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40.0 Review of Hugh Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*. By M. Wells Jakeman. Another book by Dr. Hugh Nibley, one of the more prolific writers in the LDS Church, has recently come off the press, entitled An Approach to the Book of Mormon (published as a course of study for the Melchizedek Priesthood quorums of the Church for the year 1957).

This work for the most part is a reprinting, in condensed form, of previous studies by the author dealing with the Book of Mormon in the light of the ancient East (principally Lehi in the Desert, Salt Lake City, 1952; and "New Approaches to Book of Mormon Study," The Improvement Era, November, 1953-July, 1954). As such, it presents again the important contribution of these studies: a demonstration that the Book of Mormon, in its account of a group of ancient Israelites who migrated from Palestine to the New World in the sixth century B. C., accurately reflects the languages and cultures of ancient Israelite Palestine and the Near East, even though many of the correct linguistic forms, customs, and concepts appearing therein were not known to be ancient Near Eastern at the time of the coming forth of the Record, thus tending to establish its authenticity. The only fault requiring mention here, and one which does not seriously detract from this contribution, is that in a number of his conclusions the author seems much too positive, in view of the slight evidence adduced (as in his identification, on pp. 72-77, of Lehi as a wealthy merchant engaged in Egyptian trade through the Phoenician port of Sidon).

In Chapters 14-17 is a valuable discussion—some of it published here for the first time—of several important confirmations of the Book of Mormon found in the recently discovered "Dead Sea Scrolls" and in the Apocrypha.

In Chapter 25 the author also briefly introduces some of the points previously argued in his work entitled The World of the Jaredites (published with Lehi in the Desert, Salt Lake City, 1952) and in a series of articles entitled "There Were Jaredites" (The Improvement Era, January, 1956-February, 1957). (For a critical review of the former work see June 1, 1955, Newsletter, 27.0.)

Of special concern to UAS members and other readers of this Newsletter is an appendix to the book entitled "The Archaeological Problem," presenting the author's views as to the value of archaeology for the Book of Mormon; also various assertions, mainly in the last two chapters, on points of Book of Mormon geography.

Unfortunately, the author's discussion of the archaeological approach to the Book of Mormon is vitiated by an apparent attempt to

implant an emotional judgment in the mind of his reader against this approach or the way it is being developed. Thus he refers disparagingly to those investigating this field as "people calling themselves archaeologists" (p. 366) and "these self-appointed archaeologists" (p. 363). He then—although not an archaeologist himself—proceeds to instruct the reader as to what archaeology is, and as to its true value for the Book of Mormon. In other words, he himself becomes a self-appointed critic of "these self-appointed archaeologists"! Apparently it is not generally realized as yet that archaeology is a full-time business. To qualify either as a writer or as an adviser on archaeological problems, one must be a full-time specialist in this field, not a part-time reader of the subject or a full-time specialist in some other field, such as philology, as in the present case.

The misrepresentations and misconceptions comprising the "instructions" on archaeology given in this appendix are too numerous to deal with completely here. Only the more serious can be discussed. For example, in defining archaeology for his reader (pp. 366-367), the author selects only those statements of archaeologists that support his view, which is clearly that of reducing archaeology to a strictly subordinate role to philology in the study of ancient civilizations and the Scriptures. These carefully selected statements favor the view that archaeology is not a single discipline or unified field of study, and therefore cannot be taught in a university as a distinct division of instruction, but consists only of widely separated areas of specialization without a common purpose or methodology; and that the chief function of each area specialization is that of assisting the philologists and documentary historians of that area by unearthing new inscriptions or manuscripts. To bolster this definition, the author asserts that "the world's great universities are still without archaeology departments," the reason being that "archaeology cannot be studied as a single discipline."

