All it indicates is that arrows did not have *stone* projectile points. Indeed, Mesoamericans are known to have

used bone and other material as projectile points for arrowheads. "[The Aztec] arrows, for want of Iron, were headed with Bones ground sharp, or Fish-Bones."[53]

Throughout the world, there are numerous other historical examples of arrows having sharpened wood, thorn, or bone tips for projectile points, which would leave only a few, if any, identifiable remains.[54] Such arrowheads were usually used when metal was rare, or when the cost of producing metal or stone arrowheads was excessive in relation to the missile's relative effectiveness.

In summary, there is no inscriptional evidence relating to the use of bows in Mesoamerica. However, there are limited artistic representations of the use of the bow by at least the second century A.D. Furthermore, there are numerous stone projectile points that can be classified as arrowheads, and the current trend in scholarship is to reclassify such projectile points as arrowheads, thereby dating the use of the bow by Mesoamericans to at least the first millennium B.C. It is also possible that some Mesoamericans used arrows with nonstone projectile points. Thus there is no reason to maintain that the mention of the bow in the Book of Mormon is incompatible with the archaeological evidence from Mesoamerica.

I should emphasize one last point. The fact that the bow was known in Mesoamerica does not mean that all cultures in that region would have used the weapon or would have used it extensively in warfare. As Christian Feest puts it: "Since the bow undoubtedly represents the highest development of arms technology in the tribal world, it seems strange that it is not always employed as a weapon of war. In Polynesia bows and arrows were restricted to hunting; in parts of Melanesia the spear replaced the bow, and even the civilizations of Mexico and Peru preferred the spearthrower. Since there are no technical reasons for this, it is likely that the bow was less suited to the particular war tactics of these regions."[55] One could add that although the bow was known throughout Africa, some African tribes preferred not to use it in warfare.

Thus, although the bow was clearly known in Mesoamerica in the Post-Classic period (after 900 A.D.), certain tribal or cultural groups, such as the Aztec and Classic Maya, chose not to use it extensively in warfare. The reasons for this choice probably include factors of technology (bows were weak and ineffective), culture (bows were not considered a noble weapon since you could kill an enemy without confronting him face to face), and tactics (bows did not fit well with standard military practices). But archaeological findings still suggest that the bow was known in Mesoamerica and was used by some cultural groups. The Nephites were one of these groups. The next section examines a possible reconstruction of the pattern of military bows used by Book of Mormon cultures.

Scenarios for Reconciliation

Because of the fragmentary and occasionally ambiguous nature of some of the evidence concerning Pre-Classic archery in Mesoamerica, there are several scenarios that can reconcile the description of bows and arrows in the Book of Mormon with the archaeological and artistic evidence from Mesoamerica, none of which is mutually exclusive.

Scenario One: The Weak Nephite Bow

The first scenario runs something like this. The Nephites arrived in Mesoamerica with relatively primitive bow technology. Neither Nephi nor any of his brothers were expert bowyers, and the bow technology they were able to pass on to their descendants did not represent the highest levels of sixth-century B.C. Near Eastern craftsmanship.

There are three specific corollaries to this general principle. First, either the Nephites did not transmit composite recurved bow technology to Mesoamerica or that technology was quickly lost. Second, the bow industry that ultimately became the standard Nephite bow technology was that of a relatively inefficient self bow. Third, the indigenous Mesoamerican missile technologies such as the *atlatl*, javelin, sling, and possibly the bow as well, could therefore compete effectively with Nephite bow technology so that Nephite bow industries did not ultimately displace indigenous weapon industries.[56]

The combination of technology, environment, and the nature of the available materials of Mesoamerica were such that the bows the Book of Mormon peoples used remained on a relatively primitive level. Certainly there was little, if any, use of metal arrowheads. The theoretical absence of effective fletching and the basic weakness of bows would have limited both the range and accuracy of the weapon. The bow was therefore not adopted by all Mesoamerican ethnic groups. Furthermore, although the bow continued in use for several centuries among Book of Mormon peoples, it never replaced the javelin and *atlatl* as principal missile weapons among non-Nephite civilizations.

There are several historical examples where this same type of military situation developed. The closest known parallel comes from Mesoamerica itself. Although the original tribal Aztecs used the bow extensively before their migrations into central Mexico, they eventually adopted the Mesoamerican *atlatl* as their major missile weapon, conforming to the prevailing military and technological patterns of the indigenous cultures.[57] "The chief offensive arms [of the Aztecs] were wooden clubs, edged with sharp blades of obsidian, and the javelin, hurled by means of the *atlatl*. Bows and arrows were used, but the heavier javelins were preferred for the close fighting of Aztec warfare."[58] Book of Mormon peoples or their descendants may have followed this same basic pattern, ultimately selecting the *atlatl* in preference to the bow as their major missile weapon. Likewise, despite the advanced military technology of the Romans, they consistently relied on auxiliaries and mercenaries to provide archers for their armies. "Archers [in Roman armies were] usually of Eastern origin."[59] Many tribes in Africa, such as the Zulu, although they used the bow for hunting, never developed a tradition of military archery.[60]

Scenario Two: The Atlatl *as a "Bow"*

A second possible scenario to be considered is that the writers of the Book of Mormon used the Hebrew (or Egyptian) word for *bow* to designate a new Mesoamerican weapon, the *atlatl*, for which neither Hebrew nor Egyptian has a term. The *atlatl* was a curved notched stick into which a javelin was laid that threw the javelin with increased force and range. The weapon was unknown in the Middle East in Nephi's time, and neither Egyptian nor Hebrew has a term for such a weapon.

According to this scenario, when Lehi's party arrived in America, they possessed rudimentary skills in bow and arrow making. Due to the ineffectiveness of the bows they could manufacture, the weapon was eventually discarded in favor of the more effective *atlatl*, which was adopted from the indigenous population of the region not related to Lehi. In the written language, however, the Hebrew (or Egyptian) word for *bow* was retained and transferred to the new Mesoamerican missile weapon. Thus in the writings on the gold plates, the word *bow* refers to the *atlatl*, and the word *arrow* to the dart or javelin thrown by the *atlatl*. Joseph Smith, however, translated the words according to their literal meaning.[61]

Throughout the history of the development of terminology for new weapons, it was not at all uncommon for weapons that were new to a given culture to be called by the name of an older, more familiar weapon. For our

purposes, the best example occurs with the terms used by the Spanish Conquistadores to describe Aztec weapons with which they were unfamiliar. The "Anonymous Conqueror" described *atlatls* as "spears which they throw with crossbows."[62] Other examples of this phenomenon are numerous. The Chinese, inventors of gunpowder weapons, called the earliest form of firearms "fire lance."[63] The early terminology for firearms among the Europeans was *arqebus*, literally "thunder bow." Among the Arabs, firearms were called *bunduq*, literally a type of pellet crossbow. Early rockets were known among the Arabs as "Chinese arrows." Thus, for the Nephites to adapt their old military vocabulary to the new weapons of Mesoamerica is quite consistent with the linguistic patterns of other cultures.

Scenario Three: "Bows and Arrows" as a Literary Phrase

A third possible explanation for the appearance of the phrase "bows and arrows" is that the phrase was used as part of a stock weapons list and, as such, represented Mormon's anachronistic literary terms rather than technical military terminology derived from the original texts he was abridging. According to this theory, when abridging and editing the original texts, Mormon used certain stock literary phrases to describe weapons and warfare that accurately described the situation of his day but may have been anachronistic or inaccurate when used for the weapons of earlier armies. Such anachronistic description of weapons and warfare is not at all uncommon for ancient writers who are attempting to describe warfare in periods prior to their own.[64]

Here are the major examples of the repetitive nature of the Book of Mormon descriptions of weapons, which I will call "standard weapon lists":

1. Mosiah 9:16 (ca. 180 B.C.): "I did arm them [the Nephites] with bows, and with arrows, with swords, and with cimeters, and with clubs, and with slings, and with all manner of weapons."

2. Mosiah 10:8 (180 B.C.): "Men [Lamanites] armed with bows, and with arrows, and with swords, and with cimeters, and with stones, and with slings."

3. Alma 2:12 (90 B.C.): "They [the Nephites] did arm themselves with swords, and with cimeters, and with bows, and with arrows, and with stones, and with slings, and with all manner of weapons of war."

4. Alma 3:5 (90 B.C.): "Their [Lamanite] bows, and their arrows, and their stones, and their slings, and so forth."

5. Alma 43:20 (70 B.C.): "They [the Lamanites] had only their swords and their cimeters, and their bows and their arrows, their stones and their slings."

6. Helaman 1:14 (50 B.C.): "[The Lamanites had] armed them [an army of men] with swords, and with cimeters and with bows, and with arrows."

The parallel phraseology of each of these passages, the listing of weapons in related pairs, the choices of weapons that are mentioned, and the general ordering of the weapons lend credence to the theory that these descriptions of weapons are meant to be literary devices rather than historical listings of actual weapons the warriors used in their respective periods (note also the use of "and so forth" in Alma 3:5). Thus one could compare our modern use of anachronistic sword imagery in literary descriptions of war —"saber rattling," "man of the sword," "swords into plowshares," and so on — with the use of the stock phrases given above. As a general rule, one would not expect that descriptions given by three different authors covering over one hundred years, describing both Lamanite and Nephite weaponry, would use almost exactly the same phrases, even if the weaponry had changed relatively little.

One explanation that would account for this is that the editor Mormon rather than the individual authors of each book used the terms.[65]

It is possible, if not likely, that some combination of all three of these scenarios actually occurred in Book of Mormon times. For instance, Book of Mormon cultures could have used the bow and arrow, but, because they were relatively weak and ineffective, the *atlatl* eventually either largely or completely replaced them as the primary military missile weapon while the original words for bow and arrow were retained and used as literary phrases in standard lists of weapons. At any rate, whichever one of these scenarios or a combination thereof (or some other plausible scenario) proves to be accurate, there is little difficulty in reconciling the descriptions of the use of bows and arrows in the Book of Mormon with the evidence of archery from the cultures of both the Middle East and Mesoamerica.

Appendix: Why Did Nephi Make a New Arrow?

David S. Fox has maintained that Nephi had to make a new arrow for his new wooden bow because the arrows used with his old steel bow would have been too heavy for a wooden bow.[66] Although the general principle he describes is accurate, I believe the issue is more complex than that.

In reality, nearly any arrow can be shot from any bow. The basic limiting factor is the length of the arrow versus the length of the bow — shooting short arrows from longbows is difficult. This is because a full draw on a longbow may make the distance between the fully drawn string and the handle of the bow longer than the length of the arrow. Short arrows can be shot from a longbow only if the string is not drawn back fully, which greatly reduces efficiency.

What Fox is really talking about is the relative efficiency of shooting arrows of different weights from different bows. A very heavy arrow shot from a bow with a light draw weight will have short range and weak penetrating power.[67] The accuracy and impact will be ineffective, but the arrow can be shot. Fox's discussion seems to be based on the assumption that Nephi's "steel bow" was of the late medieval steel type, while I have argued that in fact Nephi's steel bow must have been a metal-backed wood weapon that was common in the Near East of his day, which would not have shot an arrow substantially heavier than other bows.

Why then, did Nephi make a new arrow? There are two possible reasons. First, as arrows are continually shot in hunting they become lost or broken. He may simply have run out of arrows and needed a new one. Second, Nephi very likely owned a metal-backed recurved composite bow, as discussed previously. Recurved composite bows can achieve the same draw weight with a much smaller string and draw length than a longer bow. In other words, recurved composite bows shoot shorter arrows than longer bows. If Nephi's old bow was the recurved composite type, and his new one was a long staff bow (which is the simplest to make on short notice), he may have needed to make a longer arrow because of the longer string and draw length of his new bow.

Notes

1. I would like to thank the staff of F.A.R.M.S. for their assistance in this study.

2. Many works discuss the basic principles of archery. Details on bows and archery can be found in Robert Hardy, *The Longbow* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); John D. Latham and W. F. Paterson, *Saracen Archery* (London: Holland Press, 1970); Saxton T. Pope, *Bows and Arrows* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962); and Charles J. Longman and H. Walrond, *Archery* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1967; reprint of 1894 ed.).

3. See P. H. Blyth, "Ballistic Properties in Ancient Egyptian Arrows," *Journal of the Society of Archer Antiquarians* 23 (1980): 38, who bases his analysis on C. N. Hickman, "Effect of String Weight on Arrow Velocity and Efficiency of Bows," *Ye Sylvan Archer* (April 1931): 45-46.

4. Bows can be designed to propel arrows as large or larger than normal javelins and spears. However, such bows are usually so huge that a single man cannot carry them, and they often require a great deal of energy (in the form of cranks) to draw the string. Such large bows and arrows are variously called catapults, ballistas, or crossbows. In the eastern Mediterranean world, craftsmen working for Dionysius of Syracuse in the early fourth century B.C. apparently invented the catapult. By 370 B.C. they were found in Greece, and they had reached Asia Minor by at least 340 B.C. (see Eric W. Marsden, *Greek and Roman Artillery: Historical Development* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1969], 48-56; and Werner Soedel and Vernard Foley, "Ancient Catapults," *Scientific American* 240/3 [March 1979]: 150-60). Similar weapons were introduced in China at about the same period (see Robert Temple, *The Genius of China* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987], 218-24). The Book of Mormon, however, does not seem to mention such devices, so they will not be considered further here.

5. There are many exceptions to this general rule. Arrows shot with an arrow guide can be as short as fifteen inches (see Latham and Paterson, *Saracen Archery*, 145-51, esp. 151), while some arrows are known to be as long as five feet (see George C. Stone, A *Glossary of the Construction, Decoration, and Use of Arms and Armor* [New York: Jack Brussel, 1961; reprint of 1934 ed.], 72). Nevertheless, the vast majority of arrows fall within the aforementioned limit.

6. On ranges for the English longbow, see Hardy, *The Longbow*, passim; for the composite bow, see Latham and Paterson, *Saracen Archery*, 109.

7. I would like to thank Paul E. Black for his assistance in principles of aerodynamics.

8. The following is a summary of references to bows and arrows in which the word is simply mentioned with no description of its use or effects. Other examples will be discussed in detail in the following text. Bows: Enos 1:20 (420 B.C.); Mosiah 9:16; 10:8 (180 B.C.); Alma 2:12; 3:5 (87 B.C.); Alma 43:20; 44:8 (74 B.C.); Helaman 1:14 (51 B.C.). Bows mentioned in quotations from the Old Testament: 2 Nephi 15:28 = Isaiah 5:28; 2 Nephi 17:24 = Isaiah 7:24; 2 Nephi 23:18 = Isaiah 13:18. Arrows: Mosiah 9:16; 10:8 (180 B.C.); Alma 2:12; 3:5 (87 B.C.), Alma 43:20 (74 B.C.); Helaman 1:14 (51 B.C.); Mormon 6:9 (385 A.D.). Arrows in quotations from the Old Testament: 2 Nephi 15:28 = Isaiah 5:28; 2 Nephi 17:24 = Isaiah 7:24.

9. I am here following the geographical theory that the core of Book of Mormon civilizations was in Mesoamerica (modern southern Mexico and Guatemala), as proposed by John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1985).

10. Chronologically ordered, the bow or arrow is mentioned in the following cases (all dates are approximate): 1 Nephi 16:14, 15, 18, 21, 23 (590 B.C.); Enos 1:20 (420 B.C.); Jarom 1:8 (400 B.C.); Mosiah 9:16; 10:8 (180 B.C.); Alma 2:12; 3:5; 17:7; 43:20; 44:8; 49:2, 4, 19, 22, 24; 50:4 (90-70 B.C.); Helaman 1:14 (51 B.C.); Helaman 16:2, 6 (6 B.C.); Mormon 6:9 (385 A.D.).

11. For details, see Gad Rausing, *The Bow: Some Notes on Its Origin and Development* (Acta Archaeologica Lundensia) no. 6 (Lund, Sweden: Gleerup, 1967); for a more general discussion, see Arther Ferrill, *The Origins of War: From the Stone Age to Alexander the Great* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 17-26, esp. 18-21.

12. Additional evidence and discussion of ancient Near Eastern bows and archery can be found in Yigael Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands*, 2 vols. paginated sequentially (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), 295-96. Illustrations of archery from ancient artwork can be found on pp. 250, 252, 295-96, 299-300, 302-3, 314, 327, 334, 337-40, 346, 348-49, 358, 365-67, 383-93, 398, 401-3, 407-10, 41625, 430-31, 434-35, 442-45, 449-53, 458, 460-64.

13. See Stone, *Glossary*, 134, and his fig. 171.4.

14. Ralph W. F. Payne-Gallwey, *The Crossbow: Mediaeval and Modern, Military and Sporting* (New York: Bramhall House, 1958), passim; Leonid Tarassuk and Claude Blair, eds., *The Complete Encyclopedia of Arms and Weapons* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1986), 146.

15. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 2 vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 1:243. A similar use of the word "steel bow" is found in the Hindu Agni Purana, edited in its final form in the eighth century A.D., but reflecting much earlier material. This work (chap. 245, vs. 4) mentions composite bows made of horn and wood, with other bows of gold, silver, copper, and steel, clearly referring to metal covering and decoration of bows (*Agni puranam*, tr. Manmatha Nath Dutt Shastri, 2 vols., 2nd ed. [Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1967], 2:885).

16. Compare Longman and Walrond, *Archery*, 302, for a list of a number of common circumstances in which bows might break.

17. Taybugha, translated in Latham and Paterson, *Saracen Archery*, 94.

18. Latham and Paterson, *Saracen Archery*, 90-91, 99.

19. For an interesting review of some of the cultural implications of the incident of the breaking of Nephi's bow, see Nahum Waldman, "The Breaking of the Bow," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 69 (October 1978): 82-88, available as a F.A.R.M.S. reprint, 1978, with an introduction to and comparison with the Book of Mormon by Alan Goff and John W. Welch, "The Breaking of the Bow: A Suggested Ancient Near Eastern Symbolism in 1 Nephi 16." For a general introduction to the importance of the bow as a symbol weapon of authority, see Hugh Nibley, "The Arrow, the Hunter, and the State," *Western Political Quarterly* 2 (1949): 328-44.

20. For the medieval view, see Taybugha, translated in Latham and Paterson, *Saracen Archery*, 94; for the modern perspective, see Longman and Walrond, *Archery*, 300-303.

21. Longman and Walrond, 300.

22. Ibid., 27-46, provides a discussion of many types of bows made from wood.

23. Taybugha, translated in Latham and Paterson, *Saracen Archery*, 6, with commentary on 10-11.

24. Anonymous, translated in Nabih Faris and Robert Elmer, *Arab Archery* (Princeton: Princetpn University Press, 1945), 10-11.

25. Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites*, vol. 5 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1988); Lynn and Hope Hilton, *In Search of Lehi's Trail* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976).

26. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziya (died 1350 A.D.), *Al-Furusiyya* (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-ʿAlmiyya, 1976), 103.

27. Taybugha, translated in Latham and Paterson, *Saracen Archery,* 24.

28. See especially Wallace McLeod, *Composite Bows from the Tomb of Tut'ankhamun,* Tut'ankhamun's Tomb Series, no. 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970); and McLeod, "Were Egyptian Composite Bows Made in Asia?" 19-23.

29. Wallace McLeod, "Tutankhamun's Self Bows," *Journal of the Society of Archer Antiquarians* 24 (1981): 41.

30. Two examples of such tomb illustrations from the fifteenth century B.C., can be found in Wallace McLeod, "Were Egyptian Composite Bows made in Asia?" *Journal of the Society of Archer Antiquarians* 12 (1969): 19-23.

31. James D. Nations and John E. Clark, "The Bows and Arrows of the Lacandon Maya," *Archaeology* 36 (January/February 1983): 38.

32. Faris and Elmer, *Arab Archery,* 11; see also Longman and Walrond, *Archery,* 28-46.

33. Longman and Walrond, *Archery,* 304-5.

34. For a discussion of why Nephi made a new arrow for his new bow, see the appendix.

35. Longman and Walrond, *Archery,* 28-29.

36. Latayne C. Scott, *The Mormon Mirage: A Former Mormon Tells Why She Left the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing, 1979), 83.

37. Paul Tolstoy, "Utilitarian Artifacts of Central Mexico," *Archaeology of Northern Mesoamerica, Pt. 1,* ed. Gordon F. Ekholm and Ignacio Bernal, in Robert Wauchope, ed., *Handbook of Middle American Indians,* vol. 10 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), 281- 83.

