



1-1-2017

Richard Francaviglia, *The Mapmakers of New Zion: A Cartographic History of Mormonism*

Reviewed by Craig S. Campbell

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/msr2>

 Part of the [Mormon Studies Commons](#)

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Campbell, Reviewed by Craig S. (2017) "Richard Francaviglia, *The Mapmakers of New Zion: A Cartographic History of Mormonism*," *Mormon Studies Review*: Vol. 4 : No. 1 , Article 21.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/msr2/vol4/iss1/21>

This Review is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mormon Studies Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu.

Richard Francaviglia. *The Mapmakers of New Zion: A Cartographic History of Mormonism*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press. 2015.

Reviewed by Craig S. Campbell

Mormon Studies Review, vol. 4, 2017, pp. 175–80

© 2016 Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18809/msr.2017.0120> Journal DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18809/mimsr.21568030>

THE MAPMAKERS OF NEW ZION is an ambitious book presenting a cartographic history of Mormons and Mormonism from the early 1800s to the present day. Its purpose is to show original maps made (or used) by Latter-day Saints and to discuss the geographic and religious interpretations associated with those maps. The result is a marvelous archival cartographic lesson on the LDS experience from its inception.

The book's introduction, "Mapping the Sacred," utilizes historical religious maps to show how past sacred territories have been envisioned graphically. Chapter 1 assesses the earliest town planning plats of the early Saints before their exodus to the valley of the Great Salt Lake in 1846. Chapter 2 reviews cartography used as the Saints planned their move westward. Chapter 3 treats cartographic endeavors in the Mormon west, and chapter 4 brings to light the unique contributions of mapmaker James H. Martineau. Chapter 5 breaks with the historical time line in order to portray how Latter-day Saints have interpreted the Book of Mormon using maps. Chapter 6 discusses maps used by Latter-day Saints up to the present day.

I reiterate that the author's purpose is to show *original* maps. The book is not a modern-day thematic cartography that interprets earlier times in a modern light. I had to keep this in mind as I read the book and asked myself why certain maps were not shown or certain themes not addressed.

Anticipating this review, I preconceived some notions about what a work mapping the Mormon realm should ideally offer. First, the book should have viewpoints from both Mormons and non-Mormons. Second, the book should view mapping from the perspectives of leadership

and authority as well as from the vernacular perspectives of common members. The book matched my expectations well—intersections between Mormons and non-Mormons are often evident, and the contrasting views of leaders and rank-and-file members are examined.

The introduction shows how maps bridge reality and otherworldly religious perception. Maps like the ancient T-in-O (a Mediterranean Christ-on-the-cross *T* inside an oceanic *O*) combine geographic reality with spiritual vision (pp. 6–7) and become the jumping-off point for understanding the many maps featured in this book. I had never seen Orlando Ferguson’s “Square and Stationary Earth” map that makes the earth look like a slab of cement indented with a roulette wheel shape (pp. 8–9). It is important that scholars examine the meaning of such maps in which the real world intersects with believers’ perceptions. Although at first the T-in-O and other classic maps seemed old news, I soon developed an enthusiasm for how Francaviglia examined the thin line between a given place and the religious belief associated with it. In my book *Images of the New Jerusalem*, I discuss how the plat of Zion designed for Missouri was laid out without taking into account contemporary Independence, and also how Latter-day Saints (of all walks) today often remove the entirety of Kansas City from their perception of the millennial New Jerusalem (Wow! How will a city of 1.5 million people just disappear?). Similarly, Francaviglia includes a mosaic map from the floor of the Salt Lake City International Airport portraying spiritually prominent Jerusalem but not Tel-Aviv, which is nearly twice the size of Jerusalem (pp. 20, 37).

In this regard, chapter 5 is particularly captivating. The Book of Mormon has much cardinal direction identification indicating comparative locations of cities and other physical features, but it offers no maps. Many Latter-day Saints have proposed maps of Book of Mormon geography, and Francaviglia includes some of the earliest examples in his book. In some cases, though, I was confused as to why certain maps were shown while others were not mentioned. For example, a map used in BYU Book of Mormon course manuals and LDS seminary study guides for many years features a generalized lumpy hourglass shape

for the Americas with Book of Mormon cities and places marked. This map is made from internal comparison—that is, it is hypothetical, based strictly on distances and spatial relationships and related clues gleaned from the Book of Mormon narrative, and avoids any external correlations with present-day locations (Francaviglia does make this internal/external distinction in his book). I was puzzled why he would not include this commonly seen map. Given his emphasis on using original maps, perhaps he omitted it because he could not ascertain when this map was first used.

The span of the book is so great that disconcerting jumps are occasionally made through entire decades, suggesting that Mormon cartography was, at times, a bit thin. My feeling is that there is probably more out there to be discussed, but that material will wait for other outlets. Sometimes the influences of the groups we study become exaggerated, and this is the case with the Mormons in the West. Francaviglia does not ask why, if the Mormons were such a strong presence in the West, there are not more than five or six Book of Mormon place-names there (p. 179). In this vein, in chapter 2, there is an unexpected jump from F. D. Richards in 1855 to Millroy and Hayes in 1899 and then suddenly to Purcell's 2000 triptych (pp. 75–76). Sometimes maps are mentioned but not shown; this is troubling to the curious cartographer but understandable for an atlas-like endeavor where space cannot permit portrayal without sacrificing text. Occasionally an important work is not cited. For example, in the discussion of the Mormon “recapitulation” of biblical history in chapter 2, neither Jan Shipp's work nor my own is mentioned.¹

Still, there is so much archival material that has been seldom if ever seen before that results are impressive and these critiques become minor. This is evident in the chapter on Martineau in which the work of one person overlooked in the past now comes to light. A quibble is

1. Jan Shipp, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985); Craig Campbell, *Images of the New Jerusalem: Latter Day Saint Faction Interpretations of Independence, Missouri* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004).

the comparison of Martineau to the Roman administrator Cassiodorus, which seemed a stretch. Also, why not include the 1879 map that shows the peak named in Martineau's honor (p. 153)? But again, these complaints are minor in view of the overall accomplishment.