But what are the facts? Although area (or period or field) specialization must always be the aim of students of archaeology—as also, indeed, of students of most other disciplines, including philology and documentary history!—archaeology still has a common general purpose (best defined as the discovery and illustration of the early history of man by means of his actual material remains), and a common basic methodology (namely, definition of the problem of early history to be investigated by this means, and the collection—usually by excavation involving standard techniques—classification, and interpretation of archaeological data for its solution). Consequently, archaeology must surely be considered as much a single discipline as documentary history. It is, in fact, a "special historical discipline" (as stated by Benzinger in *Hebräische Archäologie*, 1927, p. 1)—a companion to documentary history. This concept of archaeology is especially accepted in the Old World; in fact, a number of British and other European as well as Near Eastern universities have separate divisions of archaeological instruction leading to a degree (some called "departments" of archaeology—directly contrary to the author's claim—e. g. at the Queen's University, Belfast; and others, "institutes" of archaeology, as at the University of London; see e. g., Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Beginning in Archaeology*, London, rev. ed., 1953, Appendix II, "Archaeological Training in Universities"). The distinct purpose and methodology of archaeology is also generally recognized by archaeologists of the United States, Canada, and Latin America (as recently in a featured address by Dr. Fay-Cooper Cole of the University of Chicago at the Great Basin Archaeological Conference held the past year at the University of Utah); in American universities, however,

archaeological instruction is usually offered only in departments of "anthropology" (or of "archaeology and anthropology"). This recognition of archaeology as a single discipline, despite the wide differences among the area specializations, is further evidenced by the number of introductory textbooks in archaeology which have lately appeared, authored by competent professional archaeologists for use especially in university departments or institutes of archaeology, or departments of anthropology having sections of archaeology as usually in the Americas; e. g., Introducción a la Arqueología, by Ignacio Bernal (a leading Mexican archaeologist), Mexico, 1952; Beginning in Archaeology, already cited, by Kathleen M. Kenyon (Lecturer, Institute of Archaeology of the University of London, and director of the joint British-American expedition to Jericho), London, rev. ed., 1953 (see also Part I of the latter work, which brings out more fully the common purpose and methodology of archaeology as a single discipline). Finally, the author's contention that the chief function of archaeologists is to aid the work of the philologists and documentary historians of the particular area of specialization, reflects a hopelessly narrow concept of the scope of archaeology. Actually the areas with ancient written records comprise only a small part of the total world range of modern archaeological research. Many areas of the world, in which important developments of early culture-history are known from archaeology to have taken place, lack such records (e. g. Peru, the North American Southwest, eastern United States), or have only a brief or fragmentary written history (e. g. southeastern Asia, Siberia). Of course, archaeologists working in areas having an extended written history—e. g. the Near East, the Mediterranean, Middle America—must be able to read the ancient records, i. e. if decipherable.

Turning to the author's "instructions" with respect to the special field of Book of Mormon archaeology ("Advice to Book of Mormon Archaeologists"), we find that his main "teaching" here is that Book of Mormon archaeologists "have consistently looked for the wrong things"; i. e., they have been looking for the cities of the Nephites as marked by the ruins of great stone buildings (pp. 366, 370-375). But few such ruins will ever be found, if at all; in fact, "we should not be surprised at the lack of ruins in America in general" (p. 366). The reason given for this scarcity or "lack" of ruins is that nearly all the buildings of the Book of Mormon peoples were of timber or wood, and consequently have long since disappeared. In fact, people "do not realize that the ancients [i. e. those of the Old World as well as the Book of Mormon peoples of America] almost never built of stone" (p. 366).

Unfortunately, in these "instructions" the author, instead of providing advice of real value to Book of Mormon archaeologists, merely reveals his own complete unawareness of the actual situation in this field. It is true that many LDS have been guilty of "looking for the wrong things" with respect to the claims of the Book of Mormon—i. e. the ruins of great stone buildings (see e. g. the Farnsworth books on the Middle American and Andean ruins). But those who may truly be termed Book of Mormon archaeologists, or people with training in this field—i. e. those against whom this criticism is leveled—have already known for a long time, without the author's instructing them, that the Nephite people of the Book of Mormon usually built their dwellings, temples, and palaces of timber or wood, and their fortifications of earth, rather than of stone (although stone appears to have been used occasionally, as also cement and probably brick). Consequently, apparently unbeknown to the author, these students of the Book of Mormon have not been looking for the ruins of large stone buildings as alleged, but instead the remains or traces