38. George C. Vaillant, *Excavations at Ticoman* (New York: American Museum of Natural History Anthropological Papers, 1931), vol. 32, pt. 1.

39. Sigvald Linne, *Archaeological Researches at Teotihuacan, Mexico* (Stockholm: Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, 1934) n.s., Publication 1.

40. Alfred V. Kidder, *The Artifacts of Uaxactun, Guatemala* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1947), Publication 576.

41. Another way to express this idea is that the bow was more widely used during the period of the Book of Mormon than after it.

42. Dee Ann Suhm, A. D. Krieger, and Edward B. Jelks, "An Introductory Handbook of Texas Archaeology," *Bulletin of the Texas Archaeological Society* 2 (1954): 529.

43. Tolstoy, "Utilitarian Artifacts," 282-83.

44. R. S. MacNeish, A. Nelken-Terner, and I. W. Johnson, *The Prehistory of the Tehuacan Valley: Vol. 2: Nonceramic Artifacts* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 55.

45. J. Eric S. Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: An Introduction* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), has been the standard text on the subject. However, there have been many recent developments in the study of the Mayan writing system. See now, David H. Kelley, *Deciphering the Maya Script* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976); and Linda Schele, *Notebook for Maya Hieroglyphic Writing* (Austin: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas, 1986).

46. Tolstoy, "Utilitarian Artifacts," 280, fig. 3Q, with discussion on p. 283; cf. John L. Sorenson, "Digging into the Book of Mormon," *Ensign* 14 (September 1984): 34; and Florencia Muller, "Instrumetla y Armas," in *Teotihuacán: Onceava Mesa Redonda* (Mexico: Sociedad Mexicana de Antropologa, 1966), 231.

47. Compare Linda Schele and Mary E. Miller, *The Blood of Kings: Dynasty and Ritual in Maya Art* (Fort Worth, Texas: Kimbell Art Museum, 1986), 41-44.

48. J. G. D. Clark, "Neolithic Bows from Somerset England, and the Prehistory of Archery in North-western Europe," *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 29 (1963): 50-90.

49. MacNeish, *Nonceramic Artifacts*, 161.

50. Fenenga Franklin, "The Weights of Chipped Stone Points: A Clue to Their Function," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 9 (1953): 309-23. I would like to thank John L. Sorenson for this reference.

51. Jim Browne, "Projectile Points," *American Antiquity* 5/3 (1940): 210.

52. T. M. Hamilton, *Native American Bows* (York, Pennsylvania: George Shumway, 1972), referenced in Christopher Bergman, "Palaeolithic Composite Points" *Journal of the Society of Archer Antiquarians* 27 (1984): 21; Tolstoy, "Utilitarian Artifacts," 281, referencing other studies.

53. Antonio de Solis y Rivadeneyra, quoted by Ross Hassig, *Aztec Warfare: Imperial Expansion and Political Control* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 15.

54. The *Rigveda* 6.75.15 (India, fifteenth to tenth centuries B.C.) mentions the use of an arrowhead of horn; Kautilya's *Artha-sastra*, book 2, ch. 18 (India, fourth century B.C.) mentions arrowheads of bone and wood; the *Mahabharata* (Dronaparva, 188.11) (India, third century B.C. to third century A.D.) also mentions bone arrowheads. All of these examples are concurrent with the use of metal arrowheads. In Africa, arrowheads of thorn and other materials were used along with iron arrowheads (see Abu Hamid al-Gharnati, *Tuhfat alalbab*, in J. F. P. Hopkins, tr., *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981], 133).

55. Christian Feest, *The Art of War* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 66.

56. On the Aztec use of the *atlatl*, bow, and sling, see Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, 75-81.

57. Jacques Soustelle, *The Daily Life of the Aztecs* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), 219-20, quoting Bernardino de Sahagun, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva Espana*, 5 vols. (Mexico: Pedro Robredo, 1938), 3:118-19.

58. George C. Vaillant, *Aztecs of Mexico* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1950), 210.

59. Peter Connolly, *Greece and Rome at War* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1981), 239.

60. Alfred T. Bryant, *The Zulu People As They Were before the White Man Came* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1970; reprint of 1948 ed.), 505.

61. There is some slight textual evidence from the Bible that this may indeed have been the case. In KJV Old Testament terminology, arrows are invariably "shot" at someone (see Robert Young, *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982], 881-82), while in the Book of Mormon, arrows are most often "cast" or "thrown," which could imply an action different than the standard shooting of an arrow. Examples include "cast[ing] their stones and their arrows" (Alma 49:4), "casting over stones and arrows" (Alma 49:19), and "stones and arrows which were thrown at them" (Alma 49:22). On the other hand, the choice of words here is probably somewhat arbitrary, since Helaman 16:2 makes a clear distinction between throwing stones and shooting arrows when the Nephites "cast stones at him … [and] shot arrows at him." Furthermore, the Hebrew word for shooting arrows, *rama*, is also the standard word for throwing.

62. Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, 123, quoting the Anonymous Conqueror.

63. Temple, *The Genius of China*, 241. The Chinese had invented the earliest type of "proto-gun" by about 905 A.D. For a detailed and technical description of gunpowder weapons among the Chinese, see Joseph Needham et al., Pt. 7, Sect. 30, "Military Technology, The Gunpowder Epic," in *Science and Civilization in China:* Vol. 5, *Chemistry and Chemical Technology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

64. Widespread examples of literary works using weaponry of their own day in describing ancient warfare can be found in Homer's *Iliad*, *Vergil's Aeneid*, Firdawsi's *Shah-nameh*, the Indian *Mahabharata*, Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, and so on.

65. An alternative explanation for the existence of such weapon lists is that they are the product of Joseph Smith's translation efforts. However, such a theory suggests that Joseph had a much wider leeway in translating than is probable.

66. "Nephi's Arrows," F.A.R.M.S. *Update*, July 1984, with a brief synopsis in "Nephi's Arrows Create Solid Bull's-eye," *Insights*, October 1984, 2.

67. See Taybugha, translated in Latham and Paterson, *Saracen Archery*, 24-33, for a medieval discussion of this question.

Armor in the Book of Mormon

William J. Hamblin

When most Americans think of armor, the image that usually comes to mind is the late medieval Western European "knight in shining armor." The historical reality is, of course, much more complex. There have been thousands of different types of armor used throughout history, with the Western-European style of heavy plate armor a rare, if not unique, phenomenon. When we attempt to understand the nature and use of armor in the Book of Mormon, we must take care not to fall victim to anachronistic preconceptions based on the cultural prejudices of our Western-European historical heritage.[1] Instead, we must begin with a proper understanding of the definition and wide range of types of armor that have been used throughout history.[2]

Armor in History

Armor can be defined as "any equipment designed to protect the body in combat."[3] Although armor varies widely throughout history and among cultures, it can be subclassified according to various technical characteristics (see fig. 1). Certain types of armor are designed to protect specific parts of the body. For example, a helmet is armor for the head, while armor for the chest and abdomen is called a cuirass or breastplate in English.[4] Some armor is classified according to the material it is made from, such as chain mail (which is composed of small interlocking rings of metal) or scale armor (which is composed of small overlapping plates of leather, metal, or other material).[5] The materials or methods of manufacture also frequently define the type of armor. Thus, leather armor is subdivided into many categories, such as *lorica*, a Roman armor composed of broad overlapping strips of leather, or *cuir-bouilli*, leather hardened by boiling in wax.

Men began wearing armor in Neolithic times. This early armor was made by simply tying a thick animal skin around the shoulders. The earliest artistic examples of armor among civilized people from both ancient Sumer and Egypt are simple animal skins forming cloaks or garments of some sort (see fig. 2). As time passed, a proliferation of specialized types, styles, and materials of armor swiftly developed in different regions of the world.

Nearly every conceivable material has been used for armor at various times and places. Although most people generally think of metal as the primary material used in making armor, animal hides and thick padded fabric have been by far the most widespread materials, due largely to the great expense of metal armor. Even in late medieval Europe, which probably witnessed the proliferation of full metal armor more than any other period and place in history, only the wealthy and elite soldiers could afford the elaborate full metal-plate armor.[6] Many other materials were widely used to make armor, including animal skins and feathers, wood, horn, bone, stone, silk, leaves, and other parts of plants. Even paper was used to make armor in medieval China.

Armor is frequently designed to afford protection against one specific type of weapon. To obtain complete protection therefore, often a soldier had to wear two or three different types of armor in overlapping layers. Chain mail, for example, provides a good defense against some types of projectiles and cutting weapons but affords little protection against the blows of a mace or club. This meant that mail was usually worn over some type of thick padded garment. Islamic warriors in the late Middle Ages frequently wore padded coats covered with mail and had additional plates of metal to protect their chests. Thus, as warfare became increasingly complex, new types of armor and weapons tended to develop in cyclic relationship to each other in a type of arms race. Any change in the technology of either armor or weapons engendered a related change in many other aspects of military technology.

It is important to emphasize here that no single type of armor can be said to offer the best protection. The selection of the type of armor that a particular culture would use was based on numerous important factors. At the most basic level were the problems of technological skill, the availability of materials, and the time needed to make the armor. If metal were scarce, expensive, or difficult to smelt or fashion, other materials were substituted. Soldiers also had to consider the relative cost effectiveness of more expensive types of armor. The tactical functions and military practices of an army were also frequently a factor in the type of armor they would use. A major consideration was the need for free movement of the body. For example, medieval Islamic cavalry were expected to be able to twist their torso while mounted on a horse so they could shoot arrows backward in the famous Parthian Shot. This would be impossible in a Western-European style suit of full metal-plate armor, which was therefore never adopted among the Muslims. Climate was likewise an important consideration. As a general rule, the warmer the climate, the lighter the forms of armor.

Another important factor to bear in mind is that throughout history the efficacy of armor was often thought to be as much the product of religious or magical properties of the armor as of the physical characteristics. Thus the inclusion of various types of talismanic markings on armor to insure divine or magical protection is almost a universal phenomenon. The best-known example of this use of talismanic markings is the appearance of the cross on Christian armor, shields, and military clothing during the Crusades. Muslim warriors frequently went into battle with verses from the Qur'an sewn into their armor. In East Asia, the dragon motif was frequently used on armor as a symbol of power, good luck, and immortality.[7]

In summary, the type of armor a culture uses is thus dependent on numerous factors. The materials, structure, and style of armor are unique to each period, culture, and region of history. Indeed, armor can be used much like pottery to distinguish among cultures and periods of time. Thus, although Joseph Smith could not have been aware of this fact, when the Book of Mormon includes descriptions of armor, it is providing us with a type of "fingerprint" by which we can attempt to locate the time and place of origin of the text. We will next turn to an examination of what types of armor are described in the Book of Mormon.

Types of Armor in the Book of Mormon

There are eight distinct terms for armor mentioned in the Book of Mormon: breastplate (11 times), shields (10 times), armor (9 times),[8] head-plates (7 times), arm-shields (2 times), animal skins (2 times), thick clothing (2 times), and bucklers (1 time) (see appendix for an index of passages). Most of these references mention armor only in passing, providing no details as to the nature of the items mentioned. Occasionally, however, enough incidental detail is provided to allow us to reconstruct a basic picture of Nephite armor.

Materials Used for Armor

The Book of Mormon mentions several different materials used in the construction of armor. The most common material for armor is animal skins, which, according to the text, only the Lamanites used.[9]

The Nephites, on the other hand, are described as using special "thick clothing" as part of their armor (Alma 43:19). Generally speaking, however, we are left with little evidence as to the other materials used to make Nephite armor. The frequent use of the word "plate" in head-plates and breastplates implies some type of rigid armor, such as wood, horn, treated leather, stone, or metal. Indeed, the head-plates are said to have been "smit[ten] in two" by Lamanite blows (Alma 43:44). Archaeological evidence from Mesoamerica suggests that

metals were not extensively used for armor, and it is therefore likely that most Nephite head-plates and breastplates were for the most part nonmetallic.[10]

The single Book of Mormon reference to the use of metal armor comes from a very ambiguous passage in Mosiah 8:10. King Limhi had sent an expedition to search for the city of Zarahemla. Instead, they discovered the ruins of the destroyed Jaredite civilization, returning to Limhi with several artifacts from these ruins. Their discoveries included "breastplates, which are large, and they are of brass and of copper, and are perfectly sound" (Mosiah 8:10). The meaning of this passage warrants close examination. First, it refers to Jaredite rather than Nephite armor and therefore gives us no information about the materials used among the Nephites and Lamanites. Nonetheless, the breastplates in question are clearly made of metal. But this does not necessarily imply that most Jaredite armor was made of metal.

First, it is by no means certain that the Limhi expedition correctly identified the things they found. They may have believed that the objects they discovered were indeed pieces of decaying breastplates and swords, but this is by no means certain. Correctly identifying the original purpose of a partially ruined artifact is frequently a difficult and uncertain process for which archaeologists are trained for years. Why are we to assume that the Limhi expedition had the expertise to accurately determine the original purposes of the objects they discovered?

Second, the Limhi expedition discovered an area of bones and ruins (see Mosiah 8:8). Most of the artifacts were probably in a state of decay. It would therefore probably not have been worth collecting decayed nonmetallic armor. Furthermore, from all the things they discovered, Limhi's expedition chose to return with only three items: the twenty-four gold plates of Ether, brass and copper breastplates, and some rusted pieces of swords, implying that they were scavenging for metal and that metal was therefore something unusual and rare — even a piece of rusting metal was worth recovering.

Thus, the expedition claimed the breastplates were "large." Large is, of course, a relative term. To a society where metal is rare, a large piece of metal might be only a few inches wide.

Third, we might ask what these Jaredite breastplates looked like. We have no explicit evidence from the text, but I will suggest below that the Nephite breastplate can be equated with Maya pectoral breastplates, which were hung around the neck and covered the middle chest. If this is true, then a Jaredite breastplate of metal could be thought of as a medallion or disk hung around the neck either entirely or partially composed of metal. Indeed, we have archaeological evidence of precisely such breastplates from the Olmec civilization, which is generally equated with the Jaredites.[11] Note also that metal was used for armor among the elites of pre-Columbian Mesoamerica.[12] The Spaniard Antonio de Solis y Rivadeneyra described the use of metal armor among the Aztecs, who had "Breast-Plates, and Shields of Wood or Tortoise-Shell, adorned with Plates of such Metal as they could get," which was usually gold or silver.[13]

Finally, the very fact that the expedition mentioned metal can be interpreted as an implication that metal was unusual. As a modern analogy: if we see a car somewhere, we generally don't describe it as being made of metal. We simply say we saw a car. On the other hand, if the car were made of wood, we would be sure to mention it, since wooden cars are rare. Thus the fact that those in Limhi's expedition were intent on describing the breastplates as being "large" and "of metal" implies to me that most breastplates were neither large nor of metal. A metal breastplate was something worth writing home about. The material of Nephite and Lamanite breastplates is never mentioned precisely because Nephites universally knew what a breastplate was made of.

Breastplates

Breastplates are the most common type of armor mentioned in the Book of Mormon.[14] Most passages simply mention the use of breastplates and therefore offer no details as to their structure or material. Breastplates were said to protect the wearers from enemy weapons—"shielded from the strokes of the Lamanites by their breastplates" (Alma 43:38; 49:24)—but they could nonetheless be penetrated—"they did pierce many of their breastplates" (Alma 43:44). Breastplates were known to the Jaredites, at least in the last phases of their civilization (see Ether 15:15). The earliest mention of Nephite armor comes in the late second century B.C. (see Mosiah 21:7). By the time of the great wars of the first century B.C., the Nephites under Moroni had developed what was to become the standard armament for their civilization: the breastplate, head-plate, and shield (see Alma 43:19, 21, 38).

Up until the early first century B.C., the Lamanites do not seem to have used armor extensively, for the Book of Mormon frequently refers to their nakedness and lack of armor (see Alma 3:5; 43:20, 21, 37). Zerahemnah specifically blamed his defeat at the hands of Moroni's army around 74 B.C. on the superiority of Nephite armor, especially their breastplates and shields (see Alma 44:9). Within a few years of this defeat, the Lamanites had copied Nephite technology and equipped themselves with similar armor (see Alma 49:6). Thereafter all sides in warfare seem to have had essentially the same defensive equipment (see Helaman 1:14; 3 Nephi 3:26; 4:7).

Shields, Arm–Shields, and Bucklers

Shields are the second most commonly mentioned form of armor in the Book of Mormon:[15] Obtaining any precise information about the nature of shields from the text is impossible, although a few characteristics seem to be implied. The text mentions "all manner of shields of every kind" (Helaman 1:14), implying that the Book of Mormon peoples used a wide variety of shields. Indeed, the text mentions several types.

"Shields to defend [the] head" (Alma 43:19) may refer to head-plates or some other type of special defense, but more likely they refer to the fact that an ordinary shield can be raised over the head for protection. The Book of Mormon mentions an interesting form of defense called the arm-shield (see Alma 43:19, 38). Finally, there is one passing reference to a buckler (see 3 Nephi 3:26), which was used in conjunction with the armor of the Gadianton robbers. Technically, a buckler is a small shield designed specifically for defense against the sword, but in general it can refer to any type of small shield that is strapped to the forearm.[16] There are no specific details about either of these two types of shields in the text, but some possible examples from Mesoamerica will be discussed later.

Head–Plates

The only technical term used in the Book of Mormon to describe armor for the head is head-plates.[17] How should we distinguish between an ordinary helmet and the Nephite head-plate? First, a helmet is generally composed of a single piece of material that protects most if not all of the head. Nephite head-plates should probably be thought of as either a single plate or a combination of several plates somehow mounted or tied together. The main technical distinction is that head-plates probably do not provide all-around protection for the wearer's head. Furthermore, rather than resting on the skull like a normal helmet, Nephite head-plates are described as being "fastened on" the head (Alma 46:13). Head-plates were also capable of being broken in two by forceful blows from enemy weapons (see Alma 43:44).

Nephite System of Armor

How were all of these pieces of armor combined into a unified system of personal defense? There are several descriptions of what could be called the fully armored Nephite warrior. Most passages mention troops armed with a combination of special clothing, shields, breastplates, and head-plates (see Alma 43:19, 38, 44; 44:9; 49:6, 24; Helaman 1:14; Ether 15:15). The two most complete descriptions are found in Alma. In Alma 43:19, "Moroni had prepared his people with breastplates and with arm-shields, yea, and also shields to defend their heads, and also they were dressed with thick clothing." On another occasion, Moroni "fastened on his head-plate, and his breastplate, and his shields, and girded on his armor about his loins" (Alma 46:13). Both of these passages mention four types of armor: a basic body armor of thick cloth, a breastplate, a head-plate, and shields. As will be described later, these are precisely the same four parts that appear in Maya armor.

As I interpret this evidence, the base layer of protection was a garment composed of thick fabric or skins (see Alma 43:19; 49:6). This armor covered only the main torso or, as the Book of Mormon describes it, the "more vital parts of the body" (Alma 43:38). The text also frequently refers to girding armor or skins about the loins (see Alma 43:20; 46:13, 21; 3 Nephi 4:7), which I interpret to mean wrapping some type of fabric or skin about the waist or torso. The legs were clearly not completely covered by armor, as they were susceptible to injury when the upper body was not. According to Alma 49:24, "there were about fifty [Nephites] who were wounded, ... but they were shielded by their shields, and their breastplates, and their head-plates, insomuch that their wounds were upon their legs, many of which were very severe."

Over this base layer of thick clothing or skins, the warrior attached several types of "plates" to protect specific areas: the breastplate, head-plate, and perhaps arm-shields. Finally, various types of shields were used, including at least the arm-shields and bucklers. How does this system of Nephite armor compare with the armor used in Pre-Classic Mesoamerica?

Armor of Mesoamerica

Since we lack detailed narrative texts from Pre-Classic Mesoamerica, we must rely primarily on artistic representations, which become numerous only in the Classic period, and on written sources from the period of the Spanish conquests and colonization, which occurred over a thousand years after the end of the Book of Mormon. Nonetheless, there is good evidence that many elements of the basic patterns of Maya, Toltec, and Aztec kingship and warfare remained unchanged from late Book of Mormon times until the end of the Classic period. For example, the Leiden Plaque, from Tikal in A.D. 320, shows many of the basic iconographic features of Maya kingship and armor seen in later Classic Maya art (see fig. 3).[18]

Cautiously examining Classic Maya art of a few centuries after the Book of Mormon can thus be useful in order to obtain some ideas about armor several centuries earlier. Also bear in mind that most Maya art depicts royalty and that the clothing, armor, and headdresses of the average Maya would have been much simpler.[19] Finally, despite the basic similarities, it is important to emphasize that the Nephites were not the Maya, and, although the basic pattern of armor may have been similar, there were undoubtedly numerous important differences. With these caveats in mind, I will examine some of the Mesoamerican evidence for each of the four classes of Nephite armor mentioned above.

