Mormon Bibliography: 1971

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CHAD J. FLAKE*

With the advent of photo-offset printing, the reprint industry has made a truly remarkable impact on the printing world. No longer is the reproduction of out-of-print items reliant on clumsy stereotype plates or the recasting of new type. In 1862 a memorable work was put into print by Constantinus Tischendorf: the Bibliorum Codex Sinaiticus, the earliest Biblical manuscript then known. It was a magnificent typographical masterpiece due to both the remarkable casting of imitative fourth-century Greek type and its faithful reproduction of the text. When Helen and Kirsopp Lake reproduced Codex in 1922, it was printed by the Clarendon Press by the photo-offset method; and, while not the printing masterpiece of the earlier work, it was actually superior due to the accuracy of its reproduction, and was produced at a fraction of the original cost. This points to the two basic advantages of photo-offset printing over older methods. In the first place—and this is probably the most important point for scholars—there are few ways to make an error unless it is deliberate. Secondly, it is far less expensive than it would be for a new edition to be set up.

This ease of printing has been a great boon to Mormon scholarship. Combining offset reprinting with xeroxing and microfilming, almost all of the important source materials on Mormonism have been made available on the market for current scholars. Reprinted works such as the Journal of Discourses, Evening and Morning Star, Times and Seasons, and B. H. Roberts's A Comprehensive History of The Church have been placed on the market through reprinting. Research Publications, Inc., of New Haven, Connecticut, with the guidance of Archibald Hanna, has placed much additional important source

*Professor Flake is special collections librarian at Brigham Young University. He also edits Mormon Americana.
material on the market, including the L.D.S. Messenger and Advocate and the Evening and Morning Star, through duopage xeroxing. Microfilm and independent xeroxing completes the list, making virtually everything of importance in printed material available.

However, with the abundance of reprints available, some companies have been organized for the express purpose of making any material available for libraries and scholars without regard to need or quality. Some presses advertise reprints with the apparent expectancy that enough subscriptions will be made to make the printing profitable. If that number is not met, the idea is just dropped, with the subscribers left with the problem of getting their money returned. Other presses rely on library subscriptions to make a reprint possible and charge accordingly. Great commendation must be given to those who reprint items of great importance, even though they have to wait several years for a return on their investment. Such a reprint is the Western Epics reprint of the L.D.S. Biographical Encyclopedia.

The difficulty for other publishers is an apparent lack of expertise in selecting books for reprinting. For example, Books for Libraries Press has reprinted Jacob Hamblin, A Narrative of His Personal Experience at a cost which far exceeds the cost of an original; it is easily obtained on the out-of-print market and has been reprinted by the MIA numerous times. Similar difficulties arise for Praeger Publishers’ reprint of T.B.H. Stenhouse’s The Tyranny of Mormonism, a dated book of little current import readily available on the out-of-print market. Even more unfortunate is the reprinting of books of little or no merit. Such a book is Jennie Switzer’s Elder Northfield’s Home, an exceedingly dull novel on Mormon polygamy. Again, this is available on the out-of-print market for much less—that is, if anyone wants it. Other prime examples are the Books for Libraries Press printing of the 1880 Book of Mormon and the Greenwood Press reprinting of the 1880 Doctrine and Covenants. Had they reprinted the 1879 edition of the Book of Mormon or the 1876 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, it would be more plausible; but the 1880 editions have little or no value, yet were reprinted at a high price. It is to be hoped that this trend will not continue and that the presses will use a qualified authority to decide which books are worthy of reprint.
As with the Mormon Bibliography of former years, this year's bibliography relies heavily on *Mormon Americana, Volume 12*.

**HISTORICAL**


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Authorized RLDS edition with references.


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Publisher's address: P.O. Box 366, Midvale, Utah.


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   For information contact Mrs. R. B. Robbins, 1148 East 27th South #62, Salt Lake City.


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Author resides in Orem, Utah.


For more information contact D. Leland Layne, 464 Canyon Road, Logan.

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Written for children.


Author’s address: 1102 Birch Lane, Provo.


For information contact Wilford Payne, 136 Braewick Road, Salt Lake City.


   Edited by Doris Barbar Smith. Available from Howard D. Sansom, 2799 Dearborn St., Salt Lake City.


   Available from Gwen H. Sherratt, 161 W. 200 N., Cedar City, Utah.


