

# Nephite Captains and Armies

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## Background

The Book of Mormon makes thirty-eight references to “captains,” thirty-one of which are “chief captains.”<sup>1</sup> These references are related to Nephite or Lamanite command positions over military units varying in size from at least fifty to tens of thousands of men. The descriptions of these captains and chief captains are quite consistent with information available concerning ancient Near Eastern and Mesoamerican armies. Military science was highly developed in the Near East at the time of Lehi, ca. 600 B.C. Most notably, the Assyrians and Persians maintained an extremely efficient military system.<sup>2</sup>

The early Israelites, at least from the time of their exodus from Egypt (see Deuteronomy 1:15), also maintained an organized military system. At the time of Lehi and King Zedekiah, the forces of Israel were still formed in tactical divisions of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens — each commanded by a captain. These then combined to form an “army” (KJV “host”), sometimes numbering up to several hundred thousand men.<sup>3</sup> There was a “chief of all the captains of the host” (1 Chronicles 27:3).

In ancient Mesoamerican historical sources, numerous cases also mention captains in connection with military units or armies, but nothing indicates that any of the source documents were available to Joseph Smith prior to publishing the Book of Mormon.<sup>4</sup> One such source is the *Works of Ixtlilxochitl*, which was written in Mexico around the close of the sixteenth century. Ixtlilxochitl, the author, was an Aztec prince who claimed to derive his material from records (hieroglyphic writings) received from his ancestors. More than two hundred years passed before this history was first published.<sup>5</sup>

In speaking of events, ca. A.D. 350-61, Ixtlilxochitl refers to “five minor leaders or captains.”<sup>6</sup> Later he speaks of two large armies ca. A.D. 880-900, one of which “a great captain” called Huihuitenuxcatl commanded.<sup>7</sup> Two other sources describing events in the ancient Yucatan area also mention military “captains.”<sup>8</sup>

This type of structure continued into the Spanish conquest era. Accounts of the battle between the Guatemalan kingdom of the Quiché Maya and the army of Pedro de Alvarado, and accounts of the Tlascalan armies that faced Cortez help illustrate this point. In 1524 Cortez sent Alvarado south to subdue the Quiché. Tecum, “Captain of the Armies of the Quiché” and grandson of the king, met the Spanish forces in battle.<sup>9</sup> The Quiché report of this battle states that there were so many Quiché warriors that they could not be counted. The chronicle further states: “The head of his horse (Alvarado’s) was taken off by Captain Tecum [with a lance].... Tecum was pierced [and killed].”<sup>10</sup> The site of this battle was later called Quezaltenango in memory of the quetzal feathers worn by Tecum in his hair and “because a great captain died.”

The encounter of Cortez with the Tlascalan armies reveals additional insights concerning the role of Mesoamerican captains. According to the report of Bernal Diaz, when the Tlascalan armies appeared on the battlefield, there were five “great chiefs” or “captains,” each with his ten thousand men. Each group carried its unique flag or standard, and “each captain had a different device [insignia].”<sup>11</sup> Moreover, each captain decided

separately when his group was to fight. In addition, Mesoamerican captains led forces composed of men in their own kin groups, often coming from a single region and sometimes speaking a single dialect.<sup>12</sup>

This basic understanding of ancient Near Eastern and early Mesoamerican military organizations makes it possible to analyze more closely the Book of Mormon's claims concerning Nephite armies. Reason suggests the Nephite system was derived through adaptation to the Mesoamerican setting. Some of this adaptation would logically result from Nephite awareness of the need to adjust to new environmental, political, economic, and social conditions in the New World, and some could result from adopting patterns already existing in the Americas.

When using the Book of Mormon as a source for the study of military history, we must bear in mind that the Book of Mormon provides very few details concerning Nephite military practices, claiming to contain less than "a hundredth part" of the Nephite-Lamanite wars (Helaman 3:14). Most of what is available comes during the period ca. 100 B.C.-A.D. 34, which accounts for only about thirteen percent of the entire Nephite history. Even here, military details are relatively sparse since the Book of Mormon is simply an abridgment of a lineage history of the Nephites, in essence a priestly record, "emphasizing what happened to one group of people, put in their own ethnocentric terms, in the midst of other peoples, each with its own version of events."<sup>13</sup> As a result, most conclusions regarding Nephite military organization and practices must remain tentative.

## **The Nephite Armies**

The Book of Mormon suggests that the Nephite military structure was based on the decimal system, similar to that in use in the vicinity of ancient Palestine and in many other regions. There are references to units of fifty (see Mosiah 11:19), thousands (see Alma 43:5; 60:22; 3 Nephi 3:22), and ten thousand (see Mormon 6:10-15). The only Israelite-sized units not specifically mentioned in Nephite-Lamanite organizations are formations of tens and hundreds. Possibly these too existed among Book of Mormon people but were not mentioned because of their relative unimportance and because they comprised part of other units, like fifties and thousands.

Units of ten thousand are most frequently mentioned in the Book of Mormon, at least after the time of the judges (ca. 91 B.C.). Use of the larger units may have resulted from increasing population and hence the increased ability or need to support larger armies. The earlier battles speak of units of fifty and thousands (see Mosiah 11:19; Alma 43:5), while later battles speak more of thousands and tens of thousands (see 3 Nephi 4:21). Whatever the case, units of ten thousand became more common as Nephite history continued, and their wars evolved into larger and more complex campaigns.

In referring to basic Nephite military units, caution should be exercised to avoid oversimplifying the structure outlined above. Scholars in recent decades have become increasingly aware that the Book of Mormon is an elaborate record and not always what it may first appear to the casual observer. Nephite military organization again provides a case in point, for although the book contains ample evidence of units ranging in size from fifty to a thousand to ten thousand, there are also exceptions to this rule. Some variations are common in most military organizations, with the pressures of combat forcing armies to modify the normal standard. Actual unit manning often does not match exactly with the official designated size. In some cases, special types of units are created in response to unusual circumstances not in conformance with the normal, established pattern.

