

Does the Book of Mormon reflect an ancient near eastern background?

Written by Administrator

Tuesday, 27 April 2010 08:09 - Last Updated Thursday, 20 September 2012 10:46

Introductory essay. Page 334

"Since it was published in 1839, the authenticity of the Book of Mormon has been at the center of controversy. Many THEORIES have been put forward about how Joseph Smith had either authored or plagiarized the text, POSSIBLY with help of others."

Well the writer forgot to tell the readers about The [Spaulding manuscript](#) that was supposed for year by the Protestants to be the text for the book of Mormon until this manuscript was found and clearly was proven false the accusation. After that came out the story about ["view of the Hebrew"](#) and even that one failed, after that some rumors that Oliver Cowdery or Sidney Rigdon helped Joseph Smith in making up the book of Mormon. Sidney Rigdon joined the church after the book of Mormon was already published and Oliver Cowdery never maintained something like that, especially after his excommunication. After all the copyright is a clear proof that Joseph is the author, legally and lawfully. It seems strange that Oliver would have let him to become president of the church and to take the copyright if he was in some other case the co author, make sense? Anyway what the writer is trying to do is just to lead the readers in the direction he likes but he is not fair at all, because he is speaking vaguely and that is it. In fact at page 335 he declares: "Fynley shows that the Book of Mormon is more LIKELY to be a modern text." Likely it doesn't mean "for sure" so we are in the field of pure assumptions.

DOES THE BOOK OF MORMON REFLECT AN ANCIENT NEAR EASTER BACKGROUND?
BY Thomas Finley page 337

I was pleasantly surprised in reading this part and I am going to tell you why. Mr. Finley is a Professor of the department of Old Testament and Semitics at Talbot School of Theology, Biola university, an M. Div in Old Testament from Talbot School of Theology and more. When I begun to read his part I was scared to death (sic)! I thought: "This profound scholar will show me, by the Bible how wrong is the book of Mormon and I felt inadequate, sincerely to compete with such knowledge, but instead to find scriptures by the Bible I have found a deep scholarship involved in how to compare the text of the Book of Mormon to an ancient Near Eastern background, so I felt even more inadequate and surely even the other readers, of both sides I am sure they will feel the same. This is supposed to be something to try to help common people in some possible understanding is the book of Mormon can be true or not, but in reality is for very few learned men who love to show off in what they think is the science of knowledge.

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I will try to show just some points that maybe can help the readers to see the traps that Mr. Finley is trying to set up for them. page 340

ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN WRITING ON METAL AND THE GOLD/BRASS PLATES.

"there is no question that metal was sometimes used as writing material in the ancient world, including the Near east" Thanks Mr. Finley for your honesty and he goes ahead:"However, such examples do not SEEM to parallel the lengthy Book of Mormon, since they contain a small amount of material and imitate standard writing procedures for the time." Since he CAN'T question the material he has to question that the Book of Mormon is too long, so if by chance, in the meantime another metal would be found longer than the book of Mormon we would have finally the proof of it? Surely not but take a look he wrote SEEM, so even if his conclusions are sure at the end to confuse the readers he still has to be honest and admit that he is just assuming what he thinks. at page 341 he has to admit that "the copper scroll from cave three of Qumran rather uniquely has a longer text (though not nearly as long as the Book of Mormon)"Mr. Finland concludes"While metal was used in the ancient Near East for writing material, the dissimilarities in usage with the book of Mormon outweigh the similarity of material"

Mr. Finland is just saying that metal material was used, how we maintain (he can't lie because it would be discovered) but you know the similarities and bla bla. Main thing here is that he had to declare "While metal was used in the ancient Near East for writing material,"

