January 2003

A Call for Emendations

Royal Skousen

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/insights

Part of the Mormon Studies Commons, and the Religious Education Commons

Recommended Citation

Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/insights/vol23/iss5/7

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Insights: The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
A Call for Emendations
from Royal Skousen, editor of the Book of Mormon Critical Text Project

As I have been working on the Book of Mormon Critical Text Project, people have occasionally written or talked to me about passages in the Book of Mormon that seem strange or difficult. A good many have made specific suggestions about emendations (or revisions to the text). Surprisingly, a large percentage of these have ended up being correct or have led me to come up with an appropriate emendation.

Most of these suggestions have also been worthy of treatment in volume 4 of the critical text (which will deal with the analysis of textual variants in the Book of Mormon). In some cases, the suggested emendations will be discussed even if it turns out that the evidence doesn’t support making a change.

You may have noticed in the recent FARMS publication Uncovering the Original Text of the Book of Mormon: History and Findings of the Critical Text Project that I gave credit in my last article (“The Systematic Text of the Book of Mormon”) for six different emendations. I have always felt that credit should be given for all suggestions that will be discussed in the critical text.

Thus far these suggestions have come from (1) ordinary readers of the Book of Mormon, (2) students in my textual criticism class at Brigham Young University, or (3) student researchers who have worked for me on this project. The main purpose of this letter is to explicitly extend an invitation to all interested readers of the Book of Mormon to send me any examples they might have of possible textual emendations or difficulties in the text that need to be considered.

Volume 4 of the critical text will be approximately 2,000 pages long and will appear in four separately bound parts. The first part, now in preparation, will cover the small plates of Nephi (from 1 Nephi through Omni), plus the Words of Mormon, and will appear sometime next year. My plan is to publish one part per year. So this means that suggestions for the text need to come in soon, especially those that deal with the first part of the text.

Please feel free to contact me directly.

Royal Skousen
Department of Linguistics and English Language
3187 JKHB, Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah 84602
(801) 422–3482 (with phone mail)
royal_skousen@byu.edu

The New World Promised Land’s Economic Base

A majority of people in the modern world are absorbed in performing their daily work, conceived in terms of jobs, money, food, and other things practical and economic. Would it have been different for the Nephites or Lamanites? Not really. The center of their daily concerns, too, was “making a living.” But what that meant differed greatly from what we mean by the expression.

We read that, among the Nephites, “the men [did] till the ground, and raise all manner of grain and . . . fruit.” Meanwhile, the women did “spin, and toil, and . . . work all manner of . . . cloth of every kind.” By dint of such labor, the Nephites “did prosper in the land” (Mosiah 10:4, 5).

In Book of Mormon times, an agrarian life was crucial to a satisfactory society. When grain was insufficient, famine prevailed (see Alma 3:2; 4:2; Helaman 11:5–6; 3 Nephi 4:3, 6). Most people farmed. Yet nothing in the book suggests that the people prepared or cultivated the land using anything other than their own hands. Although “flocks and herds” were kept, it seems that they were used mainly for food (see, for example, 3 Nephi 3:22; 4:4).

The farmers had to produce in order to feed and clothe their families as well as the “thousands . . . , yea, and tens of thousands, who [did] sit in idleness” (Alma 60:22). The latter group no doubt consisted of...