Helaman's band of "two thousand stripling soldiers" (Alma 53:22; 56:5) may be such an exception. In this case the sons of the people of Ammon desired to support the Nephite war effort by creating their own fighting force, which they asked Helaman to command. This was no ordinary military unit created in response to a governmental levy,

but instead it was a special group of people who wanted to serve their adopted nation. After organizing and arming themselves, Helaman's troops marched to join the army of Antipus, which through combat had been reduced to about six thousand soldiers (see Alma 56:10). Two thousand more men from the land of Zarahemla later joined them, thus bringing their total strength up to ten thousand (see Alma 56:28). Later, after being reinforced by sixty more soldiers, Helaman speaks of his "little band of two thousand and sixty" (Alma 57:19). This was not a typical Nephite unit of a thousand men, but in most other respects functioned as such. The "band" was under his direct command; the soldiers were organized according to a kinship framework and were considered Helaman's "sons" (see Alma 56:10);<sup>14</sup> and though somewhat autonomous, the band fought in conjunction with a larger Nephite army.

There are also references to other odd-sized units, such as armies of six thousand men (see Alma 62:12-13), but these do not appear to be main fighting units. They are instead reinforcements sent to augment existing field armies. In another case, Mormon claims to have commanded a Nephite army of forty-two thousand against a Lamanite army of forty-four thousand (see Mormon 2:9). While he had overall command responsibility, some of these forces evidently belonged to other captains, who in turn commanded units of thousands and ten thousands (see Mormon 6:11-12).

The foregoing discussion further suggests that one must be careful when interpreting references to Nephite field armies normally composed of ten thousand men. To illustrate this point, the army of Antipus mentioned earlier almost certainly numbered about ten thousand when originally deployed. Through casualties and capture, this number was reduced to about six thousand. If, however, the Nephite reference to "ten thousand" was a form of unit designation — an organizational title — then one might properly say that, although his forces were seriously depleted, he still commanded an Army of Ten Thousand. An example of this can be seen in early Roman military organization. A unit called a "century," meaning one hundred, originally consisted of one hundred soldiers commanded by a "centurion." Later, because a unit of one hundred men was too large for a single officer to control readily, the size varied from sixty to eighty men, but the designation "century" was retained.<sup>15</sup> In other words, it is not certain whether Nephite armies of "ten thousand" always maintained this number of troops. There could have been more, or less, depending on battlefield attrition or evolving Nephite usage of this description as an organizational title. The phrase "ten thousand" might not always be an accurate count of manpower.

The only type of standing army or police force mentioned in the Book of Mormon appears to have been the elite guards assigned to protect key political-religiousmilitary leaders. This is consistent with ancient military custom. There is very little detailed information about these guards. They protected key leaders while in the city (see Mosiah 7:10-11, 16), while traveling (see Alma 47:21), or while in battle (see Alma 2:32). This in part explains how kings and chief captains were generally protected in battle, despite the fact that they nearly always led in the front of their troops (see Mormon 6:11). These elite guard units were probably commanded by a captain.

Another interesting feature of Nephite armies is that, for the most part, they seem to have been formed from a militia mobilized from the general population (see Alma 16:3) and were not part of a standing army. The militia formed from lineage groups apparently established the real basis for Nephite armies. These may have been based on the seven major branches or lineage groups recognized within Nephite-Lamanite culture, i.e., Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites (see Jacob 1:13; 4 Nephi 1:36-38).<sup>16</sup> The bulk of the armed forces was probably drawn from the lower classes and was organized in ranks with fathers and brothers in similar units (see Mosiah 9:2) and organized at times by age (see Mosiah 10:9). The captains likely were individuals with some special privileges. The chief captain over all the Nephite armies seems usually to have

been of the tribe of Nephi.<sup>17</sup> The militia was organized in response to a levy or request from the central government (see Alma 60:1-2).

Men as young as sixteen to twenty-five years old were eligible to participate in, and even lead, the armed forces (see Alma 43:17; Mormon 2:2).<sup>18</sup> This would force the remaining population “to take over the jobs vacated by the national levy and to help the elders and women keep up their farms, workshops, and other enterprises.”<sup>19</sup> Those not called for military service provided material and moral support for the armies. Kin groups and local communities sponsoring military units in the field were expected to provide provisions when necessary (see Alma 56:27-28). At other times, living off the land almost certainly provided provisions, in particular from subject cities on the line of march, as was done by later Aztec armies (cf. Mormon 2:4, where the Nephite army took “possession of the city” of Angola). Those not willing to support their nation, or those actively opposing the government, could be executed according to Nephite law (see Alma 62:9-10).

The Nephite militias were equipped with a variety of weapons, including darts, javelins, slings, stones, axes, clubs, spears, bows and arrows, swords, and cimeters. Again care must be taken in interpreting how these weapons were employed. For instance, Alma 49:22 speaks of a Lamanite attack against a fortified Nephite city (fortifications were well known in Mesoamerica) and states that “stones and arrows ... were thrown” at the attackers. Whether the stones were thrown by hand or propelled by slings or some other means is not clear. Nor is it clear whether the arrows were shot from a bow or an *atlatl*-type device.<sup>20</sup>

What is also uncertain is who provided these armaments. The Book of Mormon suggests in almost all cases that weapons were personal property of the soldiers, that is, “their weapons” (Alma 56:5). Such a custom was common in ancient armies. This practice generally resulted in wealthy leaders obtaining the best weapons and protective armor. In most cases in the Book of Mormon, this body armor consisted of “thick clothing” (Alma 43:19). This corresponds well with Ixtlilxochitl’s description of armor in ancient Mesoamerica and Spanish accounts of Mayan armor during the Conquest period. In fact, according to Spanish records, the thick cotton armor worn by the Maya was “so effective that the Spaniards themselves used it.”<sup>21</sup> The story of Ammon defending King Lamoni’s flocks may also illustrate the advantage Ammon had (as the son of King Mosiah) in receiving superior military training and weapons (see Alma 17:7—Ammon was extremely well armed when he started his journey; see also Alma 17:36-37). In the ancient Near East, only privileged leaders owned and used protective metal armor. For this reason a leader was often able to defeat the common soldiers he encountered, and this fact helps explain why a leader was frequently required to defy another leader in battle.<sup>22</sup> This was possibly true for Nephite captains (see Alma 2:31-32).