Materials Used in Making Armor

Just as in the Book of Mormon, the most common material used for armor among the Maya and Aztecs was thick fabric or animal skins. The most basic form of armor was a thick sleeveless shirt made of cotton or other woven

material.[20] Schele and Miller describe this as a "shawl-like wrap of cotton armor over a *xicolli*, or jerkin, with a woven mat design."[21] De Landa describes the Maya's "protective jackets of cotton (known as *ichca–huipilli* among the Aztecs), quilted in double thicknesses, which were very strong."[22] There are numerous examples of this thick fabric jacket in Maya art (see fig. 4).[23] Animal skins would frequently be used in place of, or in addition to, the thick fabric jacket, a phenomenon that is again well represented in Maya art and other Mesoamerican art. De Landa wrote, "[The Maya wore] skins of tigers and lions, when they possessed them."[24] Some Aztecs also wore leather armor over their quilted cotton *ichcahuipilli*.[25]

Breastplates

One of the most significant elements of an elite Maya's dress was the breastplate or pectoral. It is difficult to examine any Maya sculpture or painting without finding examples of these breastplates (see figs. 4-5).[26] These breastplates were generally made of wood, bone, shells, jade, and other stones, as well as various pieces of metal.[27] They were frequently elaborately carved with decorations of gods, hieroglyphs, animals, and human skulls. Most depictions of Maya warriors show them wearing such breastplates. Probably the breastplates of the Nephites and Lamanites were basically similar to those found in the Maya artifacts.

Head–Plates

Headgear among the Maya was used to demonstrate status and could therefore be extremely elaborate. When examining Maya headgear as depicted in art, one ought to bear in mind that nearly all figures in Maya art represent royalty and the elites. The ordinary defensive armor for heads of commoners would have been much simpler. Nonetheless, we can clearly see the basic pattern. At the simplest level, "both men and women used headbands to hold their long hair away from their faces. Made of leather or cloth, these bands were often mounted with ornate carved jade plaques,"[28] which could also be called plates (see fig. 5).

The next level of complexity in headgear was to create a wooden or cloth hat upon which were mounted small plates of jade, shell, or metal. "Ornate headdresses were constructed on wooden frames and tied under the chin with straps.... The headdresses of kins and warriors .. . [were] made of jade or shell plaques mounted on a wooden or mat armature" (see figs. 3-4).[29] Finally, elite Maya would add numerous types of decoration, including carvings, glyphs, feathers, and cloth. Though Maya defensive and ritual headgear was complex, it centered around defensive "plates" of stone, wood, or metal that were either mounted on pieces of cloth tied to the head or mounted on frames of wood. Such headgear could certainly be accurately described as a system of defensive "head-plates" and could be contrasted with ancient Near Eastern headgear that I will describe later.

Shields, Arm-Shields, and Bucklers

There are numerous types of shields depicted in Maya art. One was a large, square fabric shield, probably used mainly as a defense against missiles. The second was a smaller round shield that was made of woven reeds or that was a wooden frame covered with animal skin and often profusely decorated with paint and feathers. De Landa describes them like this: "For defense they had shields made of split and woven reeds and covered with deer hide."[30] The Aztecs also used the same basic types of shields.[31] The smaller round shield may correspond to the Book of Mormon "buckler."[32] The small round shield strapped to the forearm (see fig. 6) corresponds nicely with the "arm-shield" mentioned in the Book of Mormon. The Aztecs also had special types of armor for their arms

(*matemecatl*) and wrists (*matzopetztli*).[33] At any rate, whatever specific correlations may be possible, there were clearly several types of Maya shields that played an important part in personal defense.

The Maya System of Armor

The basic armament of the Maya is remarkably consistent with that described in the Book of Mormon. Both systems have a basic layer of fabric or animal skins. Plates of various types and materials are used to protect the chest and head, along with a large variety of shields. Indeed, Follett, in his detailed discussion of Maya armor, mentions only these same categories of armor: the thick garment, the mosaic helmet composed of numerous small plates, shields, and breastplates.[34]

Our final task is to compare the armor of the Book of Mormon and Maya with that of the ancient Near East. If Joseph Smith used the Bible as a major source for plagiarism when inventing the Book of Mormon, as many critics claim, we would expect the major terms for armor in the King James Bible to appear also in the Book of Mormon. In fact, this is not the case. Rather, Book of Mormon armor terminology differs from that of the King James Bible in precisely the terms for which Mesoamerican armor has no counterpart.

Armor of the Ancient Near East as Described in the Bible

Unless someone in Lehi's expedition were a professional soldier (for which there is no evidence), the group would have had great difficulty transferring any but the most basic armor-making skills and technology from the ancient Near East to Mesoamerica. Once in the New World, the Nephites would be forced to adapt their armor industries to the local resources, technology level, and military system. Thus we should expect to find the Nephites developing or adopting a system of armor that would become more and more compatible with the technology level, resources, and system of warfare in Mesoamerica. As time progressed, Nephite armor should show more in common with Mesoamerican than with Near Eastern armor. This is precisely what we find.

It is not necessary here to go into a detailed description of armor in the Near East in the seventh century B.C., which has been well documented both textually and archaeologically.[35] Instead, I would like to focus on the semantic question of comparing the King James translations of technical armor terminology with the armor terminology of the Book of Mormon:

Table 1. Comparison of Biblical and Book of

Mormon Armor Terminology

KJV Bible	*Book of Mormon*
armor	armor
—	arm-shield
breastplate	breastplate
buckler	buckler
coat of mail	—
greave	—
—	head-plate
helmet/helm	—
—	thick garments/clothing

We find that three biblical armor terms are not used in the Book of Mormon: coat of mail, greave, and helmet/helm. Likewise, three Book of Mormon armor terms are not found in the Bible: arm-shield, head-plate, and thick

clothing. The Book of Mormon terms have been discussed above, but the biblical terms require some additional attention.

The KJV coat of mail is a mistranslation of the Hebrew *siryôn*, which should properly be rendered as coat of scales: a leather jacket on which are sewn numerous small plates of metal. Such armor was in widespread use in the Near East in the seventh century B.C. but was unknown in ancient Mesoamerica. Coat of mail is the King James Version term used to describe the armor of Goliath in what is undoubtedly the best-known combat story of the Bible (see 1 Samuel 17:5). As such, the term would have been quite familiar to Joseph Smith, yet it never appears in the Book of Mormon.

The greave (Heb. *mitzhah)*, translated only once as *greave* in the KJV Old Testament (see 1 Samuel 17:6), was a special type of leg armor used to defend the shins of the lower legs. Although the Maya did wear a type of anklet that could be considered a greave, most Maya artwork clearly shows the legs as essentially unarmored.[36] The lack of leg armor among the Maya accords with the Book of Mormon description but is, contrary to the practice in the ancient Near East as described in the Bible.

Helmets (Heb. *qoba^c*) are armor for the head and were widespread in the ancient Near East, dating at least from the early third millennium B.C. Maya head armor could, of course, be called a helmet, as is done by most archaeologists. On the other hand, the structural differences between a Near Eastern helmet, which was a single piece of metal formed to rest on the head, and the Maya headgear, which consisted of many small plates mounted on cloth or wood, should be enough to justify the difference in terminology.

Thus one could argue that the armor terminology of the Book of Mormon accurately reflects many of the technical differences between armor in the ancient Near East and that in Mesoamerica. The Book of Mormon uses biblical terms when the armor from the ancient Near East and Mesoamerica are similar, but gives different terms when the armor differs and does not use biblical terms for types of Near Eastern armor that are not found in Mesoamerica.

The study of armor in the Book of Mormon points to the following conclusions. First, the Book of Mormon text presents an internally consistent description of armor that is also consistent with the general patterns of the use of armor in Pre-Modern times. Second, the description of armor in the Book of Mormon closely matches the patterns of armor used among Pre-Classic and Classic Mesoamericans. Finally, the armor terminology in the Book of Mormon differs from that of the KJV Bible in precisely those features where Mesoamerican armor differs most from ancient Near Eastern armor.

Appendix:

Critical Index to References

1. Book of Mormon Statements about Armor

Mosiah 8:10. [Mosiah's expedition into Zarahemla has] brought breastplates, which are large, and they are of brass and of copper, and are perfectly sound.

Mosiah 21:7. [The Nephites] gathered themselves together again, and put on their armor.

Alma 3:5. [The Lamanites] were naked, save it were skin which was girded about their loins, and also their armor, which was girded about them.

Alma 43:19. Moroni had prepared his people with breastplates and with arm-shields, yea, and also shields to defend their heads, and also they were dressed with thick clothing — *[20.]* Now the army of Zerahemnah was not prepared with any such thing; ... they were naked, save it were a skin which was girded about their loins; yea, all were naked, save it were the Zoramites and the Amalekites; *[21.]* but they were not armed with breastplates, nor shields — therefore, they were exceedingly afraid of the armies of the Nephites because of their armor.... *[37.]* [The Lamanites'] nakedness was exposed to the heavy blows of the Nephites.... *[38.]* There was now and then a man fell among the Nephites, by their swords and the loss of blood, ... the more vital parts of the body being shielded from the strokes of the Lamanites, by their breastplates, and their armshields, and their head-plates.... *[44.]* [The Lamanites] did smite in two many of their [the Nephite] head-plates, and they did pierce many of their breastplates, and they did smite off many of their arms.

Alma 44:9. [Zerahemnah said,] it is your breastplates and your shields that have preserved you.

Alma 46:13. [Moroni] fastened on his head-plate, and his breastplate, and his shields, and girded on his armor about his loins.... *[21.]* [The Nephites] came running together with their armor girded about their loins.

Alma 49:6. [The Lamanites] prepared themselves with shields, and with breastplates; and they had also prepared themselves with garments of skins, yea, very thick garments to cover their nakedness.... *[24.]* There were about fifty [Nephites] who were wounded, ... but they were shielded by their shields, and their breastplates, and their head-plates, insomuch that their wounds were upon their legs, many of which were very severe.

Helaman 1:14. [The Lamanites were armed] with head-plates, and with breastplates, and with all manner of shields of every kind.

3 Nephi 3:26. [The Gadiantons of Gidgiddoni were] strong with armor, and with shields, and with bucklers, after the manner of his instruction.

3 Nephi 4:7. They were girded about after the manner of robbers; and they had a lamb-skin about their loins, and they were dyed in blood, and their heads were shorn, and they had headplates upon them; and great and terrible was the appearance of the armies of Giddianhi, because of their armor, and because of their being dyed in blood.

Ether 15:15. [At their final battle, the Jaredites were] armed with weapons of war, having shields, and breastplates, and head-plates, and being clothed after the manner of war.... *[24.]* They contended in their might with their swords and with their shields, all that day.

2. References by Type of Armor

Shields. Alma 43:19, 21; 44:9; 46:13; 49:6, 24; Helaman 1:14; 3 Nephi 3:26; Ether 15:15, 24

Breastplates. Mosiah 8:10; Alma 43:19, 21, 38, 44; 44:9; 46:13; 49:6, 24; Helaman 1:14; Ether 15:15

Armor. 1 Nephi 4:19; 2 Nephi 1:23; Mosiah 21:7; Alma 3:5; 43:21; 46:13, 21; 3 Nephi 3:26; 4:7

Head-Plates. Alma 43:38, 44; 46:13; 49:24; Helaman 1:14; 3 Nephi 4:7; Ether 15:15

Arm-Shields. Alma 43:19, 38

Skins. Alma 49:6; 3 Nephi 4:7

Thick Clothing. Alma 43:19; 49:6

Bucklers. 3 Nephi 3:26

3. References to Armor according to Major Cultural Groups

Nephites. Mosiah 21:7; Alma 43:19, 38; 44:9; 46:13, 21; 49:24

Lamanites. Alma 3:5; 43:20, 21, 37, 44; 49:6; Helaman 1:14

Gadianton Robbers. 3 Nephi 3:26; 4:7

Jaredites. Mosiah 8:10; Ether 15:15, 24

Notes

1. One must take care to ignore the appallingly inaccurate renditions of arms and armor in the Arnold Friberg paintings found in many editions of the Book of Mormon (see paintings #3, facing p. 158; #5, facing p. 396; and # 8, facing p. 483).

2. For studies of arms and armor in various ancient and medieval civilizations, see Robert Elgood, *Islamic Arms and Armour* (London: Scholar Press, 1979); A. V. B. Norman and Don Pottinger, *English Weapons and Warfare: 449-1660* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1979, reprint of 1966 ed.); H. Russell Robinson, *Oriental Armour*, Arms and Armour Series (London: Jenkins, 1967); H. Russell Robinson, *Japanese Arms and Armor* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1969); Anthony M. Snodgrass, *Arms and Armour of the Greeks* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967); JwingMing Yang, *Introduction to Ancient Chinese Weapons* (Burbank, California: Unique Publications, 1985).

3. Leonid Tarassuk and Claude Blair, eds., *The Complete Encyclopedia of Arms and Weapons* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1986), 22.

4. Compare ibid., 254-60 (helmet); 148-51 (cuirass); 102-4 (breastplate).

5. Compare ibid., 341-42 (mail); 416 (scale).

6. Norman and Pottinger, *English Weapons and Warfare,* 45, 6566, 121-22.

7. On the dragon motif in East Asia, see Edward H. Schafer, *The Divine Woman: Dragon Ladies and Rain Maidens in T'ang Literature* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1980, reprint of 1973 ed.), 15-37.

8. Of the nine references — 1 Nephi 4:19 (Laban's armor in Israel); 2 Nephi 1:23 (metaphorical use); Mosiah 21:7; Alma 3:5; 43:21; 46:13; 46:21; 3 Nephi 3:26; 4:7 — two are clearly generic references to specific types of armor mentioned in previous phrases (see Alma 43:21; 3 Nephi 4:7).

9. Skins are mentioned in Alma 3:5; 43:20; 49:6; and 3 Nephi 4:7. It is sometimes unclear if the skins were just the normal clothing or if they were considered some form of protection. Quite probably they served both functions — the normal clothing was also the standard armor. Note that Gadianton robbers are described as having "a lamb-skin about their loins, and they were dyed in blood" (3 Nephi 4:7), which may be related to the blood sacrifices and the staining of an animal skin in blood mentioned in the *Popol Vuh (Popul Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Ancient Quiché Maya*, tr. Delia Goetz and Sylvanus G. Morley [Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950], 194).

10. On the question of metal in pre-Columbian America, see John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1985), 278-88, and the references in his notes.

11. For an illustration of an Olmec metal mediallion hung on the chest, see Michael D. Coe et al., *The Olmec and Their Neighbors* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1981), 141, fig. 25.

12. Ross Hassig, *Aztec Warfare: Imperial Expansion and Political Control* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 90.

13. Cited in ibid., 15. Similar descriptions of the occasional use of metal as armor among the Aztecs can be found in ibid., 123.

14. Mentioned eleven times: Mosiah 8:10 (describing Jaredite armor); Alma 43:19, 21, 38, 44; 44:9; 46:13; 49:6, 24; Helaman 1:14; Ether 15:15.

15. Mentioned ten times: Alma 43:19, 21; 44:9; 46:13; 49:6, 24; Helaman 1:14; 3 Nephi 3:26; Ether 15:15, 24.

16. Tarassuk and Blair, *Complete Encyclopedia of Arms and Weapons*, 105-6.

17. Mentioned seven times: Alma 43:38, 44; 46:13; 49:24; Helaman 1:14; 3 Nephi 4:7; Ether 15:15.

18. Linda Schele and Mary Ellen Miller, *The Blood of Kings: Dynasty and Ritual in Maya Art* (New York: George Braziller, 1986), 109-11, 118 n. 8, 120-21, 129, 319-20.

19. Prescott H. F. Follett, "War and Weapons of the Maya," *Middle American Papers, Middle American Research Series*, Publication no. 4 (New Orleans: Tulane University of Louisiana, 1932), 395-97.

20. Ibid., 394-96. *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*, tr. Adrian Recinos and Delia Goetz (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), 52 n. 41, has an important discussion of these jackets. Compare also ibid., 57, 108. Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, 88, gives an excellent discussion with references to Aztec and Spanish sources.

21. Schele and Miller, *The Blood of Kings*, 211.

22. Diego de Landa, *Yucatan before and after the Conquest*, tr. William Gates (New York: Dover, 1978; reprint of 1937 ed.), 50. De Landa's manuscript was written in 1566.

23. For Aztec examples, see Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, figs. 31-33.

24. De Landa, *Yucatan before and after the Conquest*, 50.

25. Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, 88.

26. Schele and Miller, *The Blood of Kings*, 70, and index. Follett, "War and Weapons of the Maya," 397, fig. 43, provides an excellent example of a Maya warrior with a large breastplate. Follett describes this type of armor as a "breast-plate," 395 and 401, and also as a "front-shield," 397. Breastplates are mentioned in *The Annals of the Cakchiquels, 62.*

27. Schele and Miller, *The Blood of Kings*, 74 n. 6, report several excavations of pectorals with metal.

28. Ibid., 68.

29. Ibid., 68-69. Follett, "War and Weapons of the Maya," 397, discusses metal mounted on wooden helmets. Headgear made at least partially of metal is described in *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*, 102, 108; and *Popul Vuh*, 201. For Aztec headgear, see Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, 123.

30. De Landa, *Yucatan before and after the Conquest*, 50; see Follett, "War and Weapons of the Maya," 399-401.

31. Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, 85-88.

32. Recinos and Goetz, in their translation of *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*, use the term "buckler" to describe Maya military equipment, 50, 53.

33. Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, 90.

34. Follett, "War and Weapons of the Maya," 394-95 (thick garment); 397-98 (mosaic helmet); 399-400 (shields); 395, 401 (breastplates).

35. For an excellent general overview, see the profusely illustrated work Yigel Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands*, 2 vols. (paginated sequentially) (New York: McGraw Hill, 1963), with full bibliography up to the time of publication. For detailed word studies on biblical terminology for armor, see J. W. Wevers, "Weapons and Implements of War," in George A. Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 4 vols. plus supplement (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1962), 4:820-825, and the references mentioned therein.

36. Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, 88-90. On the other hand, the Aztecs, over a thousand years after the Book of Mormon, did have a type of greave and leg defense.

Fortifications in the Book of Mormon Account Compared with Mesoamerican Fortifications

John L. Sorenson

The Book of Mormon makes abundant reference to the construction and military use of fortifications by the Nephites and Lamanites. From the point of view of placing the scripture in its correct external setting, the remains of fortifications will be among the most useful materials that archaeologists can use to compare the excavated record of cultural history with the scriptural record.

This study compares what the Book of Mormon says about fortifications with what is known from archaeology and history about fortifying in Mesoamerica before the arrival of the Spanish. (I take central and southern Mesoamerica to constitute the "land of promise" of the Nephites, where the New World events told in the Book of Mormon took place.) The prevailing expert view has long been that Mesoamerica was largely free from military conflict. In recent years that view has begun to change to a picture more like that conveyed in the scripture — that warfare was a frequent or even dominant concern with profound consequences for ancient society. This article provides documentation for this growing congruence.

Mesoamerican Fortifications

The stereotype is firmly entrenched that, except for the centuries immediately preceding the Spanish Conquest (termed the Post-Classic period), warfare was unimportant or virtually absent.[1] Even serious scholarship from two generations ago — by Armillas, Rands, and Palerm[2] — that demonstrated the contrary was generally ignored, so strong was the bias. By the 1960s, some Mayanists had begun to acknowledge that military activity probably had some significance in their area even prior to the Post-Classic period (A.D. 1000-1521). Webster's important publication on his excavations at Becan,[3] which showed that this city in the middle of the Yucatan Peninsula was dramatically fortified before A.D. 300, ought to have given the *coup de grace* to the old notions, yet even now most Mesoamericanists pay little attention to war as a factor in the area's cultural development.

I have examined virtually all the relevant literature on this matter. Table 1 includes thirty-four regions of Mesoamerica in which more than two hundred specific places were fortified and over one hundred others were considered to have been sited with military defense in mind. The materials are drawn from over seventy-five publications.[4] Far western Mexico is excluded. Sites from that marginal area, such as the famous one of La Quemada, would add nothing but length and emphasis to the picture drawn here. Further, the assignment of a particular site to a specific region is sometimes in doubt due to lack of adequate geographical information in the sources. Unquestionably other reported sites have been missed in my search.