of Book of Mormon-period constructions of the kinds indicated—in the case of timber or wooden buildings, the foundations, floors, and corner post-holes and plaster fragments of the timber or pole-and-daub walls of such buildings which have otherwise disappeared. They have, in fact, for some time been actually finding and studying many such remains! (Again apparently unbeknown to the author; for on p. 377 he asks, "Why are there so few 'Book of Mormon' ruins?" Indeed, as many as two hundred or more settlement-sites have so far been discovered in the Book of Mormon area, dating from the actual period of the Book of Mormon civilizations, with building remains which are therefore to be identified—if the Book of Mormon record is true—as Book of Mormon ruins! Also being sought in the way of material evidence of the Book of Mormon civilizations—and being found in increasing quantity—are such things as implements, pottery, and other common culture remains, as well as sculptures. These antiquities, in fact, have generally survived from the Book of Mormon period more completely than buildings, and are also more revealing as to the Book of Mormon identity of the peoples who left them behind. See, e.g., Bulletin of the University Archaeological Society, No. 3, August, 1952, and previous issues of this Newsletter.) Apparently the author did little reading in the actual field of Book of Mormon archaeology before penning his "Advice to Book of Mormon Archaeologists."

The assertion, incidentally, that "the ancients almost never built of stone" must surely be an intentional exaggeration. Although this statement probably holds true, as we have seen, for the Book of Mormon peoples (at least for the Nephites throughout most of their history), it certainly does not for the ancient peoples of the Old World, or the ancient post-Book of Mormon peoples of the New. The author admits in another place that considerable stone construction occurred "in a few brief periods such as the late Middle Ages or the early Roman Empire" (p. 371); but he overlooks the very long periods of considerable stone construction in Egypt and the Aegean region—in Egypt, over two thousand years of almost continuous construction of great stone tombs and temples by the Pharaohs, and in the Aegean, a similar period of almost continuous construction of stone palaces and fortifications by the prehistoric Minoans, Trojans, and Mycenaeans, and of stone temples and other public buildings by the ancient historic Greeks; also the considerable period—over a thousand years—of continuous construction of stone temples and palaces by the post-Book of Mormon Maya people of Central America. Also ignored by, but surely not unknown to, the author is the fact that the early Near Easterners and other ancients—probably including the Book of Mormon peoples, in view of their Near Eastern origin—also built extensively in brick, and that many ruins of buildings and other constructions of brick have survived from ancient times in both the Old and New Worlds.

Finally, we cannot pass by the author's reference to "the lack of ruins in America in general." This is truly an astonishing statement from one presuming to give instructions involving American archaeology! Actually, as indicated in the preceding, and as anyone knows who has had a course in or read a book on American archaeology, or has traveled in or seen pictures of Mexico, Central America, Peru, or the Pueblo area of the United States, America is far from lacking in ruins, including the ruins of ancient stone buildings—not to mention innumerable constructions of brick or earth. However, the author seems uncertain on this point, for on p. 370 he contradicts himself by admitting that "there is certainly no shortage of ruins on this continent."

The author next emphasizes his conviction that "the scarcity of ruins in North America"—reversing himself again on this point!—will not "disprove the Book of Mormon" (p. 377). For the Book of Mormon peoples,

especially the Jaredites and the Lamanites, "had a type of culture that leaves little if anything behind it" (p. 370), being almost entirely nomadic ("almost all" these people "are eligible for the title of 'migrating and nomadic' peoples"—p. 371; even the Nephites were a "mobile population" who "were always wanderers in a strange land"—pp. 370, 371, also 118-120; in fact, a "picture. . . of great fortified communal structures built in large numbers at one time only to be soon deserted in a land that reverts to nomadism, devoid of cultural remains. . . , is typically Nephite"—p. 374). That the Book of Mormon civilizations, thus being mainly nomadic, could have flourished in the New World and yet not left behind any archaeological or material evidence of their existence, is supported, according to the author, by the fact that "many a great civilization which has left a notable mark in [Old World] history and literature has left behind not a single recognizable [archaeological] trace of itself" (p. 366; "that they existed there is not the slightest doubt, yet some of the greatest have left not so much as a bead or a button that can be definitely identified"—p. 371).

