

cause it is one of the most homophobic religions," said Kushner, who claims that his play was deeply influenced by Fawn Brodie's *No Man Knows My History* as well as works by Harold Bloom.

Mormon dramatists whose impulse is to write about their religion and culture have clearly been upstaged by a self-proclaimed agnostic gay Jew from Brooklyn. His imagination has, among many other things, and despite some unfair demonizing of Joe near the play's end, aptly captured much of the essence of contemporary Mormon character and the

thrilling iconography of America's most successful indigenous religion. Regardless of what one considers to be the quality and endurance of a play like *Angels in America* the lesson may be that playwrights and others interested in developing a Mormon theatrical literature had best get cracking. That such a play has issued from a non-Mormon playwright might say as much about the failure of Mormon dramatists to transcend the self-consciousness of their own social and cultural boundaries—to position themselves *in* the world—as it does about Kushner's ample talent.

## "Critical" Book of Mormon Scholarship

*New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology.* Edited by Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993).

*Review of Books on the Book of Mormon, Volume 6.* Edited by Daniel C. Peterson (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1994).

Reviewed by Stephen E. Thompson, Ph.D., Research Assistant, Department of Egyptology, Brown University.

*NEW APPROACHES TO THE BOOK OF MORMON* will undoubtedly be perceived as another salvo in the war of words between those who believe the Book of Mormon is best understood as a nineteenth-century product of Joseph Smith and those who adopt the more traditional understanding of the book as a translation of an ancient

text. It should, however, be approached as a piece of generally solid scholarship which contributes to a better understanding of the nature and origin of this book of scripture. While many of the conclusions reached are not new, the methodological rigor brought to bear in the study of the Book of Mormon certainly justifies the title of the volume.

An impressive array of topics are dealt within the book, and those interested in textual criticism, Book of Mormon geography, demography, language, and ideational context will find material of interest. Given the number of contributions to the volume (ten), and the limited space allotted for this review, it is not possible to summarize all of the articles and then offer critical remarks. I will offer only a few remarks on particular essays.

In "The Word of God Is Enough: The Book of Mormon as Nineteenth-

century Scripture," Anthony Hutchinson states that "my thesis is simple, . . . we should accept that [the Book of Mormon] is a work of scripture inspired by God in the same way that the Bible is inspired, but one that has as its human author Joseph Smith, Jr." (1). He then fails, however, to discuss the extremely complex nature of biblical inspiration.

I find the author's discussion of how one can hold that the Book of Mormon is scripture, but not historical, unsatisfying. He states that he accepts the Book of Mormon as the "word of God" because he is moved by the stories it contains, as well as by "the story of Joseph Smith . . . and [of the] people brought together by its coming forth" (7). He seems to be saying that he accepts the Book of Mormon as scripture because of his emotional reaction to the text, but is such a reaction sufficient reason to consider a book "scripture"? Hutchinson tells us that "understanding the Book of Mormon as a fictional work of nineteenth-century scripture has real advantages. The book opens up for interpretation when read this way. The stories take on an added dimension far beyond, I find, any that were lost when I stopped believing in historical Nephites" (17). Unfortunately for the reader, Hutchinson fails to provide examples of the "advantages" of his suggested method of interpretation. I would have liked to have seen how the stories take on an "added dimension." Hutchinson places great emphasis on the stories of the Book of Mormon but seems to neglect the expository discourse of the book. In what ways, if any, should this material be reinterpreted in light of the nineteenth-century context of the book?

In her article on "Book of Mor-

mon Christology," Melodie Charles states that in order "to give the Book of Mormon's idea a context this essay will show some of what the Book of Mormon says about Jesus Christ and will compare that with what the Jews at the time of Jesus' birth were expecting the Messiah to be, with what Christians after his death believed he was, and with current Mormon beliefs." Her treatment of these four topics is very uneven, however. Her discussions of what the Book of Mormon says about Christ, and of current Mormon beliefs, are adequate. She argues that the Book of Mormon is "largely modalistic" and makes "no explicit distinction between the identities of the Father and the Son" (103). This contrasts with the trithestic view of the Trinity found in Mormonism after the 1840s. Her discussion of who Christians believed Jesus to be after his death focuses almost exclusively on post-325 C.E. theology, and generally omits a discussion of who first generation Christians thought Jesus to be. Charles's treatment of messianic expectations at the time of Jesus' birth is simply inadequate and ignores recent scholarship on the subject, in which it is argued that in the Palestine of Lehi's day there was no messianic expectation (the term "Messiah," denoting an eschatological figure, is first attested during the first century B.C.E.), and that one cannot state that there was ever a messianic expectation, but messianic expectations. See, for example, J. Neusner, W. Green, and E. Frerichs, eds., *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), and J. Charlesworth, ed., *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (Fortress Press, 1992). The latter appeared too late to

have been used by Charles, but the former should have been.

