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Abstract Review of *Norman the Nephite's and Larry the Lamanite's Book of Mormon Time Line* (1995), by Pat Bagley.

Pat Bagley. *Norman the Nephite's and Larry the Lamanite's Book of Mormon Time Line.* Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995. 38 pp. with foldout 8-panel double-sided time line for Book of Mormon events, individuals, and groups. \$14.95.

Reviewed by Ted L. Gibbons

Norman the Nephite's and Larry the Lamanite's Book of Mormon Time Line is a two-part illustrated work. The first section of 38 pages provides brief descriptions, and, in most cases, illustrations, of the major individuals, groups, and events chronicled in the Book of Mormon. The final section deals with "Sacred Objects" from the *Book of Mormon*, the "Keepers of the Plates," and some of the individuals and groups associated with the translation of the record. Page 38 is an index of the individuals, groups, and events mentioned.

The descriptions are simple and straightforward. In spite of their brevity, they are in almost all instances accurate. In a careful review of the one hundred and nine summaries offered, I discovered only one with conclusions that might be suspect.

The foldout time-line at the back of the book fills sixteen 4-1/2" by 8" panels. On one side major groups are color coded and brief descriptions of individuals and groups outline the information contained in the book. Chronological dates at the top and bottom show the passage of years. Each description on the time line is accompanied by an actual or approximate date. A bottom row of images and explanations gives contemporary world events. The other side of the foldout gives a more detailed look at the years 320 B.C. to A.D. 40.

Aside from the two concerns mentioned below, the illustrations in the book and on the time line are simple, attractive, and colorful.

Pat Bagley has used Norman the Nephite and Larry the Lamanite in this book to appeal to readers of his earlier works. They add nothing to the content and utility of the work and serve

no other discernible purpose. In fact their presence as line-drawn figures in the book and on the time line are more of a distraction than an attraction. Do we need any more “arm” jokes about Ammon (“What a disarming guy . . .”)? What purpose can be served by having Larry and Norman tell us in the section on King Benjamin that his address is “1363 Curelom Way”? There are twenty-five such illustrations and notations in the book: twenty-five too many. Even those who loved Norman the Nephite, as my children did, may have difficulty appreciating this pointless material.

The illustrations have one other, and in my mind, major drawback. It is this: many of them are clearly lifted from the work of Arnold Friberg. At least a dozen of the sketches are clear imitations of Friberg’s masterpieces, lacking the detail but reflecting attitude, posture, and clothing. In some cases Bagley has drawn them as mirror images of the originals. His purpose in doing this is difficult to discern. Could he have been hoping that no one would notice? The abundant additional illustrations indicate sufficient talent to create original images. He should have done so.

What this volume tries to do it does quite well. Its presentation of the major events and people of the Book of Mormon is comprehensive and effective. The pertinent question is not “How good a book is it?” but “What purpose does it serve?” Who is going to use it? I called two local bookstores to see where it was being displayed. One had it in the Children’s section, the other in both the Reference *and* the Children’s section. In format and presentation, it appears to be a book for children. But in spite of the presence of numerous illustrations, including Norman and Larry, it is not. The information and the time line are both too complex. Teens and adults might use the book as a reference volume: “*Who were the two Mosiahs in the Book of Mormon?*” “*What was going on in the Book of Mormon when Moses divided the Red Sea?*” Answers to such questions are available here. But how often are they asked? This book will find buyers because of its appearance and author. But it will spend a great deal of time on the shelf.