Two serious misconceptions are apparent in the above argument. First of all, the idea that the Book of Mormon peoples were mainly nomadic simply ignores the numerous indications in the Record to the contrary. Although these peoples engaged in herding and some hunting (stressed by the author to establish his view that they were nomadic), their basic economic activity was unquestionably agriculture. The first thing their original colonies did on reaching the New World was to plant the seeds they had brought with them from the Old World, and to "till the earth." Throughout their history, references to their "tilling" or cultivating the earth, to their "grain" and grain "fields" and to their "crops," far outnumber those to their keeping of "flocks and herds" and to their hunting or to game animals. The Nephite standard of value in trade was a measure of barley (Al. 11:7, 15), an agricultural product—not cattle or hides, as we should expect of a nomadic herding people. But such agricultural peoples are tied to the soil; they necessarily favor a sedentary or settled life as opposed to the nomadic or wandering life of peoples who are mainly herders or hunters. Consistently with this, the Book of Mormon refers time and again to permanent settlements of its peoples—"cities," "towns," or "villages," with grain fields round about—and only rarely to temporary settlements (tent encampments). This is true even of the more important portion of the Lamanites (the most restless and warlike of the Book of Mormon peoples), who lived in cities, towns, and villages just like the Nephites and the Jaredites, in contrast to the less important group (not necessarily and probably not "most of the nation" as claimed by the author, p. 120) who lived in tents as nomads in the "wilderness" or unsettled regions. That these many settlements were truly permanent and not—as claimed by the author—merely temporary clusters of "communal structures built in large numbers at one time only to be soon deserted in a land that reverts to nomadism," is established by the fact that at least some of the more important of them are indicated to have been occupied continuously for hundreds of years (e. g. the cities of Nephi and Zarahemla), and at least in one case for some two thousand years! (namely Moron, main settlement of the Jaredites) —durations which compare well with those of permanent settlements of the Old World and modern times. Consequently, we find that the Book of Mormon peoples, instead of having a "type of culture [namely nomadic] that leaves little if anything behind it," as claimed by the author, in reality had cultures of mainly sedentary type, which—as proved by the results of archaeological excavation throughout the world—invariably leave behind extensive material remains!

The other serious misconception of the author rendering invalid his argument that the Book of Mormon peoples may not have left behind any archaeological traces is his belief that nomadic hunting or herding cultures, such as those of the Book of Mormon in his view, leave "little if anything" behind them—indeed, that "a land that reverts to nomadism" (as regularly occurred in the history of the Book of Mormon peoples in his view) is "devoid of cultural remains" (see above). Now all students of archaeology will know that this claim is directly opposite to the fact. Even though ruins, or the remains of buildings, are not ordinarily left behind by nomadic cultures, the literature of archaeology is full of excavation reports and other descriptions of material remains marking the camp or cave sites of such cultures—in fact, remains often of kinds that last almost indefinitely, and therefore may easily survive from the time of the Book of Mormon cultures: stone and bone implements, food-refuse heaps of mollusk shells and animal bones, earthen burial mounds, and even (though much less frequently than at the sites of permanent farming or urban settlements) skeletal remains of the ancient hunters or herders themselves. Consequently, even if the Book of Mormon peoples had been mainly nomadic—which we have seen they were not—a great deal in the way of material remains or archaeological traces of their existence would have had to be expected. The author's attempt to bolster his argument with the flat statement that "many a great civilization" of the Old World (presumably nomadic like those—in his claim—of the Book of Mormon)"has left behind not a single recognizable [archaeological] trace of itself," must be pronounced yet another unsupported assertion. In light of the world-wide experience of archaeology above noted with respect to remains of nomadic cultures (which are necessarily even more extensive in the case of a "great" nomadic civilization), we are justified in replying to this assertion that if not a single archaeological trace of such great civilizations has been found despite extensive excavation in their supposed regions of development, it is evident that those civilizations simply never existed!—in other words, they must be regarded as merely figments of the imagination of the ancient writers—usually poets—who speak of them. (As will be more fully noted later, ancient writings are not always entirely reliable as sources of historical information, and must be checked by the independent material evidence of archaeology.)