Table 1. Numbers of Fortified or Defensive Sites by Area

15

x

8

x

Area	Named Sites	"Others/Many"
Tarascan area		x
Rio Balsas Basin	3	x
Toluca Valley	4	x
Hidalgo	1	
Valley of Mexico		
Tlaxcala		
Puebla	5	x
Huasteca	2	x
Northern Veracruz	12	50+
Central Veracruz	8	
Morelos	5	x
Highland Guerrero	1	
Mixteca Baja	1	
Mixteca Alta	7	x
Tehuacán Valley	1	x
Cuicatlan Canada	17	x
Oaxaca Valley	15	x
Coastal Mixteca	2	
Isthmus of Tehuantepec	2	x
Chiapas Highlands	12	x
Central Depression	10	

Soconusco	5	
Western Highland Guatemala	30	
Central Highland Guatemala	46	x
Alta Verapaz	4	
Baja Verapaz	6	
Usumacinta	1	
Laguna de Terminos	7	x
Campeche-West Yucatan	4	
Petén	12	
Central Yucatan	4	
Northern Yucatan	11	
Western Honduras	4	x
El Salvador		
Total	262	

The numbers must not be taken very seriously as a count of the sites actually present in the areas listed. These numbers vary greatly according to accidents of discovery. For example, the large numbers for the highlands of Guatemala are due largely to the survey of John W. Fox and the SUNY-Albany project that investigated the pre-Columbian Quiché state.[5] Tlaxcala and Puebla have been examined with considerabl care by Angel Garcia Cook.[6] Serious surveys of other areas could sharply increase the numbers of sites fo them. Still, even the limited information in table 1 will surprise most Mesoamericanists. Few of them hithert could have named as many as a score of fortified places.

After all, it is not easy to identify some sites as fortified. In some cases, archaeologists doing field reconnaissance have reported only hillside "terraces," although further examination has convinced others that these had defensi intent. Nor is it easy to spot moats or ditches that subsequent natural or human actions have obscured, particularly when the features may lie at a considerable distance — even miles — from built-up sites. Walls can be especially hard to detect where the materials from which they were constructed have been carried off for variou nonmilitary purposes by ancient or modern peoples. (The potentially ephemeral nature of walls is demonstrated by one built at a comparatively recent date: the Spanish in colonial days forced the Indians to erect a great stone wall enclosing a huge area of the Valley of Mexico to contain the Europeans' cattle. Over two million people worked for four months on the vast project, yet today no traces of it seem to have been identified.)[7]

The construction date of a fortification may be difficult to establish. A full-fledged excavation often can bracket a possible date but not a definitive one. Many of the sites counted here have been dated not from excavation but from the occurrence of fragments of characteristic ceramics found on the site during brief field surveys. (Some in use at the time of the Conquest are identifiable historically though not archaeologically.) While the use of surface potsherds for dating is useful, construction from earlier periods of inhabitation may be hard to detect today, having been obscured if not destroyed by later construction. For a majority of the sites considered in this article, dating has not been established definitively. I merely report what the literature indicates.

Table 2 gives the site counts according to ten chronological periods. Keep in mind again that the numbers are not comprehensive or inflexible since they depend on the accidents of discovery. Because the periods I am using here are purely chronological, they may differ slightly from phase or period attributions in the original sources, for the authors of those use divergent systems of terminology. The numbers reflect the fact that a single site was often used through more than one period.

Table 2. Fortified and Defensive Sites by Period

Period	Definite	Possible
Early Pre-Classic (pre-1000 B.C.)	0	1
Early Middle Pre-Classic (1000-600 B.C.)	0	2
Late Middle Pre-Classic (600-400 B.C.)	5	1
Late Pre-Classic (400-50 B.C.)	30	2
Proto-Classic (50 B.C.-A.D. 200)	26	8
Early Classic (A.D. 200-400)	14	8
Middle Classic (A.D. 400-650)	11	13
Late Classic (A.D. 650-850)	27	11
Epi-Classic (A.D. 850-1000)	12	10
Post-Classic (A.D. 1000-Conquest)	177	16

A detailed functional categorization of the elements of fortification technology will not be attempted now. Few sites have been described in sufficient detail to permit that; however, pointing out some of the major innovations that occurred is possible, even according to the limited present evidence. Table 3 summarizes what can be said. (Abbreviations are for the periods designated in Table 2: E. Pr. = Early Pre-Classic, Pro. Cl. = Proto-Classic, Ep. Cl. = EpiClassic, and so on. Dates for the periods are also given in Table 2. Detail insufficient to justify distinguishing Early from Late Middle Pre-Classic.) Obviously, further systematic surveys and excavations will fill in some of the blanks and answer some of the questions.

Table 3. Periods of Appearance of Fortification Features

E.M.L.Pro.E.M.L.Ep.Post

Pr. Pr.Pr.Cl.Cl.Cl.Cl.Cl.Cl.

xxx xxx

x

xx xxx

x?? xx

?x

xx xxxx

xxxx xxxx

x xxxxxx

?x xxx

xx

x x x

x

?xx x

?? x

? xx x

thought to be redoubts   x x

Technological Features

Earthen barrier

Mud-brick wall

Stone wall

Wooden (palisade) wall

Spiny-thorny barrier

Isolated guard posts

Elevated defensive site

Moated/ditched site

Causeway across ditch

Bridge entrance

Gateway in wall

Missile-throwing site

  — on wall

  — from a tower

Intra-sector(ward) wall

Elite walled enclosure

Tall public structures

Regarding the time of appearance of these features according to region, it is sufficient for my present purpose to note only that areas north and west of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec — the Valley of Mexico, Tlaxcala, Puebla, Oaxaca, the Tehuacan Valley, the Cuicatlan Canada — show significant experience with defensive fortifying before the time of Christ and perhaps as early as 1300 B.C.[8]

Only a single spot in southern Mesoamerica, near the southeastern limit of the culture area, is certain to have been fortified at a notably early date. This is the site of Los Naranjos in western Honduras. An apparent moat around the area of public structures had been constructed there in the Jaral period, to which the excavators assigned the date 800-400 B.C. Since the remains show connections with the Olmec culture of Mexico, perhaps this precocious appearance of fortification technology is owed to influence from the central Mexico area, where appears even earlier. The Los Naranjos construction had attained a respectable 1.3 kilometers in length and seve meters in width in the Jaral period. Later, between A.D. 250 and 500 (Eden II period), the same site, plus a substantial area of fertile farmland, was surrounded by a ditch 5 kilometers in length with a two-meter-high embankment inside it.[9]

It is tempting to try immediately to explain the facts summarized in Table 3. Current archaeologists would be predisposed to construct either an evolutionary or a historical model to manage the data. The former schema might presuppose that warfare and fortifying activity constituted adaptations to stresses from population growt and the concurrent development or collapse of sociopolitical structures. Such a model might try to categorize th early part of the sequence as "politically formative," followed by an era of "regional state structures," only to resu in a final phase of "militarized minor polities." Actually, the sequence seems to me to show such irregularities that no credible version of straight-line sociocultural evolution is clear, although a cyclical model might serve.

An alternate view attempts to disentangle historical threads and corresponding cultural influences, with emphas on details of their interrelationships rather than on any overall developmental scheme. (Many contemporary archaeologists would consider this kind of interpretation to be "old fashioned.") But we do not yet know enough make history out of our sketchy data. There are only hints toward such an eventual history. I observed above tha the area north and west of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec seems to have seen earlier military development than did southern Mesoamerica and may have been a source for basic patterns that persisted all the way to the Conques Yet we do not know enough at this time to flesh out the picture reliably. The fact is that neither a social evolutionary nor a historical interpretation is at present believable in the light of the data at hand about fortifications. I can only repeat that appropriate though disappointing recommendation: "More research needs t be done."

Both evolutionary and historical explanations presuppose some force or tendency ("adaptation," possibly, or "diffusion") to be at work in society that can provide us a key to understand what took place. However, I suggest that a simpler explanation may account for much of the phenomena we call "fortification." The basic notions involved in defensive behavior may be so commonsensical that much of what went on required no consistent social nor historical forces. For instance, even children know that, if faced with an antagonist, they can safely move behind a barrier such as a tree. Piling up earth or stone slabs to make a "fortification" wall may not require so much cultural knowledge as simply good sense. And obviously getting on higher ground gives one an advantage over an enemy. I would not be surprised to find that a few key principles of fortifying have been reinvented time after time on the basis of common sense. Nevertheless, certain defensive notions are far less obvious and may have constituted unique inventions with a historical or cumulative cultural basis. One of these might be an entrance through a defensive wall that forces an attacker to turn sideways, thus slowing him down and rendering him more vulnerable.

At this point in studying the topic, however, I consider explanation much less feasible and also less important than description. It is important to realize that fortifying in Mesoamerica is a phenomenon that occurred over a wide area and over a long period of time, contrary to previous expert opinion.

On the basis of what is now known, it is possible to conclude the following:

1. There is good reason to believe that Mesoamerican cultures were like all the world's other archaic civilizations — war was almost ever present. Supposing that Mesoamerican cultures were peaceful, except for brief periods, is a caricature.

2. Indeed the inventiveness and scale of effort the Mesoamerican peoples show in this aspect of culture demonstrate that warfare was a crucial concern, not mere cultural embroidery.

3. Archaeologists have only begun to examine the relevant Mesoamerican materials; we have a great deal yet to learn about most of the details of fortification and of warfare generally in that area.

4. On this topic, all the standard sources interpreting the area's cultural history seriously underestimate its importance and hence are unreliable.

Fortifications in the Book of Mormon

The appendix includes references and summaries for all Book of Mormon statements about fortifying. There are twenty-four places in the text where some aspect of fortifying is alluded to. Here I summarize the key points that emerge.

Five different fortification patterns are visible. Each of these complexes has different cultural (technological), geographical, and temporal manifestations of relevance to archaeologists. They are (1) that of the Nephites in the original land of Nephi from the late sixth century to the late third century B.C.; (2) that of the people of Zeniff, who renewed the decrepit walls of the earlier Nephites at the cities of Lehi-Nephi and Shilom and used them to some degree until their departure toward the end of the second century B.C.; (3) the extensive work beginning under Moroni around 75 B.C. and extending at least to the war with the robbers about ninety years later (3 Nephi 3); (4) the final Nephite wars from early in the fourth century A.D. for at least a quarter of a century and perhaps for the sixty years until the Nephite destruction at Cumorah; and (5) the Lamanite fortifying effort in the mid-first century B.C. (see Alma 50:6; 57:4), Which may have carried over in unreported ways into Lamanite lands.

The first complex need not extend beyond a limited highland area. The second was distinguished only by modifications of the remains of the first complex. The third was widespread throughout much of the greater land of Zarahemla, perhaps with special emphasis in the "borders by the east sea" at the narrow neck of land and southward. (The geographical extent was sufficiently great that it would not be surprising for there to have been regional differences.) Complex four was centered in the area of the narrow neck and may not have been represented by many examples; we have no descriptions of what strongholds it yielded. The fifth complex, by Lamanites, is mentioned only for two limited areas: (1) part of the eastern lowlands of the land of Zarahemla and (2) an area adjacent to the narrow strip of wilderness separating the highlands of Nephi from the land of Zarahemla. Their technology probably represented primarily cultural borrowing from complex three, though with what modifications we do not know.

When the technological features of each complex are put in chronological terms, we find that the only thing we can be sure of is that complexes one and two, which are known to appear in a zone perhaps as small as a single valley, are characterized by "walls" surrounding two cities. We cannot be sure of the material, but the form of the wall would have been entirely distinct from that used later by Moroni (see Alma 49:8). It is not unreasonable to suppose that stone walls are meant, since Nephi (see 2 Nephi 5:1416) had known the stone wall at Jerusalem (see 1 Nephi 4:4) and might have communicated the *concept* to his immediate descendants in the land of Nephi, although he likely did not know any useful information about the technology involved in its construction.

Complex three, and presumably any Lamanite borrowing of that, was characterized by minor variations on the following: an excavated dry ditch, a wooden wall against which the excavated soil was sometimes piled, a simple gateway —"the pass" (Alma 62:24) — opening through the encircling wall at a single point, a timber parapet, and towers above the height of the walls from which defenders could throw missiles down against the attackers (see Alma 50:4-5). The areas enclosed could be extensive. At Nephihah, seemingly thousands of Lamanites were camped in only a portion of the enclosure while Moroni's entire army, again of thousands, got inside at night in the quiet sector of the enclosure without being detected (see Alma 62:22). And at Bountiful, the whole "land" (obviously the local land, the environs of the city) of Bountiful was enclosed by an impressive wall-making project (see Alma 53:3). Also, several passages may be read as implying the use of isolated strong points apart from the cities *per se* (e.g., Alma 50:10).

While the earthen barriers proved tactically important when first introduced, they may not have proved effective in the long run. When Moroni put down internal rebellion (see Alma 51:18; 62:7), the fortifications at Zarahemla or other center-of-the-land locations seem to have played no part in the fighting, and Coriantumr had little trouble getting inside Zarahemla's wall (see Helaman 1:20-21). In fact, following the Moroni-inspired flurry of construction of walls in the great war of Alma 51-62, we find little to indicate that new ones of the same sort were built or even that the old ones were maintained.

As to complex four, no description is provided to clarify what Mormon meant by "fortify." Nothing he says suggests that whole settlements were then surrounded with walls. His statements may be read as meaning nothing more than that his Nephite armies in the fourth century A.D. constructed a line of minor garrisons or strong points. We are unable to tell. However, according to Alma 53:5, Mormon was familiar with the earthen fortification around Bountiful. The statement that "this city became an exceeding stronghold ever after" makes sense only if it was a fourth-century A.D. observation by Mormon. (Bountiful's status as an impregnable [sacred and neutral?] city in the final wars could explain why there is no mention of it in Mormon's account of those wars.)

Incidentally, the Arnold Friberg painting of Samuel the Lamanite preaching from Zarahemla's wall, which appeared in copies of the Book of Mormon for a number of years, is surely based on a misunderstanding. The wall is there shown of stone, something nowhere suggested in the text; rather, that wall seems to have been of the "heaps of earth" construction described in Alma 50:1-6. Helaman 16:2 clearly states that the reason Samuel could not be struck by stones or arrows while atop that wall was because of the protection of the Spirit, not because he was u out of range as implied in the painting. Moreover, had he "cast himself down [to escape] from the wall" (Helaman 16:7) as shown by the artist, his preservation would truly have been remarkable, for it looks sixty feet high. (True the earth-wall structure could not be ascended from the inside by those wishing to seize the prophet, for Pahora was fatally trapped against the vertical inner wall by his armed pursuer Coriantumr [see Helaman 1:21; cf. Alma 62:21], yet Samuel could have scrambled down the outer slope to get away into the countryside because his pursuers could only get at him via a gate some distance away.)

It might be that some elements of fortification technology passed to the Nephites from the Jaredites. The book c Ether makes no mention of fortifications, yet its brevity may provide the explanation for this omission. Certainly warfare was frequent and intense among that early people, and over thousands of years of fighting, it would be surprising if they had not come up with some defensive concepts. If there were such, they might have reached th Nephites through the Mulekites (see Omni 1:17), through other unnamed peoples whose ancestors survived the Jaredite era, or else through Nephite observation of the Jaredite ruins or their records (cf. Mosiah 8:8; 28:11-1! But of course that source could not explain the walls of complexes one and two that existed prior to any knowled of the Jaredites by the early Nephites.

Comparison of Book of Mormon and Mesoamerican Fortifications

Evidently all the features mentioned or inferred above for the Book of Mormon complexes one through five wer present already during the Mesoamerican Late Pre-Classic or Proto-Classic periods, the archaeological periods coinciding with the Book of Mormon occurrences. In terms of geography, if we accept for the moment a general spatial correlation between Book of Mormon lands and Mesoamerica, we can see broad agreement. We do not y have sufficient chronological control to pin down when fortifications appeared in many of the regions of Mesoamerica, but it is generally apparent that known archaeological sites display the right sorts of military technology to agree with the Book of Mormon account.

Furthermore, the trajectory we see in the growth of archaeological knowledge about fortifications—from essent ignorance of the topic only a few years ago to the present general outlines of agreement—suggests that when further field study of appropriate sites is done, the correlation now seen only broadly may become much more specific.

Appendix: Book of Mormon Statements about Fortifications

Jacob 7:25. The people of Nephi did fortify against them.

Jarom 1:7. Began to fortify our cities, or whatsoever place of our inheritance.

Mosiah 7:10. Outside the Walls of the city [of Nephi].

Mosiah 9:8. We began to ... repair the walls of the city, yea, even the walls of the city of Lehi-Nephi, and the city of Shilom.

Mosiah 21:19. The king himself did not trust his person without the walls of the city.... *[23.]* The king having been without the gates of the city.

Mosiah 22:6. Behold the back pass, through the back wall, on the back side of the city [of Nephi].

Alma 49:2. [Ammonihah] … had been rebuilt.... They had cast up dirt around about to shield them from the arrow and the stones.... *[4.]* The Nephites had dug up a ridge of earth round about them, which was so high that the Lamanites could not cast their stones and their arrows at them that they might take effect, neither could they come upon them save it was by the place of entrance.... *[8.]* [This was done] in a manner which never had been known among the children of Lehi.... *[13.]* [The Lamanites] knew not that Moroni had fortified, or had built forts of security, for every city in all the land round about.... *[18.]* The Lamanites could not get into their forts of security any other way save by the entrance, because of the highness of the bank which had been thrown up, and the dep of the ditch which had been dug round about, save it were by the entrance. *[19.]* And thus were the Nephites prepared to destroy all such as should attempt to climb up to enter the fort by any other way, by casting over stones and arrows at them. *[20.]* [Meanwhile,] … they were prepared, yea, a body of their strongest men, with the swords and their slings, to smite down all who should attempt to come into their place of security by the place of entrance.... *[22.]* Now when [the Lamanites] found that they could not obtain power over the Nephites by the pa they began to dig down their banks of earth that they might obtain a pass to their armies … but behold, in these attempts they were swept off by the stones and arrows which were thrown at them; and instead of filling up the ditches by pulling down the banks of earth, they were filled up in a measure with their dead.

Alma 50:1. [Moroni] caused that his armies should commence in the commencement of the twentieth year of the reign of the judges … in digging up heaps of earth round about all the cities, throughout all the land which was possessed by the Nephites. *[2.]* And upon the top of these ridges of earth he caused that there should be timbers yea works of timbers built up to the height of a man, round about the cities. *[3.]* And he caused that upon those works of timbers there should be a frame of pickets built upon the timbers round about; and they were strong ar high. *[4.]* And he caused towers to be erected that overlooked those works of pickets, and he caused places of security to be built upon those towers, that the stones and the arrows of the Lamanites could not hurt them. *[5.]* And they were prepared that they could cast stones from the top thereof … and slay him who should attempt to approach near the walls of the city. *[6.]* Thus Moroni did prepare strongholds … round about every city in all the land.... *[10.]* On the south, in the borders of their possessions … [he] caused them to erect fortifications. *[11.]* Fortifying the line between the … land of Zarahemla and the land of Nephi, from the west sea, running by the hea of the river Sidon … [*v. 9* — to the borders by the east seashore].

Alma 51:18. [Note that in the civil fighting between Moroni's forces and those of the dissenters, in the center of the land, the battles slew four thousand of the latter without a hint of their having advantage of fortifications.]

Alma 51:23. [Amalickiah's forces] … took possession of the city [of Moroni], yea, possession of all their fortifications.... *[26.]* [Then they continued on] taking possession of … [additional cities] … all of which were on the east borders by the seashore. *[27.]* And thus had the Lamanites obtained … many cities, by their numberless host all of which were strongly fortified after the manner of the fortifications of Moroni.

Alma 52:2. [Thwarted in advancing farther, the Lamanites] retreated with all their army into the city of Mulek, an sought protection in their fortifications [*cf. 52:17*].... *[6.]* [Meanwhile, Teancum] kept his men … making preparations … by casting up walls round about and preparing places of resort.... *[9.]* [Furthermore, Moroni] sent

orders unto [Teancum] that he should fortify the land Bountiful, and secure the narrow pass which led into the land northward.