When a Nephite army was on the march, it was on foot (consistent with Mesoamerican warfare). There is no indication that armies used animals to carry men or supplies into battle. Although there are seven references to Nephite-Lamanite chariots (see 2 Nephi 12:7; Alma 18: 9, 10,12; 20:6; 3 Nephi 3:22; 21:14), members of the elite upper class appear to have used them exclusively in a very limited manner, and they are never mentioned in combat.<sup>23</sup>

During military campaigns, Nephite-Lamanite armies were frequently deployed for extended periods of time. As a result, the Book of Mormon states that armies often had to pitch their tents (see Alma 2:20; 47:9; 51:32; Mormon 6:4) and set up camp in the field. John Sorenson has pointed out that “it is nearly unbelievable that the entire Lamanite army referred to in Alma 51 lugged collapsible tents on their backs through tropical country hundreds of miles from the land of Nephi. Far more likely they erected shelters of brush or whatever other materials could be

found in the vicinity, referring to those or any other temporary shelters by the traditional word for tent.”<sup>24</sup> This practice was continued up to the time of the Spanish conquest. In other cases, however, the Book of Mormon states the Nephites actually “took their tents” with them into the wilderness (Mosiah 18:34-35).

The text gives no clear indication as to how these camps were laid out. Possibly the commander’s tent was placed somewhere near the center of the camp, perhaps in a manner similar to that in ancient Israel.<sup>25</sup> If this were the case, then Chief Captain Teancum’s exploit of stealing into the Lamanite camp to kill the Lamanite leader, Amalickiah, becomes even more significant (see Alma 51:34), providing several insights into Nephite-Lamanite warfare and culture. One interesting feature of this attack is that it was consistent with ancient custom. Hugh Nibley has noted that in ancient warfare, since set combat was usually forbidden after sundown, “the wee small hours were reserved for the standard attack on the rival’s tent, a vital maneuver, since once the tent had fallen, the enemy’s morale, and often his resistance, was broken.... The ultimate in heroic gestures for the Arab was a night-raid on the tent of a chief.”<sup>26</sup>

Another note of interest about this event is that it occurred on the last night of the Nephite-Lamanite year. Throughout Mesoamerica, “omens were regularly ... tied to events of the last, or first, day.... To awaken on the first day of a new year to find their leader dead would have been far more unnerving to their omen-conscious feelings than we moderns may appreciate.”<sup>27</sup> Not surprisingly then, “when the Lamanites saw this they were affrighted; and they abandoned their design in marching into the land northward, and retreated with all their army” (Alma 52:2). Additionally, when the Nephites or Lamanites lost their captains, confusion could result; and because strange commanders could not easily replace the fallen lineage leaders, the armies would often retreat (see Alma 49:25; 56:51).

The Book of Mormon gives few details concerning Captain Teancum’s background, but this episode and others indicate he was a man of great courage, with a strong and independent spirit. His name may suggest (albeit quite tentatively) a Mulekite-Jaredite influence in his life.<sup>28</sup> Incidentally, there is a strong resemblance between the name of Captain Teancum and that of Captain Tecum mentioned earlier as a great Quiché Mayan military leader. Furthermore, Captain Tecum lived in Guatemala, probably near the site of the city of Nephi mentioned in the Book of Mormon.<sup>29</sup>

The Book of Mormon further reveals that the same complex human conditions and attitudes that have existed throughout history caused these wars,<sup>30</sup> with primary impetus coming from economic, political, and religious factors. According to one study of Book of Mormon wars, “seven were economically motivated, six were politically motivated, and four were religiously motivated.”<sup>31</sup> Nephite scribes generally treat these causes in moralistic terms, that is, as the results of wickedness, greed, personal ambition, selfishness, pride, and so on.<sup>32</sup>

A common objective of Lamanite warfare was to bring the Nephites into captivity. Nephites living under Lamanite control were normally required to pay tribute (see Mosiah 19:15), and when captured in battle, they were usually taken back to become slaves or to be sacrificed (see Alma 16:2-4; 60:17; Mormon 4:14, 21; Moroni 9:7-10). Nephite chief captains were especially valued as war captives of the Lamanites (see Alm 56:12), and on both sides, warfare had significant ritual overtones. All of this is characteristic of what is known about the nature of ancient Mesoamerican warfare.<sup>33</sup> Nephite objectives, on the other hand, were usually much different, at least as long as the people were living righteously. The Book of Mormon states, “[They] were inspired by a better cause, for they

were not fighting for monarchy nor power but they were fighting for their homes and their liberties, their wives and their children, and their all, yea, for their rites of worship and their church” (Alma 43:45).

The Nephites were additionally taught “never to give an offense” (Alma 48:14; see 43:46). This teaching had practical, moral, and spiritual value. Note that the Nephites were always far fewer in number than the Lamanites. In about 120 B.C., the people of Nephi and the people of Zarahemla together were not half as numerous as the Lamanites (see Mosiah 25:3). If anything, this situation probably grew more severe over the years because of Nephite desertions.

As a result, it was imprudent for the Nephites to initiate hostilities and to rely much on offensive operations. Instead, the Nephites became more adept at using fortifications to achieve local economy of forces and maintained a grand strategy of protecting the land north (of the narrow neck of land). Fortifications, which needed relatively few men to man, became force “multipliers,” by means of which the Nephites could extend a combat front, and served as a base of maneuver for mobile field forces. This was an effective use of one principle of war, the economy of forces.<sup>34</sup> Even in situations where the Nephites may have faced an enemy of more equal numbers, they were counseled not to strike first. An opportunity of this type arose in about A.D. 17 when the Nephites considered initiating a preventive war against the Gadianton robbers,<sup>35</sup> but the chief captain and “great commander of all the armies of the Nephites” directed his people not to attack (3 Nephi 3:17-21). When the Nephites violated this principle, they usually suffered defeat (see Mormon 4:4).