But the author continues his argument against the value of archaeology for the Book of Mormon, in comparison with his own philological approach as developed in his present and preceding studies: Even if Book of Mormon archaeologists do find remains of the Book of Mormon area and period (he seems totally unaware, as previously noted, that such remains have already been found), these findings will not have any really decisive result as to the claims of the Book of Mormon, i. e. will neither prove nor disprove these claims. For "the most we can hope for [from archaeology] are general indications of a Book of Mormon type of civilization—anything more specific than that we have no right to expect" (p. 373). It is unlikely, for instance, that any particular known Book of Mormon city will ever be identified from archaeological evidence, the reason given being the lack of sufficient description in the Record itself—just as "from reliable Egyptian lists we know scores of cities in Palestine whose very existence the archaeologist would never suspect" (loc. cit.). Nor do we have a right to expect the identification of any particular monument or artifact as of Jaredite, Nephite, or ancient Lamanite origin; but this need not surprise us, for "actually the scarcity of identifiable remains in the Old World is even more impressive" (p. 366).

These pronouncements, however, cannot be accepted. The fact is that there is sufficient description in the Book of Mormon of some of its cities for their definite archaeological identification. At any rate the Prophet Joseph Smith appears to have thought so (see Times and Seasons, Oct. 1, 1842, in which he proposes the identification of the ruins of Quirigua in Central America as those of the Book of Mormon city of Zarahemla). Indeed, it is very probable that one such city—despite the dictum of the author—has already been archaeologically identified! (see August 23, 1954, Newsletter, 22.02, "The City of Bountiful Found?"). The case of the Egyptian lists of cities in Palestine cited by the author really does not support his claim: in contrast to the Book of Mormon, there is no information given in these lists as to even the approximate location of their cities, the first requirement for their archaeological identification.

Moreover, in his denial of the possibility of ever identifying any particular monument or artifact as Jaredite, Nephite, or ancient Lamanite, the author is evidently unaware of the recent identification of an ancient sculpture unearthed at the ruined city of Izapa in Central America as definitely a monument of the Nephite civilization (see the reviewer's article, "An Unusual Tree-of-Life Sculpture from Ancient Central America" [the Lehi Tree-of-Life Stone], Bulletin of the University Archaeological Society, No. 4, March, 1953, pp. 26-49). In asserting, to support this part of his argument, that "the scarcity of identifiable remains in the Old World is even more impressive," the author becomes wholly irresponsible. The fact is that the archaeological objects from sites of the Old World, as well as the New, which have been definitely identified—i. e. which are definitely known as to culture represented, place and time of origin, and purpose or use—are beyond count, both those on display in museums and those described and identified only in archaeological field reports.

Since the author is thus mistaken in his view that specific archaeological identification of the Book of Mormon cities or antiquities will never be possible, we must further conclude that, contrary to his assertion, archaeology definitely can prove the Book of Mormon, since such identifications will constitute this proof. In fact, in his general contention that "the archaeologist can never have the final word" in questions of ancient history such as raised by the Book of Mormon (p. 377), he is completely in error. It is true that "the archaeologist can never have the final word" with respect to the absence of a particular trait in an ancient culture or region (nor, in fact, can the documentary historian or philologist!). But on the other hand, the archaeologist can and very often does have the final word with respect to the presence of such a trait, i. e. by his finding and identification of actual material relics thereof; also with respect to the occurrence of a major event or development in the history of an ancient culture or region, and questions of geography and dating (as inconsistently admitted by the author himself on pp. 144-145, where he notes the fact that archaeological evidence has definitely established the general date of the Dead Sea Scrolls). Archaeology also most surely has the final word with respect to the existence of an entire ancient culture itself. At least this is so in the case of an urban culture of many-centuries' duration, featured by numerous permanent settlements, such as the civilizations of the Book of Mormon; it is inconceivable—and contrary to world-wide archaeological experience—that such civilizations could ever have existed without leaving behind some identifiable remains.