Alma 53:3. [Lamanite prisoners were set to work] ... digging a ditch round about the land, or the city, Bountiful. *[4.]* And he caused that they should build a breastwork of timbers upon the inner bank of the ditch; and they cast up dirt out of the ditch against the breastwork of timbers ... until they had encircled the city of Bountiful round about with a strong wall of timbers and earth, to an exceeding height. *[5.]* And this city became an exceeding stronghold ever after; and in this city they did guard the prisoners of the Lamanites, yea, even within a wall.... *[6.]* [Mulek, now recaptured, had been] ... one of the strongest holds of the Lamanites ... [and now he had built also at Bountiful] a stronghold.... *[7.]* [More fortifications were worked on.]

Alma 55:16. [At the city Gid, where Nephite prisoners were held, the Nephite force at night] ... cast in weapons of war unto the prisoners *[20.]* ... who were within the wall of the city, and [thus] had given them power to gain possession of those parts which were within the walls.... *[25.]* [Lamanite prisoners taken did] ... commence ... strengthening the fortifications round about the city Gid.... *[33.]* [Meanwhile, the Lamanites had] ... fortified the city Morianton until it had become an exceeding stronghold.

Alma 56:15. [When Helaman and his two thousand young men arrived at the city of Judea, they found the small Nephite army] ... toiling with their might to fortify the city.

Alma 57:4. The people [the Lamanite forces] of Antiparah did leave the city, and fled to their other [nearby] cities to fortify them.

Alma 58:21. [At Manti, part of the Nephite force] ... did take possession of the city.... *[23.]* [Thus they] had obtained possession of their strongholds [around or in the city].

Alma *62:20.* [At Nephihah,] ... when the night came, Moroni went forth in the darkness of the night, and came up the top of the wall to spy out in what part of the city the Lamanites did camp with their army. *[21.]* And ... they were on the east, by the entrance. [Whereupon the Nephites prepared] ... cords and ladders, to be let down from the top of the wall into the inner part of the wall.... *[22.]* [Then they came] upon the top of the wall, and let themselves down into that part of the city ... where the Lamanites did not camp.... *[24.]* [Finding the Nephites inside the walls, when morning came, the Lamanites] did flee out by the pass.... *[36.]* [Immediately afterward, at the city of Moroni, in the night, Teancum] did let himself down over the walls of the city.... *[42.]* [The war was essentially over, but to be sure, Moroni] fortified those parts of the land which were most exposed to the Lamanites.

Helaman 1:20. [Dissenter] Coriantumr led a Lamanite army to Zarahemla where they did cut down the watch by the entrance of the city ... that they did take possession of the whole city. *[21.]* Pacumeni, who was the chief judge, did flee before Coriantumr, even to the walls of the city ... [where] Coriantumr did smite him against the wall.

Helaman 4:7. And there [adjacent to the land of Bountiful,] they did fortify against the Lamanites, from the west sea, even unto the east; it being a day's journey for a Nephite, on the line which they had fortified ... to defend the north country.

Helaman 13:4. [Samuel the Lamanite was refused admittance to the city of Zarahemla, so] ... he went and got upon the wall thereof.

Helaman 16:2. [After hearing Samuel's words at length, unbelievers] cast stones at him upon the wall, and also many shot arrows at him as he stood upon the wall; but the Spirit of the Lord was with him, insomuch that they could not hit him.... *[6.]* When they saw that they could not hit him with their stones and their arrows, they cried unto their captains, saying: Take this fellow and bind him.... *[7.]* [Whereupon] he did cast himself down from the wall, and did flee out of their lands.

3 Nephi 3:14. [Thousands of Nephites and righteous Lamanites gathered together in an appointed place between the lands of Zarahemla and Bountiful. Their leader caused that] fortifications should be built round about them... *[25.]* They did fortify themselves against their enemies [the robbers].

3 Nephi 4:16. [The robber armies] came up on all sides to lay siege.

Mormon 2:4. [The fleeing Nephites] did fortify the city [of Angola] with our might; but notwithstanding all our fortifications the Lamanites did ... drive us out.... *[21.]* [Having fled into the land northward,] we did fortify the city of Shem.

Mormon 3:6. [At the narrow neck,] we did fortify against them.

Mormon 5:4. [In the land northward, certain] cities ... were maintained by the Nephites which [were] strongholds

Notes

1. David L. Webster, *Defensive Earthworks at Becan, Campeche, Mexico: Implications for Maya Warfare,* Publication 41 (New Orleans: Tulane University Middle American Research Institute, 1976), 1-2.

2. Pedro Armillas, "Fortalezas Mexicanas," *Cuadernos Americanos* 41 (Sept.-Oct. 1948): 143-63; "Mesoamerican Fortifications," *Antiquity* 25 (1951): 77-86; Angel Palerm, "Notas sobre las construcciones militares y la guerra en Mesoamérica," *Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia*, Anales 8 (1956): 123-34; Robert L. Rands, "Some Evidences of Warfare in Classic Maya Art," Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1952.

3. Webster, *Defensive Earthworks*, 3-4.

4. To be published elsewhere.

5. John W. Fox, *Quiché Conquest: Centralism and Regionalism in Highland Guatemalan State Development* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978).

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7. Henry F. Dobyns, "Estimating Aboriginal American Population: An Appraisal of Techniques with a New Hemispheric Estimate," *Current Anthropology* 7 (1966): 406.

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9. Claude F. Baudez and Pierre Becquelin, *Archéologie de Los Naranjos Honduras*, Études Mesoamericaines, vol. 2 (México: Mission Archéologique et Ethnologique Française au Mexique, 1973), 3-6, 69.

Seasonality of Warfare in the Book of Mormon and in Mesoamerica

John L. Sorenson

When we carefully examine the accounts of wars in the middle portion of the Nephite record, we find that military action did not take place at random throughout the calendar year but at particular times. Whatever realistic scene we assume for the Nephite lands, we would expect to find a similar seasonal pattern in that area's secular historical sources. I consider Mesoamerica (central and southern Mexico and northern Central America) to have been the scene of the Nephite conflicts, but whatever plausible location one chooses will lie in the tropics because, among other reasons, only in those areas are there feasible isthmuses located that could correspond to the "narrow neck of land" of the Nephites. Everywhere in those latitudes, war was normally carried on by the pre-Columbian inhabitants during a short annual period. This paper investigates the evidence for seasonality of warfare in the Book of Mormon account and compares it with what is currently known about the timing of warfare in Mesoamerica.

The Book of Mormon Pattern

For only one period are we presented with sufficient information to detect a seasonal pattern for fighting — during the period beginning with the fifth year of the reign of the judges (Alma 2) and continuing for about 110 years. Other reports of war (in 2 Nephi, Jacob, Enos, Jarom, Omni, Words of Mormon, Mosiah, Alma 24 and 27, Mormon, and Ether) give us little useful data on the topic. I have listed in an appendix all "military actions" in the Nephite part of the record in order to allow readers to examine the data for themselves. I conclude that a remarkably consistent record of seasons for conflict emerges.

The first and probably prime determinant for scheduling wars was the need to provide food according to a natural cycle that allowed few exceptions. We learn quickly that the middle of the Nephite calendar year was the growing season and that the primary harvest became available toward the end of the year. Since no army could operate effectively without a reasonably secure supply of food, this meant that wars had to await the completion of the agricultural year. This fundamental principle is clearly expressed in Alma 53:7, which says regarding Moroni and his forces: "He did no more attempt a battle with the Lamanites in that year, but he did employ his men in preparing for war … and also delivering their women and their children from famine and affliction, and providing food for their armies."

The idea appears in other texts:

1. Alma 57:6; 58:4, 7: "We [Helaman's army] received a supply of provisions…. And … we were strong, yea, and we had also plenty of provisions." But later "we did wait to receive provisions … until we were about to perish for the want of food."

2. Alma 60:9, 25, 35: "Ye have withheld your provisions from them, insomuch that many have fought … when they were about to perish with hunger…. Except ye … grant unto them food for their support," Moroni and his men would render foot-dragging officials "extinct"; "God will not suffer that we should perish with hunger; therefore he will give unto us of your food, even if … by the sword."

3. Alma 61:16, 18: Pahoran had "sent a few provisions unto [Lehi and Teancum], that they may not perish." He and Moroni aimed to "take possession of the city of Zarahemla, that we may obtain more food."

4. Alma 62:29: Lamanite prisoners joined the people of Ammon in a crucial task in which they "did begin to labor exceedingly, tilling the ground."

5. Alma 4:2: "But the people were afflicted … for the loss of their fields of grain, which were trodden under foot and destroyed by the Lamanites." (The Lamanites obviously had attacked near the end of the year, when ripe grain was standing in the fields. Suffering would continue until the next annual crop was ready.)

In civilizations at such a level of technological development, armies were formed of nonprofessional militia. For example, Alma 44:23 says, "The armies of the Nephites … returned and came to their houses and their lands." The demand for manpower to carry on agriculture provided the most stringent limit on maintaining armies. The husbandry of those times simply could not provide sufficient reliable surplus to feed many soldiers who were not themselves involved in the seasonal work. When an army did have to be kept in battle readiness, an added burden fell on the men who were still cultivating; thus the pacifist people of Ammon were obliged to exchange the products of their labor, "a large portion of their substance to support our armies," in exchange for protection by Nephite soldiers (Alma 43:13). But unavoidably, most of those serving in the army had to meet farming's demands during part of the year.

Another seasonal consideration was the weather. Anywhere in the tropics, rain characterizes approximately half the year — the same season when the crops are growing — with resulting muddy trails and swollen streams to cross. In all likelihood, the only time when Alma and his forces could, have waded across the river Sidon, fighting as they went (see Alma 2:27), would have been in the drier part of the year. Furthermore, had armies been fighting during the rains, they would have suffered significantly while traveling, camping, or fighting, for that time can be uncomfortably cool and unhealthy. Typically the Lamanites traveled virtually naked to reach the Nephites (see Enos 1:20; Alma 3:5; 43:20, 37). They would not have done so had protecting themselves against rain and cold been a concern. On the contrary, heat-caused fatigue was mentioned as a problem in the lowlands (see Alma 51:33; cf. 62:35). So the scripture confirms logic and observations about the timing of warfare in tropical lands — the rainy season ruled out major campaigns, which took place in the dry season instead.

Of course, there could be exceptions. Regions varied in climate; certain places and times would have permitted at least limited fighting other than at the normal dry time, although we must assume that planned major campaigns had to follow the general rule.

The Nephite Calendar

An entirely different matter concerns the translation of statements in the scriptural text from its calendrical terminology into climatic terms. The annals of the wars upon which Mormon relied in constructing his record were phrased in terms of "months" and "years"; at least that is how the terms were translated into English by Joseph Smith. But was a given numbered month hot or cool, dry or wet?

The world's peoples have used "years" measuring 260, 354, 359, 360, 363, 364, 365, and 400 days, among others. No calendar fits precisely the duration of the period it takes the earth to complete a revolution around the sun (the general definition of "year").[1] Each system only approximates nature's periodicity, then either includes adjustments so that its count does not get far out of step with solar realities or else the system falls into increasing

discrepancy. In the case of the Nephites, their record gives us insufficient information to permit us to describe their calendar with confidence. We can only make certain observations about it and then draw sensible inferences about the remaining features. We cannot clarify the matter by citing potential Near Eastern precedents, for the Book of Mormon gives us no information about the calendrical knowledge possessed by Lehi's pioneering group.

In any case, the assumption of a single calendar might be misleading. Based on how peoples at the Nephites' level of civilization tracked time, I would be surprised if the⋅ Nephites had not followed more than one system, perhaps one for ritual, another for agriculture, and at least one other for their political and historical annals. Also different localities could have followed differing systems. The checkered cultural history of Mulek's descendants (see Omni 1:17), the Ammonihahites' purposeful distancing of themselves from Zarahemla's ways (see Alma 8:11-12), and the Zoramites' divergence from Nephite culture (see Alma 31) hint at such potential diversity. A historical case illustrates how much variety is possible within a small territory: in and near the basin of Mexico at the time of the Spanish conquest, there were at least twenty-one major cultures present, only one of which, that of "the Aztecs," is well known; and many of those groups maintained differing calendrical systems and historical traditions.[2]

For the early people of Zarahemla (the "Mulekites"), Omni 1:21 refers to "moons" as a time measure, strongly indicating that they followed a lunar calendar. But "moon" is never again mentioned. Instead, the word "month" occurs throughout the text that Mormon edited, suggesting that the Nephites followed a different system. Mosiah may have imposed this as the norm for keeping historical records when he became king at Zarahemla (see Omni 1:1819). Helaman 12:15 indicates that the Nephites, at least by Mormon's day, considered the earth to move around the sun, suggesting a solar calendar and system that was probably operational throughout at least the six-hundred-year period for which we have Mormon's abridgment.

Whatever knowledge of the calendar Lehi and Nephi brought with them is suggested, or at least limited, by what historical sources tell us of the pre-exilic Israelite calendars.[3] A solar calendar was used that apparently had Canaanite — and ultimately Egyptian — sources and was closely connected with the seasons, and thus the festivals, marking the agricultural year in Palestine. It had twelve months of thirty days each. Some method was also used for intercalating days to keep the count straight with the sun's year (probably by adding five or more days at the end or beginning of the year.)

A cultural revamping, termed the Deuteronomic reformation, is thought by scholars to have taken place beginning at the time of King Josiah of Judah (who died in 608 B.C., within Lehi's lifetime). This reform effort attempted to root out pernicious cultic influences from the Canaanites and other neighboring peoples (see particularly the list of ritual abominations in 2 Kings 23:4-20). The reform enhanced the role of the then-neglected temple at Jerusalem, eliminated or reduced local shrine-centered variations in worship, and officially adopted the Assyrian-Babylonian calendar, which emphasized the moon instead of the sun in year and month calculations. At the same time, it shifted about or amalgamated religious festivals to fit into the new calendar scheme and to break up the old Canaanite pattern. But it is likely that nearly all this concern for change was on the part of Jewish priestly reformers while most of the population preferred to continue with the old ways. Certainly two, and later at least three, calendar systems coexisted.[4]

It may be helpful to consider what might have happened to the Lehi colony upon leaving their homeland near Jerusalem. What happened with the colony of Jews that settled at Elephantine in Egypt around the same time, as well as the changes that occurred among the Jewish exiles in Babylon, must have been comparable in many ways

to what occurred in Lehi's group. The cultural dynamics induced and required among each of these groups of resettled Israelites of the sixth century B.C. would be very similar.

Like the Nephites, the Elephantine people built a temple modeled after the one at Jerusalem, but their calendar followed the local Egyptian one. The calendar they used to set their festivals had been heavily modified by the Babylonian and Persian conquerors of Egypt. In Babylon, too, the exiles quickly adapted to the local lunisolar calendar, which returnees in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra would later bring back to Palestine. Change was inevitable since, after all, in Judah knowledge of the calendar of the day must have been limited to courtly or priestly specialists. Likely none of the resettled groups included people who were highly informed in such matters. The new conditions of seasons and ecology, as well as sociocultural influences from neighbors, moved them to adapt their calendar from what in the Palestine homeland had been based on nature or imposed by Jerusalem to something simpler and surely more functional in the new settings.

With Lehi's people we may suppose in the first place that their arduous trek across western Arabia would have stripped them culturally of much of what they knew about calendrical matters at home. Crossing the sea to a different environment would have wiped their cultural slate even cleaner (cf. Nephi's observations in 2 Nephi 5:7-16 and 25:1-6). For example, the Shavu^{c}ot festival, which in the land of Israel had fallen in late spring, fifty days after the first grain was harvested,[5] could not have been carried on in tropical America without change, for there the late spring was exclusively a time for planting, not harvesting (fifty days after the first harvest in Mesoamerica would fall in December).

I consider it likely that the Nephites carried with them the basic twelve-month solar calendar of the old regime; even during their travel in Arabia they continued to keep track of "years," after all. Reasons for thinking this include (1) Lehi was strongly opposed to the Jewish establishment of his day, certainly including the nationalistic, Deuteronomic reformer priests, and hence would have resisted following the Assyrian-Babylonian lunisolar count they urged; and (2) his own Manassehite tribal background meant that he would have stayed closer to Egyptian and traditional Israelite ways rather than following the newfangled Babylonian count.[6] (However, King Zedekiah's son Mulek and his company would have been more likely to follow the reformers' calendar, which emphasized "moons" as well as the naming rather than the numbering of months.)

The highest numbered month mentioned in the Book of Mormon is the eleventh (see Alma 49:1). (The highest day number is the twelfth — see Alma 14:23.) Still, two texts in the Book of Mormon point to the likelihood that the Nephites recognized twelve months. Alma and Amulek were freed from prison in Ammonihah on "the twelfth day, in the tenth month" (Alma 14:23). The events reported to intervene between then and the end of the year (see Alma 15:16) can be accommodated very plausibly in the roughly eighty days remaining in a twelve-month solar year. The same kind of general confirmation occurs in Alma 49, which reports a Lamanite army approaching the land of Ammonihah on the tenth day of the eleventh month (see Alma 49:1). Subsequent action until year's end (Alma 49:29) would fit well into the remaining fifty days allowed by a solar year but could hardly have stretched much longer.

Incidentally, the old Israelite "Calendar I" quite clearly incorporated the necessary corrections by adding days to keep sun and day counts from getting out of whack. Just how this was done is not clear, but the use of leap days is almost inevitable.[7]

In the present discussion, I assume that the dates mentioned in the period from Alma 2:1 to 3 Nephi 2:8, during which virtually all references to warfare in calendrical terms occur, were calculated on a 360- or 365-day solar-

based calendar, though this was probably just one of the calendars the Book of Mormon peoples followed.[8] I further assume that the Nephites recognized twelve months of thirty days each, with a probable five-day intercalary interval at the end of the last month.

The Nephite Annals of Wars

This paper is based upon information laid out in the appendix (see "Appendix: Annals of the Nephite Wars," pp. 462-74). In every case where Mormon provides us with sufficient chronological information to be helpful, I have analyzed and presented the plausible duration and distribution of events within each year. Even where chronology seems limited or absent, I tabulate each "military action" for the sake of completeness and because others may see in the text things I have failed to see.

In the first of four columns is a "military action reference number," beginning with the number 1. Omitted are the wars of the people of Zarahemla mentioned generally in Omni 1:17 and the purely Lamanite wars (in general at Mormon 8:8; note also Helaman 5:21), but those reported by the people of Zeniff and the sons of Mosiah are included. The list thus includes all actions involving Nephites *per se.* Actions planned, though not consummated, are counted, for they suggest times perceived to be appropriate for war even if a conflict failed to materialize.. Other significant information has also been included in the table.

Figure 1 summarizes the information on the seasons in relation to war as presented in the appendix. There are forty-six months to which a military action has been assigned (if an action carries into a second month, each month is counted separately). For each I have indicated a date, by year, month, and day as far as the record permits. Admittedly my assignment of months is subject both to the limitations of the data in the text and to my interpretations of it. Possibly I have skewed the months to fit my preconceptions, but not consciously. In any event, my month assignments are displayed so that others may check and modify my dates if they consider that necessary. Whatever bias may be involved, the pattern that emerges is too dramatic for me to have imposed it on the data. For each date given in the appendix, I also show an indicator as to whether it was (a) derived from a specific statement of the month, (b) inferred from a textual statement about the commencement or ending of a year, or (c) simply plausibly inferred by interpolating the year's events reasonably across twelve months.

Figure 1 vividly shows that wars did not simply happen at random but with striking seasonal variation. Twin peaks near the end and again near the beginning of the year are emphatic. If my assignments of just a few less-than-certain cases to the eleventh and the second months should be off by only a few weeks, the pattern might more nearly appear as a single four-month season. I consider it likely, however, that the decline in twelfth-and first-month activity is real and probably owing to the wish not to interfere with ritual observances of the year's end/beginning, or else to a concern with "bad luck" tied in with the five intercalary days that in later Mesoamerica were considered unlucky. (Compare the implications of Alma 51:28-52:2 regarding the Lamanites who pressed their attack during their new year's eve day only to meet disaster.) Furthermore, such military actions in the third through sixth months tended to be minor. Major actions thus clearly occurred between the end of the tenth and the start of the fourth month.