Another consequence of this Nephite emphasis on defensive strategy was that almost all battles took place within their own territory. It is therefore easy to see why the rewards and motivation for victory were quite different for Nephites than for Lamanites. Nephite forces were probably compensated with not much more than a basic subsistence allowance for their military service, while at least some Lamanite soldiers were probably promised a share in the spoils of war in return for their participation in the armed forces. Nevertheless, Nephite captains found that, by reminding their soldiers that they were fighting to preserve their family groups and entire social structure, they were usually more successful in motivating troops than were the Lamanite captains.

### **Chief Captains of the Nephite Armies**

Prior to about 150 B.C., very little information is available describing the Nephite and Lamanite military organizations and the roles of war captains, except that Nephite kings (beginning with the first Nephi) led their people in battle (see 2 Nephi 5:14; 6:2; Jacob 1:9-10; Jarom 1:7; Words of Mormon 1:13-14). By approximately 200 B.C., war casualties could be as high as three to four thousand (see Mosiah 9:18-19).

Quite possibly during the time from ca. 590-150 B.C., the Nephites began formulating a military organization somewhat similar to that seen in later years. Population constraints probably limited single units to not more than a thousand men, although these could have been combined to form larger armies. Units of fifty men were likely common, being first mentioned in conjunction with Laban’s position in Jerusalem (see 1 Nephi 3:31; 4:1).<sup>36</sup> Units of fifty are not mentioned again in Nephite-Lamanite military history until about 145-122 B.C. (Mosiah 11:19), while the first specific reference to a Nephite captain is found in Mosiah. 20:17 where Gideon is called “the king’s captain.”

Kings Mosiah (see Omni 1:12), Benjamin (see Omni 1:24; Words of Mormon 1:13), and the second Mosiah (see Mosiah 6:3-4) also directed military campaigns. But around 91 B.C., a change in governmental structure occurred that affected Nephite military organization to a degree. At that time, the Nephites instituted a system of judges in

place of the monarchy, with the younger Alma being selected as the first chief judge and serving as the presiding high priest (see Mosiah 29:42). Elimination of the monarchy and the establishment of a hierarchy of judges (see Mosiah 29:28-29) created pressures for some corresponding reorganization within the armed forces. One obvious change involved the senior military command position since the king was no longer available to direct the Nephite armies. The initial solution to this problem was to have the chief judge lead the armies (see Alma 2:16).

Perhaps the best single description of Nephite military organization during the reign of the judges is found in Alma 2:13. This verse states that the Nephites “appointed captains, and higher captains, and chief captains, according to their numbers” —meaning according to the number of men each type of captain commanded. This all sounds very similar to the statements reported earlier by Ixtlilxochitl and other sixteenth-century writers about Mesoamerican captains. These accounts speak of “captains,” “five minor leaders or captains,” and “great” captains or “chiefs.”

Confirming how many men each captain, higher captain, or chief captain supervised is impossible with the data currently available. It is tempting to say each chief captain commanded a unit of ten thousand, but the Book of Mormon text does not always support this assertion. Some chief captains commanded all the armies of the Nephites while others almost certainly commanded units smaller than ten thousand (see Alma 52:19, 27-28; 55:23; 56:12; 57:29). It seems impossible that every chief captain mentioned in these verses had ten thousand troops under his command. Battle conditions and casualty reports do not support such a conclusion.

Most likely the term “chief captain” was part of a title for commanders with units of one thousand or more: “chief captain of a thousand,” “chief captain of ten thousand,” or “chief captain of the armies of the Nephites.” If these assumptions are correct, then “higher captains” possibly commanded formations of one hundred or more men; and “captains” (as used in Alma 2:13) might have commanded units of fifty or fewer. The Nephite scribes, through common usage, probably shortened the titles “captain” and “chief captain,” similar to the way the term “general” is commonly used today in the U.S. armed forces. Even though there are “brigadier generals,” “major generals,” “lieutenant generals,” and “generals” (four stars), only the shorter term “general” is normally used when referring to an individual holding one of these ranks.

The first man mentioned as the “chief captain over the armies of the Nephites” is Zoram, ca. 81 B.C. (Alma 16:5). A need to relieve Alma the Younger of this responsibility may have prompted Zoram’s appointment, and thenceforth, a chief captain rather than the chief-of-state commanded Nephite armies. Zoram’s name suggests he may have been a Zoramite — a group of people frequently mentioned as fierce warriors. He was evidently a righteous man with sufficient faith to inquire of the Lord through Alma the Younger regarding where the Nephite armies should search for the Lamanites. One of his sons, Lehi, may have been the same Lehi later to serve another commander of the Nephite armies named Moroni (see Alma 16:5; 49:16).

Chief Captain Moroni was appointed to command all of the Nephite armies when he was “only twenty and five years old” (Alma 43:16-17). The use of the term “only” indicates he was considered a young commander, even by Nephite standards. No information is given regarding his early years, but few leaders have ranked with him in terms of devotion, courage, and strength of character. The later Prophet Mormon was undoubtedly so impressed with Captain Moroni’s example that he gave his own son the same name. Moroni took command of the Nephite armies in approximately 74 B.C. This marked the beginning of a new era in Book of Mormon warfare. Apparently many of the practices introduced at this time continued throughout the remainder of Nephite history, and even up to the time of the Spanish conquest.

The first references to Lamanite captains and chief captains (see Alma 43:6, 44) with a “second leader” (see Alma 47:17) to the “chief leader” are found during this time, although these positions almost certainly existed much earlier (as with the Nephites). Interestingly, these references indicate that Nephite dissenters were often appointed to be captains over the Lamanites. Evidently the Lamanite armies were not as dependent on actual lineage leaders at this time as were the Nephites. This could imply that “Lamanites” included populations other than those solely related to Lehi, Ishmael, or Zoram, although these three groups were apparently the most dominant. Something like this can be seen in the history of the people of Zarahemla (“Mulekites”). When the Nephites and Mulekites united, the Nephites immediately assumed the key leadership positions even though the Mulekites outnumbered the Nephites (see Omni 1:12-19; Mosiah 25:2). The Lamanites may very well have done the same thing when they came into contact with other Mesoamerican populations, such as the Maya. Patterns of this type have been found elsewhere in ancient Mesoamerican societies. Also during this period (ca. 65 B.C.) the first reference is found to a Nephite army of “ten thousand” (Alma 56:28).

