



Insights: The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

Volume 3 | Number 1

Article 5

March 1983

Reprints & Preliminary Reports

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Recommended Citation

(1983) "Reprints & Preliminary Reports," *Insights: The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship*: Vol. 3: No. 1, Article 5.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/insights/vol3/iss1/5>

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REPRINTS & PRELIMINARY REPORTS

F.A.R.M.S. is pleased to announce the addition of the following articles as Reprints and Preliminary Reports now available. One of the Foundation's main functions is to make research about the Book of Mormon easily accessible to general readers. The demand for these papers continues to be very strong and responses have been enthusiastic.

Two papers, both entitled "Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon," one by Angela Crowell from *Zarahemla Record* (published by the Zarahemla Research Foundation, discussed below) and the second by John Tvednes from *BYU Studies*, discuss Hebrew idioms and grammatical constructions in the Book of Mormon. The authors cover Hebraisms such as singular-plurals, specific idioms, pronominal suffixes, construct state, adverbs, cognate accusatives, the prophetic perfect, and other words or phrases which may sound awkward as English constructions but are normal in Hebrew. These studies are not exhaustive and further analysis of both the Hebrew and non-Hebrew expressions in the Book of Mormon is still needed. But these studies make excellent points of departure. Both authors find the study of Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon to be enlightening and confirming.

The Zarahemla Research Foundation provides materials about Book of Mormon archeology and linguistics. It operates a library and Book of Mormon research center in Independence, Missouri. They distribute books, maps, games, posters and other scriptural enrichment materials in addition to their quarterly newsletter, *Zarahemla Record*. Anyone interested should write to P.O. Box 1727, Independence, MO. 64055.

Robert Paul's article on Joseph Smith and the Manchester (New York) Library studies the information environment of the 1820s in Manchester, New York, and lists all books held by its library up to 1845. The list shows the relatively meager resources available to Joseph Smith and concludes, moreover, "We can be reasonably certain that young Joseph did not exploit the resources of the Manchester Library."

Read Putnam's paper, "Were the Plates of Mormon of Tumbaga," is a metallurgist's pondering over what alloy might have been used by Mormon in fashioning his "golden" plates. An alloy known to early American metalsmiths called tumbaga has characteristics which would have made it an attractive candidate for Mormon to use: it was relatively lightweight, could be pounded into thin sheets, had a good Brinell hardness for engraving and would have presented a solid gold appearance to the eye.

Two articles by John W. Welch from the *Ensign* offer some Old World views on the Book of Mormon. The first looks at the world of Jerusalem during the days when Lehi would have been growing up and finds many concerns of that day, particularly in the Reforms of Josiah and the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem in the first year before the reign of Zedekiah, which set the stage dramatically for the religious awareness and prophetic statements of the early Book of Mormon prophets. The second article reports several experiences with scholars who find themselves convinced by several remarkable aspects of the book.

Recently completed is the Preliminary Report from Gary Gillum, "Hugh Nibley: A Subject Index to His Works." Also listed, from Gillum and Welch is the Comprehensive Bibliography. These are extensive reports which should prove to be indispensable for the serious Nibley buff or Book of Mormon scholar. Special thanks go to Reed Hyde and Bev Wilbur for their work on the 96 page computerization of the Bibliography.

In his paper "Lehi's 600-Year Prophecy and the Birth of Christ," Jay Huber examines in detail the apparent problem of the historical dating of "the first year of the reign of king Zedekiah, king of Judah," when Nephi's account begins. From then to the probable date for the birth of Christ is somewhat less than the "600 years" given by the Nephite record. Here for the first time, an LDS author treats fully the matter of the Nephite calendar in relation to historical and astronomical information from both the Near East and Mesoamerica. In the course of resolving the calendrical riddle, Huber discusses a hitherto neglected prophecy about Christ which his reconciliation of chronology makes plausible. This report has had the benefit of significant cooperation from astronomers, historians, archeologists and scriptorians, all of whom have enhanced this study.

The Book of Mormon describes small ancient migrations of Near Eastern people (presumably bearded) to the New World. One of the salient physiological characteristics of American Indians, however, is a general absence of facial hair. This anomalous situation is complicated by the fact that bearded figures are frequently portrayed in Mesoamerican art. Kirk Magleby's paper catalogues and analyzes over 250 ancient Mesoamerican bearded figures in an attempt to uncover a relationship between these artistic portrayals and the Book of Mormon peoples.

Gordon Thomasson discusses the significance of the icons of royalty in the Book of Mormon. Comparisons are drawn with illustrations of regal symbols from European art. The paper discusses the dialectical style of literary composition of the Book of Mosiah and explores the relationship of some principles of political philosophy and theology in Nephite society.

Bruce Van Orden, who has recently completed a doctoral dissertation on the life of George Reynolds, one of the leading Book of Mormon scholars around the turn of the century, has prepared two concise biographical sketches, one of Reynolds and another of his contemporary Janne Sjodahl. Van Orden's research provides a background against which to appreciate and assess the scholarly output of these two Book of Mormon commentators.

Also offered with this Newsletter is a F.A.R.M.S. staff paper on weights and measures. It examines Alma 11 concerning the monetary units and measures used among the Nephites in relation to data from the ancient Near East. Detailed information is mustered in several languages, and several systems of weights and volumes are compared with Nephite usage. For example, the Egyptians measured grain with bars and dots reminiscent of the Mesoamerican system. The paper also shows that in Sumerian, the -um suffix was the masculine singular and the -on suffix was the masculine double, as in Alma 11, a *shiblon* is twice the size of a *shiblum*.