Occasionally the writing seems naive. For example, no mention is made that maps just like the online maps noted for LDS historical and sacred sites have been available in the popular "quad" compilation of LDS scripture since the mid-1980s, though now eclipsed perhaps by the use of digital editions of scripture.

Francaviglia continually and fruitfully asks why *this* particular map was significant or how *that* map was perceived. He persistently addresses the ways that maps communicate and the nature of map function among Latter-day Saints. Like many geographers, Francaviglia seems to be painfully aware of map illiteracy, particularly in the United States, and goes the extra mile to discuss why maps are important. This topic suits the largely popular audience for whom the book seems intended. According to Francaviglia, "although our culture appears to be fascinated by visual imagery, it has little understanding about how images work to inform or especially how images and words work together in . . . systems" (p. 229). Here, of course, it is the perusal of images that help us understand the Mormon "system."

The only part of the book that I thought rather weak was chapter 6, which concerns maps and the Mormon expansion. Although I liked the maps and the author's main points, two weaknesses are apparent. First, Francaviglia's archival approach made it appear that some of the maps had been selected at random. W. M. Gibson's story of self-promotion is fascinating, but it doesn't fit a logical framework (pp. 196–205). There is a sense that Francaviglia is saying, "I found this cool stuff, so I've got to put it in somewhere." Fortunately, the appeal of the material helps to offset the piecemeal structure of the chapter. Second, modern-day technology seems to blunt Francaviglia's archival approach, and he doesn't quite know how to handle the dilemma. Typing "Book of Mormon maps" into Google yields a proliferation of all kinds of images drawn by all kinds of people. How should these be discussed? Elsewhere, because Francaviglia does not

treat them; perhaps to delve into such would blunt the tone of *originality* of sources in this work. Also, Francaviglia shows administrative maps of missions and such (pp. 208–16), but what about those LDS.org ward and stake boundary maps with purple or blue outlines emphasizing the strictly geographic nature of LDS administration? Might such also be included as a form of LDS cartographic portrayal and meaning?

Along these lines, one issue I would like to have seen addressed is an analysis of how Temple Square in Salt Lake City has been shown in LDS maps over time. Two sacred blocks later were enhanced, and this LDS influence spread with the building of the Church History Museum to the west, the mammoth Conference Center and the new Church History Library to the north, and the church's involvement with the newer City Creek development to the south. Effectively, Temple Square today is at least five square blocks! How has the LDS Church portrayed core sacred space versus profane peripheral space over time, a theme famously treated by religious historian Mircea Eliade?² I expected at least minimal discussion of the mapping of Temple Square as the Mormon "core" but encountered only the stone world maps that appear on the LDS Church Office Building (p. 224).

In chapter 6 one gets the feeling that Francaviglia became bewildered by technology and publishing proliferation over the last century and has just barely scratched the surface. Indeed, he emphasizes that the scholarly treatment of LDS maps and mapping is not complete with the publication of his book.

The Mapmakers of New Zion has a respectful and egalitarian tone. The text is always positive and even reverent, never taunting or negatively tinged. Religion is viewed as an important and meaningful part of life. Francaviglia is also able to pull from his great expertise in other religions, particularly Islam, for comparisons.

So this work is enterprising and thought-provoking. Perhaps the continuity suffers slightly with the introduction of so much disparate

2. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987).

graphic material seldom seen publicly before, but the result is definitely worth it.

Craig S. Campbell is professor of geography at Youngstown State University in Youngstown, Ohio, where he currently teaches courses in world regional geography and cartography. He is interested in the geography of the Latter-day Saints, the cultural geography of North America, and the American automobile industry.

Thomas Carter. *Building Zion: The Material World of Mormon Settlement*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015.

Reviewed by Paul G. Monson

Mormon Studies Review, vol. 4, 2017, pp. 180–84

© 2016 Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18809/msr.2017.0121> Journal DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18809/mimsr.21568030>

MORMON CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES has recently become more inescapable than ever for non-Mormons, including the Catholic author of this review. Whether it be the crass satire of a Broadway musical, the presidential candidacy of an LDS member, or the acquaintance of a neighboring family, Americans confront Mormonism with both caricatures and curiosity. Through non-Mormon eyes, Mormon practice and culture are distinctly different and oddly familiar, yet the articulation of this paradox often escapes the observer. Carter, a non-Mormon scholar with an LDS family history, creatively offers a grammar for articulating and understanding this paradox, employing that which is most basic to the fabric of human society: material culture.

The subdiscipline of material culture found its voice in the 1990s, and in this sense the book advances a conversation that began two decades ago with the work of Colleen McDannell on Christianity in