Space will not permit this study to explore in detail the principles and techniques of warfare developed under Captain Moroni.<sup>37</sup> Suffice it to say that during the command of Moroni the Nephite armies seem to have exhibited, to some degree, every one of the following principles of war: objective, offensive, security, mass, economy of force, maneuver, simplicity, unity of command, surprise, and flexibility (mobility).<sup>38</sup> Examples of many of the principles and tactics Moroni used can be found particularly in Helaman’s epistle to Moroni in Alma 56-58. These chapters appear to be a verbatim translation of all, or at least most of Helaman’s report, rather than an abridgment. Two of Moroni’s favorite tactics seem to have been the use of decoys and several forms of envelopment — both were extremely common in ancient warfare. In addition, the Book of Mormon implies Nephite armies were predominantly composed of infantry.

To conduct his military operations, Captain Moroni evidently received considerable authority, but his power was certainly not absolute. Although Moroni was empowered to resettle segments of the population and execute individuals for rebellion against the government (Moroni even threatened to remove the chief judge from office because he believed Pahoran had been negligent in his support for the Nephite armies), he probably was still limited to a degree in his ability to commit individual Nephite armies to battle.<sup>39</sup> There is some indication that major military decisions were arrived at jointly with other chief captains, with each captain having some say in where, when, and how his forces were to be employed. These decisions were made in a “council of war” (Alma 52:19).

Undoubtedly, military decisions of this type were based on available intelligence concerning enemy troop movements, concentrations, objectives, and so on. Sending spies into the field to monitor and relay information concerning enemy activity was common for Moroni and other Nephite commanders to obtain the best intelligence possible (see Alma 43:29-30). They may have functioned in a manner similar to the Aztec intelligence service Montezuma used after the landing of Cortez, sending numerous reports complete with illustrations on invading forces.<sup>40</sup>

But Moroni’s greatness in Nephite society goes beyond the fact that he was a brilliant strategic thinker, organizer, and leader; it also stems from his faith and trust in the Lord. For this reason, he did not rely on spies and armies alone to assist him. As with his predecessor Captain Zoram, Moroni willingly sought advice and spiritual insight from the Nephite high priest (see Alma 43:23). This pattern was characteristic of most great Nephite captains until the demise of their civilization in approximately A.D. 385.<sup>41</sup>

Moroni yielded command of his armies to his son Moronihah ca. 57 B.C. He died at the relatively young age of forty-two at his home about one year later (see Alma 63:3). Many of the Nephite leaders may have lived to be 70-90 + years old.<sup>42</sup> It therefore seems a little unusual that Captain Moroni lived only about forty-two years. We can only speculate that the strains of seventeen years of war, coupled with wounds suffered in battle (see Alma 52:35), could have brought a premature end to his life. Moroni had fought bravely for some seventeen years, and his career marked a major turning point in Nephite-Lamanite warfare. He faced enormous trials in attempting to preserve the lives and freedom of the Nephites against a foe that far outnumbered his own people. He clearly recognized the need for constant vigilance, and even directed his people to prepare extensive and expensive military defenses during times of “peace” that they might be better protected from possible attack (see Alma 50:1-15). The great Nephite captains who followed inherited much of the tradition, structure, and strategic thought introduced by Chief Captain Moroni.

Moronihah commanded in his father’s stead for at least the next twenty-seven years (until about 30 B.C.). During this period, there were repeated dissensions among the Nephites that left them vulnerable to attack from the Lamanites. In about 51 B.C., the Lamanites launched one of their most daring thrusts into the center of Nephite territory and succeeded in capturing the capital of Zarahemla. A fierce counterattack by the armies of Moronihah and Captain Lehi slew the Lamanite commander and forced his army to surrender (see Helaman 1:27-33). As a result, Zarahemla was recaptured and returned to Nephite control.

Sixteen years later another major war broke out. The Lamanites managed again to take “possession of the land of Zarahemla; yea, and also all the lands, even unto the land which was near the land Bountiful” (Helaman 4:5). This was by far the most severe setback the Nephites had suffered to date. Moronihah was forced to refortify his key cities and armies on a defensive line aimed at preventing any further Lamanite penetration into the north country (see Helaman 4:7). Gradually the vastly superior number of Lamanites were overwhelming the Nephites. Beginning in about 30 B.C., the best that Moronihah’s forces could do was to maintain those parts of the land then under Nephite control. Converted Lamanites eventually returned some of the other lands to the Nephites (see Helaman 5:50-52).

The next Nephite chief captain mentioned in the Book of Mormon is Gidgiddoni, ca. A.D. 17. As with his predecessors, Gidgiddoni was appointed to command the Nephite armies because he possessed “the spirit of revelation and also prophecy” and was therefore recognized as “a great prophet” (3 Nephi 3:18-19). The method of warfare Gidgiddoni followed appears to have been similar to that introduced earlier by Captain Moroni, and the Nephites “did march forth by thousands and by tens of thousands” (3 Nephi 3:22). The major differences, however, were that now the principal threat came not from the Lamanites, but from Gadianton robbers, and that Gidgiddoni essentially used a “scorched earth” strategy to deprive the robbers of their means of subsistence (see 3 Nephi 3:24-26; 4:2-4).<sup>43</sup> When the robbers were finally forced to meet the Nephites in open battle, the armies of Gidgiddoni managed to defeat them and inflict great casualties on the robber units, “cutting them off by the thousands and by tens of thousands” (3 Nephi 4:21). These battles with the Gadianton robbers are described as “great and terrible ... insomuch that there never was known so great a slaughter among all the people of Lehi since he left Jerusalem” (3 Nephi 4:11).

The text does not specify how many soldiers took part in these battles and what the actual number of casualties were for each side. This is because the reference to “thousands” and “tens of thousands” being cut off is an imprecise indicator (compare to Alma 28:2; note the reference to “slain *and* scattered”). For example, it is unclear whether this refers to actual casualties, or whether it just indicates that units of “thousands” and “tens of

thousands” were defeated. What is clear is that Nephite wars were gradually becoming larger and more destructive than those of the preceding six centuries.