Linguistic issue page 342

"some Mormon scholars have claimed that certain linguistic features in the Book of Mormon support Joseph Smith's assertion that through the medium of the Urim and thummim I translated the record by the gift and power of God." John Tvedtnes, for example, refers to "Hebraisms" in the Book of Mormon that reflect "the language that the Nephites used in daily speech-Hebrew". Mr. Finley at page 343 declares that Tvedtnes listed a total of 13 categories of feature found in the Book of Mormon that indicate an idiom that would be "awkward or unexpected in English, even in Joseph Smith's time. Yet they make a good sense when viewed as translations, perhaps as too literal translations from an ancient text written in a Hebrew like language." after listed those categories Mr. Finley concludes:"Most of the features Tvedtnes lists are also found

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commonly in the KJV, and it makes good sense that the KJV COULD have influenced the author's phrasing and style of writing even where he was writing creatively and imaginatively." Mr. Finley forgets to remember that the Book of Mormon was written in 65 days and Joseph had several different scribes, not just one, so he should have written a story, invented by himself, to make sense with the Bible's prophecy and the Bible teachings and further he should find even the time to go back to the Bible's text to copy sentences very unusual for his time, spending more time and rendering his work more complicated, in fact the expressions listed by Tvedtnes are "Plates of brass instead brass plates, With patience instead of patiently, taxed with a tax, by the hand of instead "By" the conjunction "and" used to connect each member of a list of items prepositions plus "that as in "because that and so on. I have found this part of the book very boring because there is nothing of interest, probably what our scholars are just speculations but we can easily say the same for what Mr. Finley maintains nothing more nothing less. The key point is that we really do not know exactly the language of the book of Mormon that was Egyptian reformed, who knows today what it was? Nobody! But Mr. Finley is even funny in his statements listen to this at page 351

"Since Lehi, Nephi's father, was descended from Joseph, son of Jacob (1 Nephi 5:14) and also lived "at Jerusalem in all his days" up to the first year of King Zedekiah (1 Nephi 1:4), it SEEMS LOGICAL to expect that he and his family spoke Hebrew (but here we are talking about writing not speaking Mr. Finley!) as their native language>

1 Nephi 1:2

2 Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians.

Mosiah 1:4

4 For it were not possible that our father, Lehi, could have remembered all these things, to have taught them to his children, except it were for the help of these plates; for he having been taught in the language of the Egyptians therefore he could read these engravings, and teach them to his children,

Mormon 9:32

32 And now, behold, we have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech.

Mormon 9:33

33 And if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record.

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Mormon 9:34

34 But the Lord knoweth the things which we have written, and also that none other people knoweth our language;

From this it is clear that they used the Egyptian reformed because it was more concise than the Hebrew, it was something practical. The funny thing is that Mr. Finley declares:"WHILE THERE WERE STRONG CONNECTIONS between Egypt and Judah around 600b.c. and EVEN EXAMPLES OF HEBREW WRITTEN WITH EGYPTIAN (HIERATIC) CHARACTERS." Thanks Mr. Finley to provide the evidence! and He goes ahead, again assuming (wrong). "It would be odd that Nephi would record information to be handed down through his family in the Egyptian language itself.....The only reason I can think of for Nephi to use Egyptian writing for his records is that it WOULD PRESUMABLY TAKE UP LESS SPACE than Hebrew writing (bravo!) though EVEN THAT IS DOUBTFUL!"

Mr. Finley was giving the right answer but he thought to be wrong because it was against his purpose.

The Geography of 1 Nephi pag 359

Here we are totally in the field of assumptions for LDS scholars and for Mr. Finley too so it would be a waste of time to discuss this part because no proof can be furnished in both sides.

CONCLUSION page 365

"It is difficult at best for Mormon scholars to verify their claims that the book of Mormon is based on an ancient document. Not having the original text from which the translation was made is a huge BARRIER to overcome.....even worse, the researchers are not in complete agreement among themselves about whether the original would have been Hebrew or Egyptian, though the predominant part view SEEMS to lean toward Hebrew."

Mr. Finley never read carefully the Book of Mormon because

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[Rendering fiction](#)