

Preface

The Book of Mormon is full of facts, ranging from eternal truths to mundane details. This collection charts many of those facts in clear and convenient graphs and visuals.

This newly reformatted and enhanced collection of 177 visual aids aims to serve multiple purposes. Students and teachers will find here helpful guides for personal study, as well as masters for making handouts or projectable classroom images.

The idea for this book first began to take shape a decade ago. One of my responsibilities on the board for Macmillan's *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* was to gather or create the five hundred maps, charts, and photographs that accompany its thirteen hundred articles. Personal experiences in working with several people in collecting and selecting those graphic images and, similarly, in using such visuals in illustrating many subsequent publications and lectures have convinced me of the value of charts in communicating important gospel information.

In 1996 my research focused on Book of Mormon visuals. Morgan A. Ashton, serving as a BYU intern under my supervision, worked to locate as many previously circulated Book of Mormon charts, graphs, and maps as possible. From his findings, certain recurring themes were identified and composite charts were created. In addition, many new charts were conceived. All of these schematics were then refined and shaped on the computer by my son, Gregory Welch, who devoted the summers of 1997 and 1998 to the graphic and conceptual development of this project.

A preliminary packet containing samples of about half of these charts was distributed by the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies in 1997. Feedback and additions from many people have improved this new publication, and they are acknowledged with much appreciation.

In order to enhance understandability, a brief narrative explanation was then added to each chart. Because each chart is by nature an incomplete abstraction of much more complicated data, these brief explanatory notes quickly orient the viewer to the contents and purposes of each chart. A fuller discussion of each topic can be found in the bibliographic sources given. Amy K. Bingham, Don L. Brugger, and Eden N. Rasmussen at FARMS superbly shared much of the load in writing or editing those comments, as well as in designing the layout of this book, checking sources, and finalizing the graphic presentation of each chart.

This collection is by no means complete. Many more charts could easily be added, and other excellent schematics can be found in other publications. Readers may want to make new charts on their own, as well as add further details to the charts created so far.

I am deeply grateful to all who have helped transform the vision of this book into a concrete reality. We hope that these visuals will open new vistas of insight for Book of Mormon students everywhere.

John W. Welch
Provo, Utah, July 1999