Indeed, a serious misrepresentation of the value of archaeological materials as sources of historical information must be charged to the author. He quotes the admissions of various archaeologists (pp. 368-369) that (1) much archaeological material is of questionable value, and that

(2) even material adequately recorded is often difficult to interpret; and thereupon unwarrantedly concludes for his reader that "half the material [of archaeology] is useless and the other half can't be used"! Actually, although it is true that much archaeological material is of questionable value (because of poor recording as to place of finding and stratigraphic and other context), a very great quantity still remains, in all areas, the historical value of which can hardly be questioned; and although this adequately-recorded material is often difficult to interpret, much of it has or can be successfully used: witness the imposing culture-histories which have been firmly established by archaeological research in many parts of the world without the help of ancient written records, e. g. in the preclassical Aegean region, in pre-Roman Italy, in Bronze Age and Celtic central and northern Europe, and in pre-European Peru and the Southwest and Eastern Mound Area of the United States. The author's contention that "material remains unaccompanied by written texts are necessarily in themselves 'highly ambiguous material' " (p. 369) does not hold when they occur in stratigraphic order or other distributional patterns or associations meaningful for culture-history, as in all the above areas as well as all others where archaeological research is going on, including those having ancient written records.

As a matter of fact ancient written records, in which the author has such great faith, have often been proved to be quite unreliable (though others have often been proved reliable) by archaeological checks; the likelihood of at least some human error must always be kept in mind in using such records: they are usually more or less biased accounts of events, and sometimes were consciously falsified. They should, therefore, be checked by material archaeological evidence whenever possible. On the other hand, the reliability of archaeological materials as historical evidence can hardly be denied, since they constitute actual physical survivals of the events or developments to which they owe their origin.

Consequently, the author's contention at the beginning of his work and throughout, that documentary sources are more important than archaeological for testing and confirming the historical claims of the Book of Mormon and other scriptures (pp. 3, 4-6, 13), or that the "Old World" or philological approach is more decisive than the "New World" or archaeological (pp. 13-14, 377), cannot be accepted. A more accurate appraisal would be that they are equally valuable. The documentary are certainly more important and decisive, when available and decipherable or usable. But it should be kept in mind that nearly all the more recently discovered of these sources have themselves been archaeologically discovered (as the author himself often acknowledges), and therefore archaeologically authenticated, also that their interpretation depends in large measure upon an understanding of the cultural background of their authors as revealed in part by archaeology; moreover, since nearly all the history of its peoples is placed by the Book of Mormon in the New World, the "New World" or archaeological test of this history is bound to be at least as decisive as the "Old World" or philological.

Limitations of space allow only a few remarks here with respect to the author's assertions on points of Book of Mormon geography.

These assertions are positive statements for which the author gives little or doubtful evidence, or no evidence at all. On p. 242, for instance, he denounces "the authority on. . . Book of Mormon geography," for "unbridled license of speculation and airy weakness of evidence." But he gives no example of such speculation, that would justify this harsh judgment. On

the other hand, in this assertion (along with others) he merely manages to reveal his own unawareness of the actual status of the subject of Book of Mormon geography. For this judgment can be applied only to some of the published studies on the problem. The greater and more recent part of the work on Book of Mormon geography consists of unpublished but well-substantiated conclusions, apparently unknown to the author but known to all persons with training and experience in the field of Book of Mormon archaeology (the geography of the Book of Mormon, it should be noted, is mainly a problem of Book of Mormon archaeology, since its final solution must come from the results of excavation). Nevertheless, this quick dismissal of the work of others on the geographic problem clears the board for the author's own views, the implication being that these views are the opposite of speculation and have the support of strong evidence.