Figure 1. Number of Months Involving Nephite Military Actions

12 °   11 °   10   9   8   Number 7   Military 6 °   Actions 5 ° °   4   3 ° °   2   1 °   0

When statements in the record about food or "provisions" are analyzed, a confirming pattern emerges. The second month is most frequently indicated as time for reprovisioning (seven occurrences), with the third month next (four occurrences). Two cases may indicate logistical support somewhere between the fifth and tenth months. In addition there are single references for the twelfth, first, and fourth months. These combine to form a consistent season for primary replenishment from, say, the twelfth through the fourth months. This is agreeable with having the harvest primarily in the tenth through twelfth months. (After the crop was mature, actual harvest work would have required some time, followed by an administrative process of assessment or taxation, and then transport to the armies.) Of course limited local supplies were no doubt furnished to the forces at almost any time of year, but I am talking about the primary supply effort. Moreover, three references to hunger conditions for soldiers are consistent in falling between the fifth and tenth months.

Seasons of War in Mesoamerica

Our information on the timing of warfare in this area has not been examined comprehensively by scholars. What is known is consistent, for example, with the fact that in Yucatan, wars were usually fought between October and the end of January (or February in other Mesoamerican regions).[9] In that period, travel was rarely restricted due to bad weather; it was still relatively cool, and food was available either by supply from the logistical base or by taxing the subjugated.

The schedule varied slightly depending on local topography and climate. The corn crop, fundamental in the diet everywhere in Mesoamerica, is typically planted in April or May, just before the rains begin and after the fields have been cleared and the rubbish burned. It can be harvested about the time when the clouds and rain taper off (the wettest months are July and September for most regions) and the temperature rises because of greater sunshine. Harvest is from October to December, again depending on locality and on crop variety. The crucial time for agricultural labor under this regime is, and was anciently, March through May. At other times, being away was inconvenient but not critical. Probably the segment of time freest from field work for the typical cultivator/warrior was November through February, which, of course, coincides with the war season. Under emergency conditions, naturally, some military action could go on, though hampered, throughout most of the year.

Comparing the Patterns

The congruency of the two bodies of data is obvious in their division of the year into fighting and nonfighting times, the former during weather compatible with travel and the latter at planting season. This is so unmistakable that point-by-point comparison is hardly needed.

When we see in such marked fashion that the bulk of the military action for the Nephites took place during their eleventh through second months, while in Mesoamerica late October into February was battle time, I must equate the two patterns. If Mesoamerica is the location of Book of Mormon wars, as nearly all Latter-day Saint students of the matter now believe, there is no alternative to concluding that the Nephite new year day during the first century B.C. fell late in December. The winter solstice is perceived by so many of the world's peoples as an obvious, phenomenon of cosmic significance that December 22, give or take a day, is the odds-on favorite also to have been the Nephites' new year marker.[10]

Supposing that is the case, we find the following equivalences:

Table 1. Probable Nephite Calendar during the Reign of the Judges

First month	About December 22 to January 20
Second month	About January 21 to February 19
Third month	About February 20 to March 21
Fourth month	About March 22 to April 20
Fifth month	About April 21 to May 20
Sixth month	About May 21 to June 19
Seventh month	About June 20 to July 19
Eighth month	About July 20 to August 18
Ninth month	About August 19 to September 17
Tenth month	About September 18 to October 17
Eleventh month	About October 18 to November 16
Twelfth month	About November 17 to December 16

Probably five extra days completed the year.

Two Possible Exceptions to the Pattern

But our comparison must consider a couple of possible exceptions to the generalization that major military actions fall at the year's end or beginning. One is the battle in which Helaman and his two thousand young warriors helped lure a Lamanite army out of Antiparah to its destruction. This event is said to have occurred early in the seventh month (see Alma 56:42). The other is the attack by robbers on the besieged Nephites under Lachoneus; it is placed in the sixth month under a different calendar system (see 3 Nephi 4:7).

In the first place, the accuracy of the seventh-month date in Alma 56:42 might be questioned. I have shown in another paper[11] that Helaman's recollection of some dates was probably in error, for he omitted one entire year from his narrative. This is understandable because his record, an epistle to Moroni, was hastily written in the field immediately after concluding long, rigorous combat. A careful reading of Alma 56:27-30 indicates to me that Helaman's date for the battle near Antiparah may have been erroneous.

Consider the following statements: The text first reports the arrival of food and reinforcements for Helaman's and Antipus's army in the second month, *"thus* we were prepared" with both warriors and supplies (Alma 56:2728). And, "the Lamanites, *thus* seeing our forces increase *daily,* and provisions arrive for our support, they *began* to be fearful, and *began* to sally forth, if it were possible to put an end to our receiving provisions and strength. Now *when* we saw that the Lamanites *began to grow* uneasy on this wise, we were desirous to bring a stratagem into effect upon them" (Alma 56:29-30; italics added). The expressions I have emphasized connote passage of only a short period of time. Despite Helaman's dating the subsequent engagement to the seventh month, the phrasing and logic of these verses make it seem unlikely to me that the interval between the arrival of the food and the tactical action would encompass up to five months. Moreover, it is somewhat doubtful that Helaman would carry, or credibly appear to carry, food to a neighboring city at the seventh month, an odd time for reprovisioning.

Also, an explanation can be offered for a dating error, although perhaps it is strained. Two comments made when this paper was read publicly suggested that Helaman might have miswritten the month number due to features of either Mesoamerican glyphic or Hebrew conventions for writing numbers. Professor John P. Hawkins suggested that perhaps Helaman made an arithmetical mistake while referring to calculations involving the Mesoamerican bar-and-dot system of numbers. There a seven would appear as two dots above a bar. A stray mark that was misread as a bar could produce a seven, from an intended two. On the same occasion, John Tvedtnes drew attention to the fact that, in Hebrew, mistakes sometimes occur among the numbers two, three, seven, and eight due to confusion when those numbers are abbreviated. Either effect might have been involved for Helaman, although I am uncertain whether Helaman used either the bar-and-dot system or Hebrew in his epistle where he made the putative error.

On the other hand, if the conflict did take place as early as the third month, the account seems to get to the end of the year rather abruptly (see Alma 57:3-5). Hence one can argue pro and con without any way to settle the issue given the present limited text. (In figure 1, I have simply not counted this incident, nor any others from the appendix with a question mark.)

Even if the seventh month should prove correct, a unique geographical circumstance could mean that the "rainy season" would not have ruled out this particular action. The location of Antiparah in the geographical correlation I follow is near Motozintla, within a few miles of the Guatemalan border and almost at the top of the pass over the Sierra Madre de Chiapas linking the Central Depression of Chiapas and the Pacific lowlands.[12] Peculiar geographical conditions affect rainfall there. A configuration of high peaks (the highest mountain in Central America is only a few miles away) makes the northeast versant of the mountains, including the little Motozintla valley, unusually dry by shielding it from moist air off the Pacific. The abbreviated wet season in this locality consists of two peaks each less than two months in length, April-May and September-October. Even then, annual rainfall in the valley is only a fraction of what it is on the peaks a few miles away. An early seventh-month battle would fall around June 21 on the Nephite calendar (see table 1). This is within the annual period called the *canicula* ("dog days") or *veranillo* ("little dry season"), when in most years the rains let up for a period of one to three weeks.[13] Thus for good reasons, even if Helaman's battle was in the seventh month, the weather could have allowed such an event. Interestingly, on the calendar laid out above, a seventh-month attack would have taken place within a day or two of summer solstice, if not precisely then, and may have been planned to fall exactly on that auspicious day.[14]

Another problem in chronology occurs when the robbers in the time of the Nephite judge Lachoneus launched their main attack on the Nephites' refuge area in the "sixth month." But the event took place following the change in the era for reckoning the Nephite year, as reported in 3 Nephi 2:5-8. We are told there that when nine years had passed from the signs of the Savior's birth, the Nephites took that event as a beginning for their new system for calculating time.

As we look back at the record of that marker event, we learn that it did not take place at the new year but sometime afterward. Here is what 3 Nephi 1 reports about the timing. In "the commencement of the ninety and second year, … the prophecies … began to be fulfilled more fully" with the appearance of greater signs and miracles among the people (3 Nephi 1:4). Some people began to say that the time was past for the prophecy of Samuel to be fulfilled and they began to rejoice over the fact (see 3 Nephi 1:5-6). "It came to pass that they did make a great uproar throughout the land" (3 Nephi 1:7). Believers, however, watched steadfastly for the day and night and day without darkness that had been prophesied (see 3 Nephi 1:8). "There was a day set apart" when believers would be destroyed if the prophesied event did not take place (3 Nephi 1:9). Note how many time-significant phrases

occur in these verses—"began to be," "began to say," "began to rejoice," "and it came to pass," "began to be," "did watch steadfastly," and "now it came to pass" — all of which point to the passing of a considerable length of time between the end of the ninety-first year and the dramatic event of the light-filled night. An interval of months seems required by this language. (The statements about events during the remainder of the ninety-second year, in 3 Nephi 1:22, 23, and 25, are more obscure in regard to chronology.)

What we know from Palestine about the crucifixion sets the date in early April. (In light of the statements on chronology in the four Gospels, the only legitimate possibilities, it appears, are April 7, A.D. 30, or April 3, A.D. 33)[15] If we suppose the old Nephite year ended around December 22, while the birth date of Jesus occurred in the beginning of April, we can accommodate the Book of Mormon statements about dating. The Nephite calendar adjustment would then have been about three-and-a-third months.[16] This would allow enough time to encompass the events reported in the text prior to the special day and would also fit the Palestine data.

In that case the beginning of the Nephite year in the new system would have been in the first week of April. The attack of the robbers reported in 3 Nephi 4:7 in "the sixth month" would then have fallen in September, as late as the twenty-seventh. In weather terms that would not normally be a good time for fighting, although in a particular year, it might have been feasible. One explanation for this anomalous date is the robbers' desperate need for food. Given their evident extremity, that may be reason enough for hastening their campaign. (In the tabulation of military actions, I have marked this event with "VI," but I have not counted it in figure 1.)

The major conclusions of this study are

1. Nephite wars were typically carried out early in the dry season as permitted by the agricultural maintenance pattern and when weather conditions were most suited for military campaigns.

2. With overwhelming probability, the Nephite calendrical system used to report their wars in the first century B.C. placed their new year day at or very near the winter solstice.

3. Shortly after the birth of Christ, the Nephite calendar system changed to a base that seems to have put their new year near the beginning of April.

4. The Nephite seasonality pattern for warfare agrees remarkably well with what we know from Mesoamerica about seasons for fighting and for cultivation and harvest.

5. Two possible anomalies in the agreement between the two patterns exist, but reasonable explanations can be provided for each.

Appendix: Annals of the Nephite Wars

Key: # = Nephite records
Z# **= Zeniffite record**

SM# **= Sons of Mosiah record**

Superscripts: [L] = Lamanite initiative [N] = Nephite initiative [NvsN] = Nephites vs. Nephites [LvsL] = Lamanites vs.

Anti-Nephi-Lehies [Z] = Zeniffite initiative [O] = Intended action not carried out [A] = Multiple battles involved

Quality rating for date: [a] = specific month cited (3 occurrences) [b] = commencement or end of year specified

or implied (32 occurrences) [c] = plausible inferential basis (11 occurrences)

1. Era: Since Departure from Jerusalem

Action	Text	Dates	Events
1[LA]	2 Nephi 5:34		Within forty years, Nephites had already had wars and contentions
2[LA]	Jacob 7:24	55-179	Lamanites delight in wars and seek to destroy Nephites continually.
3[LA]	Enos 1:20	55-179	Enos sees wars in his lifetime; Lamanites continually seek to destro
4[LA]	Jarom 1:7	179-238	Lamanites come many times against Nephites.
5[LA]	Omni 1:2-3	ca. 238-320	Omni fights much against Lamanites; seasons of serious war.
6[L]	Omni 1:24	ca. 440-460	A serious war in the days of Benjamin.
7[L]	Words of Mormon 1:13-14	ca. 440-460	Lamanites come from land of Nephi; Benjamin's armies beat them
8[NO]	Mosiah 9:1-2	ca. 405	Zeniff and a Nephite army go to land of Nephi to destroy the Lamar

2. Era: Zeniff as King/Since Departure from Jerusalem

Action	Text	Dates	Events
Z1[L]	Mosiah 9:14	13/ca. 445	Lamanites attack.
Z2[Z]	Mosiah 9:16-18	13/ca. 445	Nephites counterattack, drive Lamanites out of their land.
Z3[L]	Mosiah 10:3, 5, 8-10, 19-20	35/ca. 467	Lamanites attack Shilom from Shemlon after twenty-two years of peace, but are driven out.
Z4[L]	Mosiah 11:16-17	40/ca. 472	Lamanites attack Zeniffite guards.
Z5[Z]	Mosiah 11:18	40/ca. 472	Noah's army defeats Lamanites.
Z6[ZO]	Mosiah 18:33	ca. 43/ca. 475	Noah's army pursues Alma's people.
Z7[L]	Mosiah 19:6-20	ca. 43/ca. 475	Lamanites attack Noah; he flees, dies.
Z8[L]	Mosiah 20:7-11	ca. 45/ca. 477	Lamanites attack people of Limhi because of stolen maidens.
Z9[Z]	Mosiah 21:7-8	ca. 46/ca. 478	Limhi and army attack Lamanites and are beaten.
Z10[Z]	Mosiah 21:11	ca. 46/ca. 478	They renew the fight and suffer much loss.
Z11[Z]	Mosiah 21:12	ca. 46/ca. 478	And still again, losing once more.
Z12[LO]	Mosiah 22:15	ca. 53/ca. 485	Lamanite army pursues Limhi's people into the wilderness unsuccessfully.
Z13[L]	Mosiah 23:25-29	ca. 53/ca. 485	Lamanite army that had chased Limhi enters Helam where Alma and his people dwell.
Z14[LO]	Mosiah 24:23	ca. 55/ca. 487	Lamanite army pursues Alma's people, but cannot catch them.

3. Era: Reign of the Judges

Voice of the people obtained: negative.Alma 2:10VIII.1-IX.30Action 10 planned.

Action	Text	Dates	Events
9[NvsN]	Alma 2:1	5.I.10-III.30 (=514)	Contention begins; Amlici strives to be king.
	Alma 2:5-7	IV.1-VI.1	
	Alma 2:8	VI.5-VII.30	Amlici stirs up followers.

	Alma 2:12-14	X.1-XI.25	Mobilization of Amlicites and Nephites.
	Alma 2:15	XI.25-28	Amlicites move from homelands to hill Amnihu.
	Alma 2:17-19	5.XI.29[b]	Fighting.
10[L]	Alma 2:27-28	5.XI.30[b]	Amlicite-Lamanite combined army attempts to reach Zarahemla, but Nephites drive them away.
11[L]	Alma 3:20-23	5.XII.5-12[b]	A backup army attacks and is driven off.
	Alma 3:25, 27	XII.30 (+5?)	All these wars commenced and ended in fifth year. Thus ends the year.
SM1[LvsL]	Alma 24:2	10.	Lamanites attack Anti-Nephi-Lehies.
12[L]	Alma 16:1	10.XII.1-11.II.5	Lamanites prepare, march to target.
	Alma 16:2-3	11.II.5-7[a]	Attack at Ammonihah and around Noah.
13[LA]	Alma 25:3	11.II.7-23[a]	En route back, Lamanites had many battles.
14[N]	Alma 16:8	11.III.7[a]	Battle above Manti; captives are recovered.
	Alma 16:9	XII.30 (+5?)	Thus ends the eleventh year.
15[L]	Alma 16:12	14.	Lamanites come to war this year; no details.
SM2[LvsL]	Alma 27:2	14.	Lamanites again destroy Anti-Nephi-Lehies.
16[L]	Alma 27:14	14.XII.7-21	Anti-Nephi-Lehies flee to the borders of the land of Zarahemla.
	Alma 27:20	XII.21-25	Alma, Ammon consult the chief judge.
	Alma 27:21-26	15.I.1-II.1	Voice of the people obtained; leaders return; Anti-Nephi-Lehies go to Jershon.
	Alma 28:1	II-X	They settle, plant, build; Nephite armies placed.
	Alma 28:2-3	15.XI.15-17[b]	Huge battle with Lamanites; tremendous slaughter on both sides.
	Alma 28:4-6	XII.1-30	Ritual mourning period.
	Alma 28:7	XII.30 (+5?)	Thus ends the fifteenth year.
17[LO]	Alma 35:10	17.X-XII	Zoramites stir up their people and Lamanites against people of Ammon.
	Alma 35:12	XII.30 (+5?)	Thus ends the seventeenth year.
	Alma 35:13	18.I-II	Ammonites moves to Melek (cf. Alma 43:13), leaving Nephite army in Jershon to contend with Lamanites and Zoramites.
	Alma 43:4, 15, 22	18.II[b]	Nephites prepare for war; Lamanite armies want to attack but do not due to superior Nephite preparations.
18[L]	Alma 43:22-33	18.III-X	Lamanites redeployment to Manti sector (via land of Nephi homeland?). Moroni spies on them, sends to Alma and receives prophetic assistance, marches to Manti, mobilizes locals, positions his men, waits.
	Alma 43:35-54	18.XI.25[b]	Battle; Lamanites defeated.
	Alma 44:23	XII.1-15	Nephite armies return to homes.
	Alma 44:24	XII.30 (+5?)	Thus ends the eighteenth year.
19[NvsN]	Alma 45:1	19.I	Fasting, prayer, thankfulness.
	Alma 45:2-18	I.15	Alma charges his son, leaves.
	Alma 45:20-22	I.25-III.25	Helaman preaches, organizes in all the land.
	Alma 46:1-7	III.25-IV.30	Sorting out of sides, arming, Amalickiah's "flattery," and gathering of dissident force.
	Alma 46:12-28	IV.1-IV.30	Moroni rallies the faithful.
	Alma 46:29-33	19. V.1-7[c]	Amalickiah departs; Moroni and posse pursue, intercept, slay some. Amalickiah escapes.
20[L]	Alma 47:1-36	19.V.20-VIII.20	Amalickiah gains, consolidates power.
	Alma 48:1-5	VIII.20-X.10	Amalickiah stirs up Lamanites, prepares for war, staffs army with Zoramites.
	Alma 48:8-9	X-XI	Moroni fortifies Nephite sites.
	Alma 49:1	X.10-XI.10	Lamanites on way to Ammonihah.
	Alma 49:3-24	19.XI.10-15[b]	Lamanites are defeated at Ammonihah and Noah.
	Alma 49:25	XI.15-XII.15	Lamanites return to land of Nephi.
	Alma 49:29	XII.30 (+5?)	Thus ends the nineteenth year.

21[N]	Alma 50:1-6	20.I-II	Nephites fortify extensively.
	Alma 50:7	20.II.10-30[c]	Lamanite squatters driven from east coastal area by Nephite army.
	Alma 50:9-15	III-XII	Settlers installed; Nephites construct cities and fortifications.
	Alma 50:16	XII.30 (+5?)	Thus ends the twentieth year.
22[NvsN]	Alma 50:25	24.II.1-III.15	Contention arises between peoples of Morianton and Lehi; legalistic jousting.
	Alma 50:26-27	III.15-IV.30	A warm contention; former take up arms; Lehi group flees to Moroni.
	Alma 50:28-29	V-XI	Morianton worries, determines to flee to north, sells his people on it.
	Alma 50:33-35	24.XII.1-20[b]	Morianton group flees; Moroni pursues; battle occurs.
	Alma 50:36	XII.21-30	Moriantonites returned; lands united.
	Alma 50:40	XII.30 (+5?)	Thus ends the twenty-fourth year.
23[NvsN]	Alma 51:1	25.I-II	Peace.
	Alma 51:2-6	III.1-V.30	Contentions develop; petitions made; sides chosen.
	Alma 51:7	VI.1-VII.30	Voice of the people obtained.
	Alma 51:7	VIII.1-X.1	Political stalemate.
	Alma 51:14	IX.15-XII.1	Lamanites army on the way to east coast.
	Alma 51:15-21	25.IX.30-XI.30[c]	Moroni receives (emergency or partial?) approval by the voice of the people, subdues rebels.
24[L]	Alma 51:22-23	25.XII.1[a]	City of Moroni attacked, taken.
	Alma 51:25-37	XII.5-30 (+5?)	Lamanite army advances to near Bountiful. On new year's eve, Teancum slays Amalickiah in his tent on the beach. Lamanites hole up. Thus ends the twenty-fifth year.

The chronology from here to the beginning of the thirtieth year constitutes a revision of the literal dates in Alma 52-58, which contain contradictions likely due to errors of memory by Helaman. The revision is developed in my paper, "The Significance of the Chronological Discrepancy between Alma 53:22 and Alma 56:9," which can be requested from the author at F.A.R.M.S. The revisions do not change any seasonal information.