At this point, note that Nephite historians possibly exaggerated some accounts of large armies—a common practice in ancient history. Examples can be found in Alma 2:27 and Helaman 1:14. The first passage describes the Lamanite and Amlicite armies as “being as numerous almost ... as the sands of the sea.” The second episode claims the “Lamanites had gathered together an innumerable army of men.” These verses are obviously hyperbole and simply indicate that relatively large bodies of soldiers were involved. An analysis of Nephite wars in the book of Alma actually suggests Nephite armies (during the reign of the judges) usually numbered between 30,000-50,000 in the field at a given time.<sup>44</sup> These numbers are less than the armies of 60,000-200,000 on a side that apparently fought in highland Guatemala shortly before the time of the Spanish conquest.<sup>45</sup>

Of course the greatest battle recorded among the Nephites and Lamanites occurred during the final days of Chief Captain-Prophet Mormon, the last great commander of the Nephite armies. During the final great struggle near the Hill Cumorah (almost certainly located in Mesoamerica),<sup>46</sup> apparently over 230,000 Nephite soldiers (organized in units of 10,000 each) were killed (see Mormon 6:10-14). This figure does not include their wives and children (see Mormon 6:7) and Lamanite casualties. When combined, this likely means that somewhere near 600,000 people may have died in the bloody conflict. It is not certain how long the battle lasted.<sup>47</sup> Although it brought an end to Nephite civilization, it did not eliminate all “Nephites” (see Moroni 1:2; 9:24).

Casualties on the scale of those accompanying the battle at Cumorah were clearly the exception rather than the rule in Mesoamerican warfare.<sup>48</sup> Mormon’s account of the wars between about A.D. 322 and 346 clearly indicates Nephite-Lamanite armies usually numbered between 30,000 to 50,000 (see Mormon 1:11; 2:9, 25). The passage in Mormon 1:11 is interesting because it shows the Nephites considered an army of 30,000 to be “a great number of men.” Furthermore, as discussed above, the Nephite armies of ten thousand fighting in the last wars possibly refers to a technical term for units rather than the actual number of men.

Another point commonly overlooked concerning Book of Mormon warfare is that there were also extended periods of peace, the most notable of which occurred between about A.D. 34 and 322 (See 4 Nephi 1:4, 18; Mormon 1:8). Such an accomplishment is possibly unmatched in world history and covered a period longer than the entire history of the United States.

Captain Mormon was evidently born during the end of this extended era of peace, ca. A.D. 310-11, somewhere in or near the land northward (see Mormon 1:6). He was a descendant of Nephi, and “in all likelihood he was the senior male in the senior branch of the [Nephite] line.”<sup>49</sup> When he was about ten years old, Mormon states he “*began* to be learned somewhat after the manner of the learning of [his] people” (Mormon 1:2; italics added). This statement corresponds extremely well with what is known about later Aztec society. Among the Aztecs (who claimed to have inherited the mantle of earlier Toltec political preeminence), by the age of ten most boys *began* “to attend either their wards’ military schools, *teipochcalli*, or particularly if they belonged to the nobility [as was probably the case with Mormon], schools connected with the temples, *calmecac*, where they received a more religiously oriented education that explicitly trained them for the priesthood or to be leaders in their communities.”<sup>50</sup> Possibly under such circumstances, Ammaron recognized Mormon’s potential for greatness and therefore instructed the youth that someday he should obtain the sacred Nephite records (see Mormon 1:3).

When Mormon was fifteen years old, he “was visited of the Lord” (Mormon 1:15), and in his sixteenth year, he was appointed to lead the Nephite armies (see Mormon 2:2). This was the beginning of a military career that was to span approximately fifty-eight years. As a historian, prophet, and military leader, the world has produced few men to equal him. He was a man of tremendous spiritual and physical strength. Mormon possessed great ability and opportunity but did not seek power or glory. At one point he became so distraught over the wickedness of his people that he “did utterly refuse” to be their commander and leader (Mormon 3:11). He willingly gave up a position of great authority because he could not, in good conscience, lead a nation into battle whose sole purpose was to wreak vengeance on its enemies (see Mormon 3:14-16).

About thirteen to eighteen years later, Mormon’s desires for the welfare of his people caused him to return to public service as commander of the Nephite armies; but he was “without hope” regarding the final outcome of their struggle (see Mormon 5:1-2). He nevertheless felt an obligation to serve his nation to the best of his ability. Earlier, Mormon had led the Nephites in many clashes with the Lamanites. He also helped frame a peace treaty with the Lamanites and Gadianton robbers that lasted ten years (see Mormon 2:28-29; 3:1), during which time he recognized the need to continue preparing the Nephites to defend against possible attack (see Mormon 3:1). Mormon was truly a realist with high ideals.

Something of Mormon’s stature as a leader is indicated when Mormon resumed command. The Nephites “looked upon [him] as though [he] could deliver them from their afflictions” (Mormon 5:1). But Mormon resumed leadership at a time when the Nephites could no more prevail against the Lamanites. Furthermore, this was apparently a time of substantial political and economic strain on Nephite society. During the previous one hundred and fifty years, their society had existed as a coalition of tribal/lineage groups consisting primarily of Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, and Zoramites, while the Lamanites were a combination of three additional lineage groups – the Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites (see 4 Nephi 1:36-38; Mormon 1:8).

During much of Mormon’s lifetime, the prevailing conditions are described as “one complete revolution throughout all the face of the land” (Mormon 2:8). Food may also have been in short supply during this time due to the tremendous disruptions caused by warfare (see Moroni 9:16). These factors and others resulted in an environment where perversion and brutality became common among both Nephites and Lamanites (see Moroni 9:5-20). For example, rape, torture, human sacrifice, and ritual cannibalism are mentioned (see Mormon 4:14, 21; Moroni 9:7-10). Later Mesoamerican history saw an even fuller development of these practices. Groups like the Aztecs and even some tribes of North American Indians believed that “torture had overtones of religious sacrifice.... Eating a bit of the body was a way to get some of the fortitude of an especially courageous sufferer.”<sup>51</sup> Glimpses of these scenes are described in the Book of Mormon with the intense feeling one would expect from a man who was an eyewitness. Mormon’s lamentation over the senseless demise of his beloved people is full of pathos (see Mormon 6:16-22).