Unfortunately, however, we find that this is not the case. Thus on p. 113 the author declares that "certainly there is no doubt at all that the Book of Mormon is speaking of desert most of the time it talks about wilderness." But what is the evidence given for this very positive conclusion?—merely the fact that (1) according to the Oxford Dictionary only one of the four meanings of "wilderness" is that of a region overgrown with vegetation or covered with forest or jungle; and that (2) in the Bible "wilderness" almost always means desert. This is not evidence that points beyond doubt to the conclusion that in the Book of Mormon "wilderness" usually means desert. The Oxford Dictionary certainly does not rule out the possibility that the "wildernesses" of the Book of Mormon in the New World were regions of forest or jungle, since it does give this as one of the meanings of the term; and even though in the Bible "wilderness" almost always means desert, this of course is because the Near Eastern lands dealt with in the Bible happen to have been almost always in or near the desert, while the New World lands dealt with in the Book of Mormon could have been generally in or near quite different—i. e. forested—regions (surely the Book of Mormon peoples in the New World, in the face of a possibly different physical environment, did not necessarily continue to use geographic terms such as "wilderness" with the same meaning—other than that of an unsettled region—as in their Biblical homeland).

As a matter of fact, the evidence of the Book of Mormon itself makes it quite clear that its "wildernesses" in the New World were generally not deserts as in the Near East but forest regions: references, for example, to "the forest" which covered the northern part of the land southward (general land of Zarahemla including the land Bountiful) and apparently much also of the southern highland part (general land of Nephi; Eth. 10:19) and to "the forests" in the region of the city of Nephi (e. g. Enos 3), also other indications of a wet climate. Moreover, contrary to the author's argument (pp. 340-344, 348-349), the rather open country of the region of the city of Nephi—"forests" (note the plural) were characteristic of this region—does not necessarily mean that the rest of the Book of Mormon area was similarly "for the most part" open or unforested; this would conflict with many indications in the Record to the contrary—one of which is inconsistently quoted by the author himself (p. 294: "'the land southward. . . was covered with animals of the forest,' " Eth. 10:19, previously cited here), on the basis of which he refers, again inconsistently, to "the forested land to the south" (same page). Nor can we conclude with him that the Record indicates that the region of the city of Nephi was "a very dry" or "arid country," with desert wildernesses (pp. 342-344): the admitted presence of forests, as well as lakes (waters of Mormon, waters of Sebus) and

abundance of wild animals, all point instead to a climate of at least moderate rainfall. (His main argument here is that the flight of the people of Limhi from the city of Nephi into "the wilderness," with their flocks and herds" [Mos. 22], surely would have left behind a well-marked trail, if through jungle or forest; consequently, the statement that the Lamanite army which pursued them for two days "could no longer follow their tracks" and were therefore "lost in the wilderness" can be understood only if we assume that the region was not one of jungle or forest but of desert: "How could their tracks have become lost to the swift and clever Lamanite trackers right behind them? Very easily in arid country, by winds laden with sand and dust, which have rendered many an army invisible and effaced its tracks. But never in a jungle." This conclusion, however, reveals a lack of first-hand acquaintance on the part of the author with wet forest or jungle country. The reviewer, on the other hand, can testify from such first-hand acquaintance [having traveled by foot and horseback in the tropical rain forest of northern Central America] that the trail of a company of people with animals, even that of an army, traveling through a jungle can very quickly be effaced or rendered indistinguishable by one of the frequent heavy rain storms characteristic of such a country—all foot and hoof tracks are soon obliterated in a sea of mud, and branches and twigs are broken everywhere, leaving such signs valueless to pursuers for distinguishing the trail. The editor of this Newsletter, who lived in Panama for a time, has similar testimony on this point: that on one occasion a wide pathway was cut through the jungle of that region for the passage of heavy army equipment, but could not be found again the very next day!) In view of this, the author's further conclusion that the rest of the Book of Mormon area was also "rather dry," with desert wildernesses, is likewise unwarranted.