Alma 52:19-20 28.I.8-30 Council of captains at Bountiful, then embassies to get Lamanites to come fight. Epistles have been exchanged in the wake of action 41, Moroni goes to Pahoran, recruiting as he goes. Helaman 4:5-6 57 Dissenters and Lamanite armies come down, possess Zarahemla, and drive Nephites near to the land Bountiful.

25[L]	Alma 52:2	26.II.1-III.15	Ammoron travels to Nephi.
	Alma 52:4-5	III.15-VIII	He consolidates power.
	Alma 52:12-13	26.IX-XI.15[b]	He raises a new (limited) army and attacks the west sea borders of the Nephites with little success but poses a threat.
	Alma 52:11, 15	XI-27.I.30	Moroni goes to the west sea front, organizes, recruits, establishes defenses.
26[NO]	Alma 52:15-17	26.XI-XII[b]	Moroni has instructed Teancum to attack Mulek if possible and has sent some reinforcements, but Teancum lacks a tactical plan. Keeps visiby preparing for attack while fortifying.
27[L]	Alma 52:19; 56: 13-14	27.X.25-XI.15[b]	Lamanites capture Manti, Seezrom, Cumeni, and Antiparah.
28[LO]	Alma 56.9	XI.15-30	Helaman's two thousand sons march from Melek to Judea.
	Alma 56:10, 18	27.XII-28.II[b]	They help fortify Judea; Lamanites dare not attack though expected to.
29[N]	Alma 52:18	27.XI.1-XII.20	Moroni has been recruiting a large army and now leaves Zarahemla for Bountiful to join Teancum.
	Alma 52: 21-26	28.II.5-6[b]	Stratagem leads to recapture of Mulek.
	Alma 53:7	III-XII	Nephites on the east fortify and farm.
30[LA]	Alma 56:29	II.15	Food, reinforcements arrive at Judea.
	Alma 56:29	28.III.1-VI.30[c]	Lamanites, nervous about increased Nephite strength, sally out to intercept support.
31[N]	Alma 56:30-34	28."VII"(III?).1-5[a]	Stratagem carred out near Antiparah to defeat Lamanites.
32[NO]	Alma 57:3-4	28.X-XI[b]	Helaman prepares to attack Antiparah, but Lamanites abandon it.

	Alma 57:5	XII.30(+5?)	Thus ends the twentieth-eighth year.
33[N]	Alma 55:7-24	29.II.14-15[c]	Gid is recaptured.
	Alma 55:25	II.16-III.15	Lamanite prisoners labor fortifying Gid.
34[LA]	Alma 55:27	29.III.1-IV.30[c]	Lamanite tricks, minor attacks to free prisoners fail.
35[N]	Alma 57:6	II	Supplies, six thousand more men reach Helaman.
	Alma 57:8-12	29.II.15-III.30[b]	Helaman's army besieges Cumeni; Lamanites surrender.
	Alma 57:13-16	IV.1-14	Large number of prisoners create a dilemma; they are sent toward Zarahemla.
36[L]	Alma 57:17-22	29.IV.15[b]	New Lamanite army attacks, but is defeated, retreats to Manti.
37[NO LO]	Alma 58:1-2	29.V[c]	Stalemate at Manti, but tactical tricks by both sides tried with no real battle; Lamanites will not come out to fight.
	Alma 58:3-4	V-X	Helaman waits for food and men.
	Alma 58:5	V-X	Lamanites being reinforced and supplied.
	Alma 58:8	XI.1	Helaman receives some food, a few men.
38[N]	Alma 58:10-30	29.XI.20-21[b]	Operation at Manti captures the city; Lamanites flee to the land of Nephi.
	Alma 58:41	XII.1	Helaman writes, sends his epistle.
39[NO]	Alma 55:33-34	XI-XII	Lamanites fortify Morianton, bring in supplies, men.
	Alma 55:33	29.XII.15-30[b]	Moroni prepares to attack Morianton.
	Alma 55:35	XII.30(+5?)	Thus ends the twenty-ninth year.
	Alma 59:5	30.I[c]	Moroni continues preparation.
40[NvsN]	Alma 61:5, 8	30.I.15[b]	Rebels in Zarahemla drive out Pahoran to Gideon; write to Lamanite king.
41[L]	Alma 59:5-8	30.I.25[b]	Lamanites, including some from Manti, attack, capture Nephihah.
42[NvsN]	Alma 62:3-6	III-V	
	Alma 62:6	VI-X	In Gideon, loyalist forces are gathered, consolidated, armed.
	Alma 62:7-8	30.XI[b]	Moroni and Pahoran lead army against the king-men under Pachus, defeat them.
	Alma 62:9-11	XII	The disloyal receive trials; government functions are restored. Thus ends the thirtieth year.
43[N]	Alma 62:14-15	31.I.30-II.25[b]	Moroni leads a large army toward Nephihah. En route, they encounter a Lamanite force headed to Nephihah, capture them.
44[N]	Alma 62:18-29	31. II.27-30[b]	Nephites take back Nephihah and pack prisoners off to Melek.
45[N]	Alma 62:30-38	31.III.1-2[b]	Nephites attack Lehi, driving Lamanites to the city of Moroni, then out of the land.
	Alma 62:39	XII.30(+5?)	Thus ends the thirty-first year.
46[L]	Alma 63:10-15	39.XI?[c]	During the year, the chief judge dies, dissenters go to Lamanites and stir them up. They come against the Nephites.
	Alma 63:16	XII.30(+5?)	Thus ends the thirty-ninth year.
47[LA]	Helaman 1:14	41.I-X	Lamanites gather a well-armed, innumerable army.
	Helaman 1:15-34	41.XI-XII[b]	Lamanites come down, led by Coriantumr, take Zarahemla, and go through the center of the land toward Bountiful. But they are headed off, retreat, and are decimated. Thus ends the forty-first year.
48[NvsNA]	Helaman 3:17-22	46-48	Great contentions and wars among the Nephites. Thus ends the forty-sixth year. In the latter end of the forty-eighth year, the wars and contentions begin to diminish a small degree.
49[NvsN]	Helaman 4:1-2	54	Contention among the Nephites with much bloodshed; rebels are slain or driven out to Lamanite lands.
50[LA]	Helaman 4:4	56	Dissenters and Lamanite armies prepare for war.
51[L]	Helaman 4:8	58-59	Nephites are driven entirely out of the land southward.
52[NA]	Helaman 4:9	60	Nephites regain many parts of land.
53[NA]	Helaman 4:10, 17	61	Nephites regain half their possessions. Thus ends the sixty-first year.
54[NA]	Helaman 4:18	62	Nephites try but fail to gain more.
55[NvsNA]	Helaman 11:1-2	72-73	Robbers cause a war that goes on all year and through the next.
56[NvsNA]	Helaman 11:24-25	80	Dissenters, robbers war with Nephites, retreat to wilderness and mountains after murdering and plundering.

Action	Text	Dates	Events
57[NvsN]	Helaman 11:28-29	80.XI	Nephites send an army to search for robbers, but it is driven back. Thus ends the eightieth year.
58[NvsN]	Helaman 11:30-32	81.I-II[b]	At the beginning of the year, Nephites go against robbers and destroy many, but must return to their own lands because of robbers' numbers. Thus ends the eighty-first year.
59[NvsN]	3 Nephi 1:27	93	During the year, Gadianton robber bands living in the mountains slaughter many.

4. Era: Sign of Christ's Birth

Action	Text	Dates	Events
60[NvsNA]	3 Nephi 2:11-19	13-15	There begin to be wars through all the land. Before the thirteenth year has passed away, this war threatens Nephites with destruction. It continues for two years.
61[NvsN]	3 Nephi 3:1, 13-26	16-17	In these years, the people gather in one place to starve out robbers.
	3 Nephi 4:7-12	19."VI"[a]	In the nineteenth year, "sixth month," robbers battle Nephites, but are beaten and eliminated.
62[LA]	Mormon 1:8-12	322	In this year a war with multiple battles begins; Lamanites withdraw.
63[L]	Mormon 2:1	326	A new war begins.
64[L]	Mormon 2:3	327	Lamanites come against the Nephites, who retreat northward.
65[L]	Mormon 2:4	327-330	Unsuccessful stand at Angola.
66[L]	Mormon 2:5	327-330	Unsuccessful stand in land of David.
67[L]	Mormon 2:9	327-330	At Joshua, Nephites defeat the Lamanites.
68[LA]	Mormon 2:15	?-334	Implied slaughter of Nephites in wars.
69[L]	Mormon 2:16	345	Nephites driven into the land northward to Jashon.
70[L]	Mormon 2:20	345	Driven northward to land of Shem.
71[L]	Mormon 2:22-25	346	Nephites defeat Lamanites.
72[NA]	Mormon 2:27	347-349	Nephites attack, regain their old lands.
73[L]	Mormon 3:4-7	361	Lamanites attack at the narrow pass, are beaten, and flee to their own lands.
74[L]	Mormon 3:8	362	Lamanites return and are again beaten.
75[N]	Mormon 4:1-2	363	Nephites attack Lamanites, then retreat to land of Desolation.
76[L]	Mormon 4:2	363	Immediately a new Lamanite army arives and beats Nephites, taking land of Desolation.
77[L]	Mormon 4:7-8	364	Lamanites come against the city Teancum, but they are repelled.
78[N]	Mormon 4:8	364	Confident Nephites retake land of Desolation.
79[L]	Mormon 4:10-14	367.I?	The 366th year has passed away, and Lamanites come again, taking possession of lands of Desolation and Teancum.
80[N]	Mormon 4:15	367	Nephites drive out the Lamanites once more.
81[LA]	Mormon 4:17-20	377	Lamanites mercilessly drive Nephites; in land of Desolation, Nephites lose and flee.
82[LA]	Mormon 4:20	378?	At Boaz, the Lamanites must attack twice to win.
83[LA]	Mormon 5:3-4	379	Two Lamanite attacks at Jordan fail.
84[L]	Mormon 5:6-7	380	Nephites are beaten badly and flee.
85[L]	Mormon 6:5-15	384	The final battle at Cumorah; tens of thousands destroyed; Nephites become extinct as a nation and people.

Notes

1. The actual length of the solar year varies periodically between 365.242120 and 365.242877 days according to Leroy E. Doggett and George H. Kaplan, "Calendar Accuracy," *Sky and Telescope* 65 (1983): 205-6. Astronomically, the solar year's average length over a fivemillion-year period is about half a minute shorter than our Gregorian year.

2. Charles Kolb in Michel Graulich, "The Metaphor of the Day in Ancient Mexican Myth and Ritual," *Current Anthropology* 22 (1981): 53. Pages 51-59 present information on the hotly debated subject of whether Mesoamerican calendars included intercalation mechanisms. Victoria Bricker, "The Origin of the Maya Solar Calendar," *Current Anthropology* 23 (1982): 101-3, has proposed that the southern Mesoamerican calendar did not adjust to keep seasons and calendar days in agreement. From a Book of Mormon point of view, it may be of interest that she calculates that the Maya solar calendar was first used "around 550 B.C.," at which time the seasons and the solar year would have been in full coordination. At that time 06 Pop, first day of the first month of the Maya year, fell at the winter solstice. Of course Lehi's party reached their land of promise, probably in southern Mesoamerica, around 585 B.C., although we do not know what relation his descendants may have had to the bearers of higher Maya culture.

3. Useful basic sources include Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology: Principles of Time Reckoning in the Ancient World and Problems of Chronology in the Bible* (Princeton: Princeton University Preis, 1964); and Julian Morgenstern's trilogy, "The Three Calendars of Ancient Israel," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 2 (1924): 13-78; "Additional Notes on 'The Three Calendars of Ancient Israel,'" *Hebrew Union College Annual* 3 (1926): 77-107; and "Supplementary Studies in the Calendars of Ancient Israel," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 10 (1935): 1-149. A similarity may have prevailed between the Near East and Mesoamerica in beliefs and customs regarding the beginning of the new year. The unlucky or "useless" days of the Aztecs and Maya immediately preceding the new year were a time of psychological tension and ritual uncertainty in the face of a possibility that the hoped-for renewal of the world at the moment of initiation of the new time period somehow might fail to take place (see, for example, George C. Vaillant, *The Aztecs of Mexico* [Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1950]). The similar five-day period in Egypt had some of the same connotations. Julian Morgenstern, in his *The Fire upon the Altar* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1963), 6-49, argues passionately, if not with complete persuasiveness, that similar beliefs and practices surrounded the Israelite new year celebration at the fall (changed later to the spring) equinox.

4. Morgenstern, "Supplementary Studies," 3.

5. 1bid., 7.

6. See John L. Sorenson, "The 'Brass Plates' and Biblical Scholarship," *Dialogue* 10 (1977): 34; also available as a F.A.R.M.S. Reprint, 1977.

7. Morgenstern, "Additional Notes," 101.

8. I consider it obvious that, at the very least, two calendars were in use among the Nephites, if only because the lunar system indicated for the people of Zarahemla would not have disappeared, considering how numerous they were in the Nephite-ruled society. We should also expect that at the least the Israelite immigrants would adapt or borrow, as did the Elephantine group in Egypt, a local, ecologically suited system of reckoning to govern their agricultural cycle. After all, whoever made them acquainted with native American maize (see Mosiah 7:22; 9:9,14) could not have made the transfer of the plant and the essential cultural knowledge of its husbandry without also sharing an appropriate calendar with the newcomers (on maize transmission, see John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient*

American Setting for the Book of Mormon [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1985], 139-40). Mesoamerica is, of course, famous for the number, variety, and complex articulation of its calendrical systems (see, for example, Linton Satterthwaite, "Calendrics of the Maya Lowlands," in Gordon R. Willey, ed., *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, 16 vols. [Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965], 3:603-31).

9. Ralph L. Roys, "Lowland Maya Native Society at Spanish Contact," in Willey, *Middle American Indians*, 3:671.

10. A good source showing the time depth of solstitial reckoning is Vincent H. Malmström, "A Reconstruction of the Chronology of Mesoamerican Calendrical Systems," *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 9 (1978): 105-16.

11. John L. Sorenson, "The Significance of the Chronological Discrepancy between Alma 53:22 and Alma 56:9," available from the author upon request at F.A.R.M.S.

12. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 35, 241.

13. Jorge Vivó Escoto, "Weather and Climate of Mexico and Central America," in Robert C. West, ed., *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, 16 vols. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964), 1:187215. On rainfall in the Motozintla area, see Carlos Navarrete, *Un Reconocimiento de la Sierra Madre de Chiapas: Apuntes de un Diario de Campo*, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México Centro de Estudios Mayas, Cuadernos 13 (México, 1978).

14. Mesoamerican battles were sometimes scheduled for auspicious times (Michael D. Coe, "Skywatchers of Ancient Mexico," *Archaeoastronomy* 4/1 [1981]: 39-40).

15. Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, 298-301.

16. In regard to the calendar in the new reckoning, 3 Nephi 8 forces me to reconsider a position I had previously taken. On the fourth day of the first month in the thirty-fourth year of the new era, the prophesied signs of the crucifixion began with the rise of a great storm and a "tempest" (3 Nephi 8:5-7). I suggested in *An Ancient American Setting*, 322, that this referred to a tropical hurricane, but the season when hurricanes have occurred historically falls only between June and November. A hurricane would have been absolutely impossible, on natural principles, whether the old late-December new year had been referred to here or, as I now suppose, the new year fell over three months later. Rereading the text persuades me now that a hurricane probably was not referred to. The tempest, after all, arose abruptly, then ended after only three hours (see 3 Nephi 8:6, 19). This does not describe a typical hurricane coming out of the Caribbean. Something more like a set of super thunderstorms triggered by volcanism could account for the reported phenomena. Such thunderstorms would be quite possible in April.

The Importance of Warfare in Book of Mormon Studies

William J. Hamblin

Historians are becoming increasingly aware of the fundamental role of warfare in human history.[1] Warfare served, for instance, as a major factor in the development of early forms of civilization and the state.[2] Many times military conquest directly resulted in cultural interaction and the transformation of civilizations, such as the spread of Hellenism after the conquest of Alexander the Great and the great Islamic cultural synthesis following the Arab conquests. The expansion and eventual dominance of the world's great religions were often closely related to military conquest. Military conquests directly aided in the extension of Christianity, especially in the Age of Discovery. The success of Arab conquests swiftly raised Islam to the status of a world religion.

In addition, the search for military superiority over enemies frequently stimulated the invention of new technologies.[3] Much of the great literature of antiquity centered around military themes and was produced under the patronage of military elites.[4] The transportation of diseases, plants, and animals, as well as human migrations to new regions, was closely connected with military expeditions.[5] Exploration and the expansion and control of trade routes were based as much on military as on economic activities.[6] Warfare was thus always a major concern of the elites of ancient societies. In early times, leaders frequently assumed that anyone who was not a member of their tribe, city, or kingdom was a potential enemy. Thus, unless some compelling reason existed for peaceful cooperation, international relations were at best passively hostile and quite often openly violent. Periods of peace were often predicated more on the fear of going to war with a strong enemy than on any concept among the ruling elite that peace was somehow desirable. Of course, there were many exceptions to this general pattern, especially among some, though by no means all, religious leaders and philosophers. Nonetheless, political and military reality ensured that peaceful social concepts seldom were put into widespread official practice. In this century, which can be characterized as the age of world war, genocide, and nuclear bombs, it is difficult to imagine that less than a century has passed since modern technology rendered the effects of war so horrendous that a widespread call for the complete abolition of war has arisen.

The inevitability of war has always been a chief criterion in determining how ancient societies organized themselves. The need to defend family, home, and possessions from bands of brigands or organized enemy armies necessitated the increasing militarization of ancient societies. In such a situation, the ruling elites were closely associated with, if not actually the same as, the military elites. Indeed, many rulers could maintain their power only by exerting military force against their own subjects. The process of progressive militarization culminated in the formation of a series of huge militarized empires like Assyria, Persia under the Achaemenids, the empire of Alexander the Great and his successors, the Mauryan empire in India, the Qin dynasty in China, and, of course, Rome.

In these social and economic conditions, most disposable economic resources of ancient governments were devoted to maintaining a strong military force. Estimates vary, but probably fifty to seventy-five percent of the revenues of Pre-Modern European governments went to support the armies.[7] The social, cultural, and religious values of many ancient societies further glorified military action and heroism, creating a widespread martial mentality.[8] The spoils of war represented a major source of income and prosperity for a victorious state. What we see today as the great cultural achievements of ancient civilizations were, for the most part, built on the plunder, blood, and ruins of defeated enemies.

The civilizations described in the Book of Mormon were no exception to this general pattern. Aside from a remarkable period following the visitation of Christ to the Nephites, armed conflicts at different levels of intensity were nearly constant phenomena. Few, if any, generations passed without involvement in a major war. The authors of the Book of Mormon took war and its social and spiritual ramifications very seriously. Hugh Nibley, for instance, estimated that the book devotes approximately one-third of its content directly or indirectly to military matters.[9] The Book of Mormon describes many aspects of warfare in great detail, and several of its prophets and heroes were military men. In its emphasis on warfare, the Book of Mormon accurately reflects the grim reality of history.

The Discontinuity between Ancient and Modern Warfare

Like many aspects of human life, the nature of pretechnical warfare falls into definite cross-cultural patterns. This is to say that, in broad terms, soldiers in most ancient societies tended to organize for war and fight in a limited number of basically similar military systems. Nonetheless, though warfare has been a constant factor in human history, the precise nature of warfare and the means by which wars were carried out have varied greatly.

There have been many periods of transformation in the patterns of human warfare. The most important began in the late sixteenth century in Western Europe, based on a combination of the development of effective gunpowder weapons, the development of new methods of state organization that allowed an increasing percentage of state resources to be devoted to warfare, the creation of new military tactics, and the eventual industrialization of warfare. Later, the military developments of the Napoleonic age· further transformed patterns of warfare.[10] These developments eventually changed the history of the entire planet and transformed the way people lived.[11] Thus historians recognize a fundamental discontinuity, beginning in the sixteenth century, between what could be called Modern or technical warfare and Pre-Modern or pretechnical warfare.

Despite the fact that Joseph Smith lived in the age of Modern, or technical warfare, following the great military transformations of both the sixteenth century and the Napoleonic wars, the Book of Mormon consistently reflects the basic patterns of Pre-Modern warfare. The Pre-Modern military patterns described in the Book of Mormon are not limited to generalities, but also extend to the minutest details of the text. I would like to summarize the remarkable consistency and ancient parallels of Book of Mormon military descriptions in seven categories.

