

Why Study Warfare in the Book of Mormon?

John W. Welch

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-à-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 replot 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–xlili. 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: Flag 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 Zemnah," 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. Preliminary 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. 239-64 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.