Prior to these last events in Nephite history, Mormon tried desperately to change the Nephite course – one similar to that followed by the earlier Jaredite nation (see Moroni 9:4, 23) – but to no avail. The people would not listen to his urgings, and his armies no longer responded to many of his commands (see Moroni 9:18). There was little left for him to do, except to write an epistle to the Lamanite king requesting that he be permitted to gather the Nephites near the Hill Cumorah in order to give final battle (see Mormon 6:2; cf. Mormon 3:4).

Prior to the encounter at Cumorah, Mormon “hid up in the hill Cumorah all the records” that had been entrusted to him, except a few plates that he gave to his son, Moroni (Mormon 6:6). Although wounded, Mormon survived the final battle long enough to help record the results of that historic day, ca. A.D. 385. The emotions and thoughts

Mormon displayed as he later surveyed the battlefield littered with bodies of his kindred reveal true anguish, as well as a depth of character seldom found among men. Among the last words of advice this great Nephite captain recorded and preserved for those who would later find his sacred record are these: “Know ye that ye must lay down your weapons of war, and delight no more in the shedding of blood, and take them not again, save it be that God shall command you” (Mormon 7:4).

Following the death of Mormon —resulting either from his wounds at Cumorah or from being hunted down by Lamanite warriors (see Mormon 8:3-5) — Moroni continued his father’s record. For at least the next thirty-six years, Moroni apparently wandered alone over vast parts of the North American continent.<sup>52</sup> During this time, he made several substantial contributions to the sacred plates. In about A.D. 421, Moroni deposited the plates, which largely contained Mormon’s abridgment of Nephite history, in a hill in upstate New York. Among many other things, his record indicates that subsequent to the Nephite destruction, extensive warfare continued among the Lamanites. The history of Mesoamerica does in fact suggest that warfare became increasingly common in the post-Book of Mormon era. There are also historical and archaeological indications that significant movements of Mesoamerican people and ideas eventually penetrated as far north as what is now the Arizona-New Mexico area and into the lower and mid-Mississippi Valley and southeastern states region.<sup>53</sup> For instance, “by about A.D. 700 a vibrant, well-organized way of life called the Mississippian culture arose ... with a strongly Mexican flavor to its arts. This culture transformed the east during the 1,000 year Temple Mound period.”<sup>54</sup> These people also constructed large pyramidal hills, usually around a central plaza, with temples on the flat summits. Other similarities, such as depictions of ceremonies resembling Mexican sacrificial rites, are likewise present among the Mississippian culture.

### **Implications for Today**

Writing about war in the Book of Mormon, Hugh Nibley says:

It is real war that we see here, a tedious, sordid, plodding, joyless routine of see-saw successes and losses — brutally expensive, destructive, exhausting, and boring, with constant marches and countermarches that end sometimes in fiasco and sometimes in intensely unpleasant engagements. The author writes as one would write — as only one *could write* who had gone through a long war as a front-line observer with his eyes wide open. Everything is strictly authentic, with the proper emphasis in the proper place.<sup>55</sup>

The Book of Mormon tells of many great men, and among them were many of the Nephite captains. They appear as real people from the pages of history as one carefully reads the accounts of their lives. Some possessed superior qualities, but they also made common, human mistakes. Further, the military-historical setting provided for these men appears authentic. It seems illogical to assume that anyone writing in the relatively peaceful world of Joseph Smith in the 1820s could have created the wonderfully complex, consistent, and accurate picture of ancient Mesoamerican warfare found in the Book of Mormon. Most of what is known about this milieu was not even known in Joseph Smith’s day.

Perhaps the greatest advantage of all in recognizing and accepting the veracity of Book of Mormon warfare is that modern man may thereby learn from the mistakes of the past. In many ways the Nephite-Lamanite environment may have parallels in today’s world.

To better confront the challenges we face, perhaps we should emulate the qualities Nephite leaders like Chief Captain Moroni possessed:

Moroni was a strong and a mighty man; he was a man of a perfect understanding; yea, a man that did not delight in bloodshed; a man whose soul did joy in the liberty and the freedom of his country, and his brethren from bondage and slavery; yea, a man whose heart did swell with thanksgiving to his God, for the many privileges and blessings which he bestowed upon his people; a man who did labor exceedingly for the welfare and safety of his people. Yea, and he was a man who was firm in the faith of Christ, and he had sworn with an oath to defend his people, his rights, and his country, and his religion, even to the loss of his blood.... If all men had been, and were, and ever would be, like unto Moroni, behold, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever; yea, the devil would never have power over the hearts of the children of men. (Alma 48:11-13, 17.)

## Notes

1. According to R. Gary Shapiro, comp., *An Exhaustive Concordance of the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City: Hawkes, 1977), s.v. *captain* and *captains*: 2 Nephi 13:3; Mosiah 20:17; Alma 2:13, 16; 16:5; 43:6, 16, 17, 44; 48:5; 49:5, 11, 13, 17, 21, 23, 25; 52:19, 28, 38; 55:23; 56:12; 57:29; 58:25; 59:12; 60:36; 61:2; Helaman 16:6; 3 Nephi 3:17, 18, 19.

2. John Warry, *Warfare in the Classical World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), 38. On the Assyrian army, see T. Kendall, "Warfare and Military Matters in the Nuzi Tablets," Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1975; and F. Malbran-Labat, *L'Armée et organisation militaire de l'Assyrie d'après les lettres des Sargonides trouvées à Ninive* (Geneva-Paris: Librairie Droz, 1982). For a brief overview of the Achaemenid Persian army, with bibliographic references to other studies, see J. M. Cook, *The Persian Empire* (London: Dent, 1983), 101-12, and *passim*.

3. Chaim Herzog and Mordechai Gichon, *Battles of the Bible* (New York: Random House, 1978), 156-57.

4. On sources available to Joseph Smith, see Milton R. Hunter and Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon* (Oakland, California: Kolob, 1959), 3-11.

5. Alfredo Chavero, ed., *Obras historicas*, 2 vols. (Mexico: Oficina Tip de la secretaria de fomento, 1891-92); cf. Hunter and Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon*, 1-6.