The Ecological Foundations of Ancient Warfare

Pre-Modern warfare, along with all other elements of Pre-Modern life, was closely bound up with the natural environment. These environmental considerations are clearly reflected in the history of warfare and underlay many of the descriptions of warfare in the Book of Mormon.

The basic environmental limitation was that human beings are physically limited. The human body can operate at peak efficiency only within a limited range of environmental conditions governed by factors like temperature, humidity, and altitude. Even under optimum environmental conditions, humans need frequent periods of rest and daily access to food and drink. When extended beyond its limited range of favorable conditions, the human body quickly loses efficiency, and the effectiveness of the warrior rapidly deteriorates.

Another basic limiting factor was the terrain. Each geographical zone in the world represents a unique combination of hills, mountains, forests, valleys, rivers, lakes, and oceans. The patterns of warfare in any region of the world are invariably based on their unique terrain. As John L. Sorenson has demonstrated in his geographical

studies, the accounts of warfare in the Book of Mormon are filled with descriptions of the strategic and tactical effects of the terrain.[12]

Another important consideration in warfare is climate, hydrology, and seasonality. War was very difficult to conduct during periods of extensive rain, heat, or cold. Because ancient societies were closely tied to the seasonal cycles of nature for crop planting and harvesting, agricultural considerations limited periods of extended warfare. Sorenson has also demonstrated that the Book of Mormon accounts of warfare reflect the climatic and seasonal conditions of Mesoamerica.[13]

A final important natural factor in ancient warfare was animal resources. Throughout human history, a wide range of animals has been used to support military activity. Donkeys, horses, camels, elephants, and oxen have served as beasts of burden to transport supplies and equipment. Soldiers also rode horses, camels, and elephants into battle. Cattle, sheep, goats, and other livestock were frequently herded with armies to provide continuous supplies of meat. Thus the speed of an army's march frequently depended not on the average speed of a human being, but on the average speed of the slowest animal accompanying the army. Many military systems also used birds such as Carrier pigeons to send messages.[14]

The success of many ancient military systems directly hinged on creating efficient human and animal cooperation specifically adapted to particular environments. Two of the great military transformations in world history came about through the domestication and militarization of the camel and horse. For example, the success of the great Arab conquests of the seventh century A.D. depended on the fighting units' ability to transport men and supplies quickly through the desert with camels.[15] Of even greater impact was the domestication of the horse and the development of chariot warfare, which contributed to the widespread success of Indo-European migrations and the ultimate collapse of several ancient civilizations, including Old Babylonia, Middle Kingdom Egypt, Harappa in India, and Shang China.[16] Chariot-based armies subsequently dominated ancient warfare in Eurasia for a thousand years and were replaced only when soldiers learned to ride horses in battle effectively, thereby eliminating the need for chariots. Mounted military aristocracies, like the medieval European knights, thereafter dominated warfare in Eurasia for another two thousand years, until the rise of effective gunpowder weapons in the sixteenth century.

The success of Central Asian nomadic armies, like the Mongols, stemmed directly from their unique combination of horse and sheep nomadism. The ultimate limitation on the size of the Mongol empire was inadequate pasture land for their animals rather than their enemies' military strength.[17] India, on the other hand, was uniquely the land of elephant warfare, where the strength of an army was measured by the number of elephants a king owned.[18]

In short, different military systems developed in different parts of the world at different times according to the different animal resources human beings could use for their military purposes. The Book of Mormon clearly reflects this principle. Unlike the Bible, with its frequent references to horses and chariots in warfare, no animal is ever mentioned as being used for military purposes in the Book of Mormon. There are, of course, references to the horses and chariots of King Lamoni (see Alma 18:9-12; 20:6), but these are clearly in a ceremonial and transportational rather than a military setting.[19] The king may ride in his chariot, but no one is ever said to have fought in a chariot, nor to have ridden a horse in battle. Horses and chariots are again mentioned in 3 Nephi 3:22 but in reference to migration rather than combat. Though the problems surrounding the mention of horses and

chariots in the Book of Mormon have by no means been resolved,[20] from the perspective of military history, animals did not play a significant role in Book of Mormon warfare, either in battle or for transportation of war supplies. This precisely parallels pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, where animals do not seem to have been used extensively for military purposes.[21]

Military Technology

Another important element in Pre-Modern warfare was the technological limitations of the civilization at war. Although Modern warfare is the age of the absolute preeminence of technology, technological and tactical developments have always played a significant role in changing balances of military power.[22] Despite vast differences in detail, all Pre-Modern soldiers fought with missile or melee weapons in face-to-face encounters, frequently wearing some kind of armor. With the rise of effective long-range gunpowder weapons, however, guns quickly replaced muscle-propelled missiles, swords, and spears, while armor was progressively discarded. The range at which killing could occur continually lengthened, until today it has reached into the heavens. Without exception, the weapons, tactics, and military operations described in the Book of Mormon fit into the ancient pattern.

Ancient societies needed a broad range of technological skills to transform their natural resources into military power. These skills included animal husbandry for the care of mounts and pack animals, metallurgical and lithic skills for weapon and armor making, engineering skills for building fortifications and siegecraft, and nautical skills for sea and river transportation and naval warfare.

The Book of Mormon provides a great deal of incidental detail on military technology. As we have attempted to demonstrate in several chapters in this volume, descriptions of weapons and armor in the Book of Mormon are all consistent with ancient patterns as represented in the ancient Near East and Mesoamerica. Indeed, the Book of Mormon consistently parallels Mesoamerica and differs from the ancient Near East in precisely those features that distinguish Mesoamerica from the ancient Near East. Coats of mail, helmets, battle chariots, cavalry, and sophisticated siege engines are all absent from the Book of Mormon and Mesoamerica, despite their importance in biblical descriptions of ancient Near Eastern warfare.[23] Studies on fortifications demonstrate that the Book of Mormon patterns of military architecture and engineering are also consistent with similar patterns in Mesoamerica.[24] The Book of Mormon further reflects the fact that ancient military technology and tactics were never static. Major changes in military techniques described in the Book of Mormon include the proliferation of armor and fortifications among the Nephites in the first century B.C. (see Alma 43:19; 48:8-9), which the Lamanites later adopted (see Alma 49:6).

Social and Economic Foundations of Ancient Warfare

Warfare should not be seen as strictly a military activity. Many elements in warfare reflect the social and economic patterns in a society. In order to be militarily competitive, ancient societies first needed access to basic resources to carry out warfare: food to feed the soldiers; textiles and leather for clothing and armor; specialized stones or metals for weapons and armor; stone and lumber for building fortifications; timber and other products for ship building; and gold, silver, and other forms of wealth to purchase these supplies and to ensure the loyalty of the troops.

The ability to recruit, equip, train, supply, and move large groups of soldiers, servants, and animals also represented a major social undertaking for ancient societies. Indeed, warfare strained the economic and social resources of many ancient societies, sometimes beyond their limits, thereby contributing to their ultimate collapse.[25] As the story of Moroni and Pahoran illustrates, the cost of warfare exerted terrible social and economic pressure on Nephite society (see Alma 58-61).[26] Because of the economic strain of supporting armies at war for long periods of time, plundering was essential in supplying many ancient armies and is constantly mentioned in the Book of Mormon.[27]

Demography and patterns of recruitment are topics that warrant further study. Obviously, the Book of Mormon describes a steady demographic and geographic expansion of Nephite culture through the centuries.[28] This expansion coincided precisely with a steadily increasing size of armies and casualties mentioned in the text. The pattern was to move from armies numbering in the thousands in the first century B.C. to armies in the tens of thousands by the fourth century A.D.[29]

Pre-Modern warriors were generally organized into kinship or communal groups, serving under leaders who personally participated in the melee. The broadened agricultural and industrial base of early Modern societies allowed for an increasing percentage of the population to serve in the military, until eventually universal conscription was introduced. In Modern warfare, the tactical organization of soldiers is purely administrative rather than communal. Pre-Modern warfare also tended to be aristocratic, with a hereditary, highly trained, elite military aristocracy dominating warfare in most societies. With the rise of gunpowder weapons, which allow marginally trained peasants to kill the most highly trained aristocrat, the hereditary military aristocracies became functionally obsolete and ultimately declined and disappeared. As John Tvedtnes has demonstrated, the Book of Mormon fits the ancient pattern of tribal and communal military organization and hereditary military aristocracies.[30]

Military Operations

It is interesting that a volume on warfare in the Book of Mormon has very few discussions of the actual battles and campaigns. This reflects the current trends in military history, which focus less on what has been called the "drum and bugle" accounts of battles, and more on the political, social, economic, cultural, and religious implications of warfare in human societies. Of course, Nibley, Sorenson, and others have already done preliminary examinations of battle narratives in the Book of Mormon.[31] Nonetheless, a great deal of work in analyzing the actual accounts of campaigns still remains.[32] Here I can only briefly review some of the major patterns in Pre-Modern field operations as reflected in the Book of Mormon.[33]

Preparations for battle in ancient societies were very complex. Creating an army was essentially tantamount to creating a mobile city. An army had all the social, economic, and logistical needs of a sedentary city, but it faced the additional problems of being constantly on the move and harassed by enemies.[34] The Book of Mormon clearly reflects many of these problems.

Manpower had to be recruited, and soldiers trained, equipped, organized into units for marching and tactics, and mobilized at central locations to begin operations. An army generally required a wide range of camp followers to supply its troops with food and supplies: porters, cleaners, cooks, and other laborers. The number of camp followers sometimes equaled or exceeded the number of soldiers in an army. The army needed to prepare and

maintain barracks, arsenals, fortifications, and other bases, and the society had to prepare to maintain some type of a standing army, usually royal guardsmen, in peacetime. Getting the troops and supplies to the strategic points of conflict required extensive marching and maneuvering. Any reader of the military sections of the Book of Mormon will recall the seemingly endless accounts of marches and countermarches.

Not all military conflict in antiquity was characterized by formal, set battles. What we in modern times call guerrilla war typified much ancient warfare. This characteristic of warfare is also well described in the Book of Mormon, as can be seen in Peterson's analysis of the nature and motives of the Gadianton robbers.[35]

Actual battlefield operations usually represented only a small portion of the time of a campaign, but they were inevitably the most important. Battles began with the dispatching of scouts to reconnoiter for food, trails, and the location of enemy troops. Most ancient armies used spies and other means to gain intelligence, and the Book of Mormon frequently mentions the importance of spies and other Nephite intelligence operations.[36] Military leaders generally made battle plans shortly before the army encountered the enemy. Such plans were frequently formulated by a council of officers and professional soldiers who discussed the situation and offered suggestions, which is precisely what Moroni does in preparation for battle (see Alma 52:19).

In theory, units within an army during battle could be controlled, maneuvered, and withdrawn on command. In fact, though, when the actual fighting began, such coordination often proved difficult. Soldiers tended to fight in units distinguished by banners held by officers or assistants, and the troops simply followed the banner around the field (recalling to mind Moroni's title of liberty and other banners placed on towers). Cohesion of military formations was often a decisive element in Pre-Modern combat. It was especially vital for defensive purposes, for an organized body of men could mutually protect one another, while a single isolated man would be subject to attack from the side and rear.

Work by Merrill has demonstrated that armies in the Book of Mormon were organized on a decimal system of hundreds, thousands, and ten thousands. This followed a pattern similar in ancient Israel and was probably the most widespread system of military organization in the ancient world. There was also a clear ranking of captains and chief captains, and there seems to have been a basic continuity between officers and their units.[37]

Battles frequently began with an exchange of missiles to wound and demoralize the enemy. Only when the missiles were exhausted did hand-to-hand combat occur. The battle described in Alma 49 offers a good description of archery duels preceding hand-to-hand melees. When panic began to spread in the ranks, a complete collapse could be sudden and devastating. The death of the king or commander often led to the complete collapse of an army, as happened in Alma 49:25. Casualties occurred most during the flight and pursuit after the disintegration of the main units. Battles in the Book of Mormon often end with descriptions of just such routs, flights, and destructions of armies (see Alma 52:26-36; 62:31, 38).[38]

Political and Legal Norms of War

Each ancient civilization developed its own political and legal norms by which it was supposed to conduct warfare. Of course, in antiquity, as today, such legal norms were often honored only in the breach. Nonetheless, ancient societies often professed important laws and patterns of behavior regarding international relations and diplomacy.

Perhaps the greatest distinction between modern and ancient international affairs is the ancient emphasis on personal oaths. Szink's paper in this volume shows that ancient military oaths were taken very seriously, and the

Book of Mormon emphasis on oaths of loyalty from troops and oaths of surrender from prisoners illustrates these ancient concepts very well.[39] The Book of Mormon also presents a complex pattern of international relations, treaties, and diplomacy consistent with ancient Near Eastern practices.[40]

The question of the causes of warfare in ancient societies has received detailed attention by historians and anthropologists, who have discovered a broad range of social, economic, ethnic, political, cultural, religious, and personal causes of war. In a F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report, Palmer has examined some of these causes, pointing out that the Book of Mormon manifests similar patterns.[41] Patterns of war in a civilization were also frequently linked to major ideological conflicts, as Hilton and Flinders discuss in their paper in this volume.[42] On the other hand, shifting patterns of ideological and religious loyalties could also serve as the basis for making peace, as Tvedtnes discusses.[43]

In many ancient societies, few distinctions existed between soldiers and police forces, although, as Welch has shown, there were clear distinctions between thieves and robbers that are also manifest in the Book of Mormon.[44] Welch's contribution to this volume demonstrates that the Book of Mormon presents a complex pattern of martial law, with numerous details parallelling ancient Israelite and Jewish laws of war.[45]

Cultural Manifestations of Warfare

Ancient warfare was often a cultural and artistic phenomenon. Before the modern concentration of wealth in the hands of capitalists and the development of mass media art forms, the two major patrons of literature and the arts were kings and priests. Most Pre-Modern literature and art therefore naturally reflects the concerns of their patrons — warfare and the gods, along with the important addition of the favorite nonmilitary pastime of the warriors (if not always the priests), love. Most of the great classics of Pre-Modern world literature focus on the concerns of war, God, and love: the Gilgamesh epics, Homer's epics, the Hindu epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, the Hebrew Bible, Vergil's *Aeneid*, the Norse sagas, the medieval European romances, Dante's *Divina commedia*, Japanese war tales like *Heike Monogatari*, Chinese novels like *The Three Kingdoms*, Firdawsi's *Shah-nameh* from Iran — the list could be greatly expanded. Likewise, war and God are the two major themes of the Book of Mormon, which can thus be seen as a typical product of the concerns of Pre-Modern elites.

Religion and War

As James Aho has demonstrated, nearly all ancient warfare was sacral warfare carried out in relation to a complex series of religious ritual, law, and ideology.[46] Although there have always been political and economic motives for ancient and medieval war, Pre-Modern warfare was fundamentally sacral. Post-sixteenth-century European technicalized war has become increasingly secularized, with political, nationalistic, racial, and economic justifications predominating.

The close connection between religious ideology and warfare is one of the most obvious ancient elements of the Book of Mormon. In numerous incidental details, the Book of Mormon reveals the substantial ties between warfare and religion, which parallel patterns in the ancient Near East and in Mesoamerica. In his chapter in this volume, Ricks has demonstrated that certain elements of Israelite patterns of holy war were continued in the Book of Mormon, along with the important ancient idea that success in war was due fundamentally to the will of the gods. As he has shown, the Book of Mormon mentions activities such as consulting prophets before battle. Likewise, a strict purity code for warriors can be seen in the story of Helaman and the stripling warriors. An

example of ritual destruction of cities in relationship to warfare also appears in the Book of Mormon (see Alma 16:1-11, cf. Deuteronomy 13:12-18).[47]

Warren's contribution to this volume approaches the question of sacral warfare from the Mesoamerican perspective. Warren demonstrates that the issues of ritual kingship and human sacrifice of war prisoners, which many scholars now see as fundamental elements in Mesoamerican religious and political societies, have interesting parallels in the Book of Mormon.[48]

Book of Mormon Parallels to Ancient Patterns

Let me conclude this overview by summarizing the military topics on which the Book of Mormon manifests clear parallels to ancient patterns of military behavior: the use of only pregunpowder weapons; communal bases of military loyalty; tribal military organization; agricultural economic base; seasonal patterns in warfare; military implications of geography and climate; limited use of animal resources; weapons technology and typology; fortifications; military innovations; social and economic impact of warfare; the military implications of changing demographic patterns; recruitment based on tribes and communities; the problems of supplying soldiers in times of war; complex prebattle maneuvering; extensive scouting and spying; prebattle war councils; use of banners for mobilization and organization; decimal military organization; proper tactical role of missile and melee combat; patterns of flight after battle; the importance of oaths of loyalty and surrender; dorms of international relations; the causes of warfare; treatment of robbers as brigands; laws of war; importance of plunder in warfare; guerrilla warfare; ritual destruction of cities; ritual capture of kings; human sacrifice; treatment of prisoners; disposal of the dead; centrality of war to the elite culture; the fundamental interrelationship between war and religion; religious ritual behavior before, during, and after battle; divination before battle; camp purity; and the ideology of holy war. In none of these topics does the Book of Mormon contradict the ancient patterns of the practice of warfare. In many of these topics, the Book of Mormon uniquely reflects its dual heritage of the ancient Near East and Mesoamerica. Hugh Nibley has called the study of military affairs in the Book of Mormon "a rigorous test" to the historical claims of the book.[49] In light of the numerous papers in this volume, we can say that the Book of Mormon does indeed pass the test.

Notes

1. See William McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society since* A.D. *1000* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1987). For a general introduction to ancient warfare, see Arther Ferrill, *The Origins of War* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1985). For a discussion of specific reasons for studying warfare in the Book of Mormon, see John W. Welch, "Why Study Warfare in the Book of Mormon?" in this volume.

2. Jonathan Haas, *The Evolution of the Prehistoric State* (New York: Columbia, 1982).

3. Martin van Creveld, *Technology and War: From 2000* B.C. *to the Present* (New York: Free Press, 1989).

4. On the "heroic" background of the origin of literature, see H. Munro Chadwick and N. Kershaw Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 193240).

5. On diseases, see McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power*; and William Hardy, *Plagues and Peoples* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press, 1976).

6. Carlo M. Cipolla, *Guns and Sails in the Early Phase of European Expansion, 1400-1700* (London: Collins, 1965); and Geoffrey V. Scammell, *The World Encompassed: The First European Maritime Empires, ca. 800–1650* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

7. For examples from Pre-Modern Europe, see Carlo M. Cipolla, *Before the Industrial Revolution* (New York: Norton, 1976), 51-53. A discussion of Modern (technicalized) and Pre-Modern (pretechnical) warfare follows.

8. For a general introduction to martial mentalities in societies, see James A. Aho, *Religious Mythology and the Art of War: Comparative Religious Symbolisms of Military Violence* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981); Bruce Lincoln, "War and Warriors: Overview," in Mircea Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion,* 16 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 15:339-44; and C. Scott Littleton, "War: Indo-European Beliefs and Practices," in ibid., 15:344-49. The best-known examples of martial mentality dominating a social system are the western European knight and the Japanese Samurai, on which see Joachim Bumke, *The Concept of Knighthood in the Middle Ages,* tr. W. T. H. and Erika Jackson (New York: AMS Press, 1982); and Stephen R. Turnbull, *The Samurai: A Military History* (New York: Macmillan, 1977).

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20. For a brief discussion, see Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 295-96.

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22. McNeill, *Pursuit of Power*.

23. In this volume, see William J. Hamblin and A. Brent Merrill, "Swords in the Book of Mormon"; William J. Hamblin, "The Bow and Arrow in the Book of Mormon"; William J. Hamblin, "Armor in the Book of Mormon"; Paul Y. Hoskisson, "Scimitars, Cimeters!"; and William J. Hamblin and A. Brent Merrill, "Notes on the Cimeter (Scimitar) in the Book of Mormon."

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25. Norman Yoffee and George L. Cowgill, eds., *The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988) contains detailed discussions of numerous factors from many different civilizations.

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27. See R. Gary Shapiro, comp., *An Exhaustive Concordance of the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City: Hawkes, 1977), s.v. "gain," "plunder," "steal," and their derivatives.

28. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 190-238.

29. A. Brent Merrill, "Nephite Captains and Armies," in this volume.

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32. See Matthew Hilton, "Preliminary Summary of Nephite Armed Conflict in the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. Working Paper, 1987.

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35. Daniel C. Peterson, "Notes on 'Gadianton Masonry,' " and "The Gadianton Robbers as Guerrilla Warriors," in this volume.

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