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## Brief Notices

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## Brief Notices

“A Historical Overview of the Mormons and Their Clothing, 1840-1850” by Carma de Jong Anderson (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1992)

Anderson’s pioneering work on Mormonism’s material culture was written to provide historical clothing information for “producers for stage and film, sculptors and graphic artists” (ix).

The study’s importance, however, extends beyond that increasingly significant but small cadre. Detailed, well-documented, and copiously illustrated, Anderson’s explication of footwear, waistcoats, shawls and outerwear, trousers, aprons, coveralls, and accessories won her the 1992 Reese Award for the best dissertation in Mormon history. Interesting history this is, too, furnishing a new perspective on the identities of early Church members, many of whom literally wore on their sleeves or hats or shoes clear indications of their national origins, occupations, and socio-economic ranks.

Anderson searched out, measured, and photographed clothing in private and museum collections; studied folk art, paintings, engravings, and photographs; and consulted contemporary written descriptions, store ledgers, advertisements, and

costume books. The wealth of information she garnered brings richer texture to the record of the daily lives of the Saints. Women spent every spare moment knitting so their families could have inexpensive stockings. Paunchy men used whalebone stays in their vests to preserve the tightly sculptured look. The Hancock family, each possessing only one tow shirt or dress, dejectedly left behind their season’s crop of flax when they fled Missouri. A young Norwegian American, Goudy Hogan, saw Joseph Smith in his light-colored linen coat, noted “a small hole in each elbow of his coat sleeve,” and concluded “that he was not a proud man” (128).

Anderson cogently observes: “As the fields of sociology and psychology have explored the impact of multiple environments on human life, the importance of our most intimate environment, our clothing, has become more apparent” (xiv).

—Jill Mulvay Derr

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*Follow the Living Prophet*  
by Brent L. Top, Larry E. Dahl, and  
Walter D. Bowen (Bookcraft, 1993)

Whether for those who willingly listen or for those who are confused by some alternative voices, this timely and significant book

builds a careful case for obedience to the living prophets. Based upon thorough research in Church government and doctrine, *Follow the Living Prophet* deals with such topics as the responsibilities of the presiding quorums in administering and governing the Church, succession in the Presidency, general conference, living oracles and the standard works, and the principles of counsel and common consent. Other chapters trace patterns of revelation and apostasy and emphasize the crucial need for a listening ear.

Without being ponderous, the book handles weighty matters in clear and inviting language that serves to frame, order, and situate abundant quotations from scripture and from Church leaders. Indeed, the authors intend that their own voices should recede so that those of the Brethren assume the foreground: "It is more important to us that the reader know what *they* teach and feel than what *we* think about the matter" (ix).

This book weaves together a remarkable collection of statements from the prophets, seers, and revelators of the restored Church. The consistency and unanimity of these statements is compelling. I found myself drawn especially to the discussion of *unanimity*. Several pages (61-63) explicate the settled and vital principle that all decisions of the presiding quorums "must be by the unanimous voice of the same" (D&C 107:27).

Using as its point of departure the story of Arabella Smith's courage and commitment during the

Hole-in-the-Rock saga, the final chapter, "Our Future Safety," is a forceful coda. The book's central theme is also reinforced by six landmark addresses provided in the appendixes. These addresses—by Harold B. Lee, Spencer W. Kimball, J. Reuben Clark, Marion G. Romney, Boyd K. Packer, and Gordon B. Hinckley—comprise one-fifth of the volume.

*Follow the Living Prophets* is a valuable source book for all members of the Church. It is a handbook for survival through obedience to those whom the Lord has chosen and set in place.

—Lucile C. Tate

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*Les Mormons* by Massimo Introvigne (Brepols, 1991)

With their opinions influenced by Pierre Benoît's somewhat historical 1921 novel, *Le Lac Salé*, many speakers of French have had a very limited view of Mormonism. In *Les Mormons*, Massimo Introvigne acknowledges there are widespread and inaccurate perceptions of Mormons that attribute to them a polygamous life-style yet in our day. He states that his intent is to provide a factual and objective view of who the Mormons really are, as well as a clear view of the origins and evolution of their church and religion.

In addition to an apparent in-depth exposure to a broad array of written sources, the author by his own claim made numerous trips to Utah as well as to Missouri, meeting with various Mormon splinter

groups, active Mormons, and anti-Mormons. He states that he met with "intellectual Mormons of all sorts, from the most 'liberal,' such as the editors of *Dialogue*, to the most conservative" (9). After such a variety of personal contacts but without placing his scholar's objectivity in question, the Catholic writer does speak of having established "ties of friendly rapport" with several "intellectual Mormons" (9). These contacts apparently helped the author develop the book's particularly extensive bibliography.

Introvigne cites Mormonism in his introduction as the most important of the "alternative religions" established during the past two hundred years. He supports this contention by the extent and objectivity of his coverage. He has sections on the doctrine and history of Mormonism as well as an anthology of Mormon writings. In addition he provides an overview of Mormon fine arts, with brief looks at architecture, sculpture, painting, literature, and music. He rounds out the work with sections on the spiritual life-style of Mormons, a sociological profile, and a discussion of the organization of the LDS community.

Readers of French who wish to experience an objective assessment of Mormonism written by a non-Mormon will enjoy *Les Mormons*, probably the most in-depth and the least biased outsider's view published to date in the French language.

—Michael D. Bush