6. *Ibid.*, 357-58; Chavero, *Obras historicas*, 25: "Cohuatzon, una de las cinco cabezas ó capitanes inferiores."

7. Hunter and Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon*, 383.

8. *Ibid.*, 67; and "The 'Historical Recollections' of Gaspar Antonio Chi," ed. and tr. M. Wells Jakeman (Provo: Brigham Young University, 1952), 39.

9. George E. Stuart and Gene S. Stuart, *The Mysterious Maya* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1977), 120. The complete account is in Robert M. Carnack, *Quichean Civilization: The Ethnohistoric, Ethnographic, and Archeological Sources* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 39, 283, 303, 341.

10. Stuart and Stuart, *The Mysterious Maya*, 120; see Adrian Recinos, *Cronicas Indigenas de Guatemala*, 2nd ed. (Guatemala: Academia de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala, 1984), 90.

11. Bernal Diaz del Castillo, *The Bernal Diaz Chronicles*, tr. and ed. Albert Idell (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1956), 106, see 103-11.

12. John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1985), 263– 64.
13. *Ibid.*, 55.
14. *Ibid.*, 264.
15. On the Roman army, see Graham Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1969).
16. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 313; cf. John A. Tvedtnes, “Book of Mormon Tribal Affiliation and Military Castes,” in this volume.
17. Compare *ibid.*
18. On Aztec military service, see Ross Hassig, *Aztec Warfare: Imperial Expansion and Political Control* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma, 1988), 27-47.
19. Herzog and Gichon, *Battles of the Bible*, 162-63.
20. Compare William J. Hamblin and A. Brent Merrill, “Swords in the Book of Mormon”; Paul Y. Hoskisson, “Scimitars, Cimicers!”; and William J. Hamblin and A. Brent Merrill, “Notes on the Cimicer (Scimitar) in the Book of Mormon,” in this volume.
21. Stuart and Stuart, *The Mysterious Maya*, 118; see also William J. Hamblin, “Armor in the Book of Mormon,” in this volume.
22. Warry, *Warfare in the Classical World*, 14.
23. Compare William J. Hamblin, “The Importance of Military Matters in the Book of Mormon,” in this volume.
24. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 161.
25. Herzog and Gichon, *Battles of the Bible*, 172-73.
26. Hugh Nibley, “Tenting, Toll, and Taxing,” *Western Political Quarterly* 19 (1966): 618.
27. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 275. Research by David A. Palmer, “Warfare in Nephite America,” F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report, 1985, 7, has shown that most Nephite wars started near this time, probably because many of the warriors were also farmers. In Mesoamerica, large military operations were usually seasonal, primarily transpiring during the slack period at the end of the rainy season when crops were ripening. This means Mesoamerican warfare was generally confined to October through February (Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 246, 275; see John L. Sorenson, “Seasonality of Warfare in the Book of Mormon and in Mesoamerica,” in this volume).
28. Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites*, vol. 5 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1988), 242.

29. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 47.
30. A. Brent Merrill, "The Causes of War," *Military Review* 62 (July 1982): 45-52.
31. Palmer, "Warfare in Nephite America," 2-4; see John W. Welch, "Why Study Warfare in the Book of Mormon?" in this volume.
32. Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 240.
33. See Bruce W. Warren, "Secret Combinations, Warfare, and Captive Sacrifice in Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon," in this volume. For an example of ritual, see Hugh Nibley, "A Strange Order of Battle," in *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, vol. 6 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1988), 209-21. This discusses some of the circumstances concerning Moroni and his title of liberty.
34. Trevor N. Dupuy, *The Evolution of Weapons and Warfare* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1980), 35; see also Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 261, for a brief description of Nephite fortifications.
35. According to ancient Near Eastern law, a thief (usually a local person who stole from his neighbor) was dealt with judicially; whereas a robber (usually an outsider, like a brigand or highwayman) was dealt with militarily. This ancient legal and linguistic distinction is meticulously observed in the Book of Mormon (see "Thieves and Robbers," F.A.R.M.S. *Insights*, July 1985, 2; and John W. Welch, "Law and War in the Book of Mormon," in this volume.
36. Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*, 97-98.
37. For a summary of Moroni's military career, see Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, 2nd ed., vol. 7 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1988), 292-329.
38. David Zook, Jr., and Robin Higham, *A Short History of Warfare* (New York: Twayne, 1966), 29; see Hugh Nibley, "Warfare and the Book of Mormon," in this volume.
39. See John W. Welch, "Law and War in the Book of Mormon," in this volume.
40. Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, 49-52.
41. See Stephen D. Ricks, " 'Holy War': The Sacral Ideology of War in the Book of Mormon and in the Ancient Near East," in this volume.
42. Sidney Sperry, *Book of Mormon Chronology* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 13.
43. See n. 38.
44. Estimates regarding the size of Nephite armies were conducted by the author using the conclusions discussed earlier about Nephite military organization and references to key Nephite commanders. They are only rough approximations and do not include other possible members of the population living near fortified areas (see also Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 193-94).

45. On the numbers in Aztec armies, see Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, 55-60, who concludes that Aztec armies could have numbered several hundred thousand.
46. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 44.
47. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, 302.
48. For statistics from Aztec times, see Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*— on any size, 55-60; on casualties, 111-17.
49. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 164; cf. Tvedtnes, “Book of Mormon Tribal Affiliation and Military Castes,” in this volume; cf. also Mormon 1:5. Mormon’s life story has interesting parallels to Ixtlilxochitl’s account of an ancient historian-prophet-captain named Huematzin (Hueman) (Hunter and Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon*, 337).
50. On Aztec religio-military training, see Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, 30-37.
51. Jules B. Billard, ed., *The World of the American Indian* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1974), 129; see Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 346); Warren, “Secret Combinations, Warfare, and Captive Sacrifice in Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon,” in this volume.
52. Moroni’s writings imply he may have experienced “Survivor Syndrome”; see “The Survivor Syndrome,” F.A.R.M.S. *Insights*, June 1984, 3; 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.
53. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 93, 105.
54. Billard, *The World of the American Indian*, 64.
55. Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, 292.