Again, the author's flat rejection of Central America as the area of the Book of Mormon (or at least as the land southward, the region of the early Nephite settlements: p. 343) must also be considered hardly more than speculation: none of the reasons he gives to support this rejection can be held to carry any weight as evidence. Thus one of them is his view, above discussed, that the Book of Mormon area, contrary to Central America, was "for the most part" open or unforested country and "rather dry," conclusions we have seen to be based upon weak evidence and even opposite the probable facts. (It may further be noted in this connection that Central America, although generally forested as actually required by the Book of Mormon for the land southward, is comparatively open and dry, like the region of Nephi, in the very region where we must locate Nephi if Central America is a part of the Book of Mormon area [northern Central America—the land southward in the "Limited Tehuantepec" identification], namely the highland region of northwestern Honduras and southeastern Guatemala!)

A second reason he gives for his rejection of Central America as the land southward of the Book of Mormon is that the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, at the north end of Central America, is too wide to be the "small neck" or "narrow passage" of land which connected the land-southward division of the Book of Mormon area with the land northward: "To call the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, one hundred and thirty miles wide, a 'narrow passage' is of course out of the question" (p. 360). But this is not out of the question at all. Although the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, in its present width of 130 miles, may be considered too wide to be described as a "small neck of land" or "narrow passage" in the absolute sense, in the relative sense—i. e. in comparison with the land areas on either side—it does fit these terms (and probably did even more in ancient Book of Mormon times, as there is evidence of a considerable regression of the sea on each side since those times)—else why do

geographers designate it as an isthmus?

A third and final reason given by the author for his rejection of Central America is the—according to him—"immense length" of and "enormous distance involved" in a recorded journey from the city of Nephi to Zarahemla, both of which were settlements in the land southward; i. e., a distance between these points exceeding the extent of Central America (pp. 342-343). But this journey turns out to have been that of a large company of men, women, and children (the people of Limhi)—evidently on foot through forest at least a large part of the way, with their provisions and "flocks and herds"—of only some 21 days (since the similar journey of the people of Alma is explicitly indicated to have required this period of time); which means that Nephi and Zarahemla could not have been much over 300 miles apart (if this journey was accomplished at a travel-rate of some 15 miles a day, a rather liberal estimate for such a company, especially with "flocks and herds," journeying on foot through forest), and probably not much over 250 (since a more likely estimate of the travel-rate in this case would be around ten miles a day), by the undoubtedly somewhat meandering route of this journey, or probably not much over 200 miles by direct air-line! Consequently these cities, contrary to the author, could both very easily have been located in Central America, which has an extent of over 1,300 miles—and even in northern Central America (i. e. the land southward according to the now widely accepted Limited Tehuantepec or Mesoamerican identification of the Book of Mormon area), which has an extent of over 650 miles.

Thus all three reasons advanced by the author for his rejection of Central America as the land southward of the Book of Mormon have been found to be invalid. We may add that in this claim he is also in disagreement with the Prophet Joseph Smith, who concluded that Zarahemla, which was in the land southward, was in Central America (loc. cit.). Indeed, at the end of his study the author even appears to disagree with himself on this point. Whereas he asserts, in his argument against Central America, that "it is plain. . . that our [Book of Mormon] story does not take place in the jungles of Central America" (p. 343), he now writes inconsistently (p. 376): "But what of the mighty ruins of Central America?. . . It is our conviction that proof of the Book of Mormon does lie in Central America."

In conclusion, we may state that the major part of the work under review, that dealing with the Book of Mormon in the light of Near Eastern philology (the author's field of specialization), is of very considerable worth to the student of the Book of Mormon. But the author has seriously reduced the over-all value of his work, by including unacceptable discussions of Book of Mormon archaeology and geography. These are subjects which, for proper treatment, require specialization in a different field, namely that of archaeology and especially American archaeology.