In his article "A Record in the Language of My Father," Edward Ashment discusses the question of the original language of the Book of Mormon and the statistical methods which have been employed to find evidence for multiple authorship in the book. I find myself in general agreement with Ashment's conclusions—i.e., that there is insufficient evidence available from the English "translation" to support claims that the Book of Mormon was written in Egyptian, Hebrew, "reformed" Egyptian, or in Hebrew using Egyptian characters. Ashment's article provides the needed methodological corrective to studies which try to point out "Hebraisms" in the text of the Book of Mormon. Any construction which has a parallel in the King James Version of the Bible cannot serve as evidence of Hebrew as the language underlying the Book of Mormon.

While I am largely in agreement with Ashment's conclusions, I cannot concur in all the particulars of his argument. In arguing against a suggestion by Brian Stubbs that "long strings of subordinate clauses and verbal expressions [found in the Book of Mormon] . . . are acceptable in Hebrew, though unorthodox and discouraged in English," and therefore provide evidence of Hebrew influence on the text of the Book of Mormon, Ashment uses methods of argumentation which border on the nonsensical. He maintains that if such constructions were "acceptable" Hebrew syntax, the 1981 text from the modern selections from the Book of Mormon in Hebrew "should readily reflect the literally-translated Book of Mormon text. In fact, it does not" (364). The fact that a modern transla-

tion of the Book of Mormon into Hebrew (what form of Hebrew?) does not reflect such constructions does not *prove* anything about the nature of the language of the Hebrew Bible. Similarly, Ashment's "biblical" text which he creates from Genesis 1:1 to "help make clear" that the "unusual syntax of the Book of Mormon is not characteristic of Hebrew" (365-66) also proves nothing about the Hebrew Bible, since the text is purely a creation of Ashment. His demonstration that such constructions are not limited to the Book of Mormon but can be found in other writings of Joseph Smith for which there is no postulated Hebrew *Vorlage* is sufficient to establish the point that these constructions cannot serve as evidence of an underlying Hebrew text of the Book of Mormon. In a footnote (365n42), Ashment notes that the unusual syntactic construction under discussion is not "representative of Egyptian" and quotes from Gardiner's grammar of Middle Egyptian, which notes that "involved constructions and lengthy periods are rare." This statement does not represent the current understanding of the Egyptian language; lengthy, involved constructions are not at all rare in Egyptian. See the remarks of F. Junge, "How to Study Egyptian grammar and to what purpose. A Summary of sorts," *Lingua Aegyptia* 1 (1991): 398, and M. Collier, "Predication and the Circumstantial  $sdm(=f)/sdm.n(=f)$ ," *Lingua Aegyptia* 2 (1992): 18n5.

To conclude on a technical note, due to limitations imposed by the publisher, the authors were unable to make use of any of the standard systems used to transliterate the Hebrew, Egyptian, and Greek alphabets. In order to make use of transliterations, David Wright had to devise a new

method involving an unsightly mix of upper and lower case letters to render characters not found in the English alphabet. To make matters worse, this transliteration system was not used consistently throughout the book, and at times the same letter is transliterated in different ways. If Signature Books plans to continue publishing the type of scholarship represented in this book, I hope that it will develop the capability to reproduce any of the accepted transliteration systems currently in use. Such *ad hoc* creations as found in this volume are not acceptable.

Since its first appearance in 1989, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* (RBBM), published by the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies headquartered at Brigham Young University, has evolved from simply providing reviews of books dealing with the Book of Mormon to being a vehicle for publishing responses to what are perceived as attacks on traditional Mormon attitudes to scripture. According to the title, the journal is dedicated to dealing with books about the Book of Mormon, but when the need arises, its scope can be extended to books dealing with the Book of Abraham and to books dealing with Mormonism in general. For example, volume 3 included reviews of Rodger Anderson's *Joseph Smith's New York Reputation Reexamined* (Signature Books, 1990) and Dan Vogel's *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture* (Signature Books, 1990), and volume 4 reviewed C. M. Larson's *By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus: A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri* (Institute for Religious Research, 1992). (Apparently RBBM will review whatever its editor feels inclined to include.) Thus

it was only a matter of time until FARMS trained its guns on what they perceived to be the latest attack on the Book of Mormon.

In the current issue, RBBM editor Daniel Peterson has assembled a team of thirteen reviewers to aid him in evaluating *New Approaches*. They are Davis Bitton, John Tvedtnes, John Gee, Royal Skousen, John Welch, Robert Millet, Louis Midgley, James Smith, John Sorenson, Matthew Roper, Richard Anderson, Martin Tanner, and William Hamblin. Two reviewers (Bitton and Tvedtnes) provide considerations of the book as a whole, while others respond to one or several of its essays. Some reviewers (Welch, Midgley, Sorenson, Anderson) respond to criticism of their earlier work by authors in *New Approaches*, while Hamblin responds to an article by Brent Metcalfe which appeared in *Dialogue* (Fall 1993). While Metcalfe's essay was not part of *New Approaches*, nor a book about the Book of Mormon, apparently the editor felt that the contents of this article justified a response in RBBM (xi).

One of the first things that I noticed about this book was the tone in which the articles are written. This is not merely an attempt to evaluate the essays presented in *New Approaches*, but an effort to discredit totally the articles and authors. This is attempted by the frequent use of a sarcastic (e.g., 483) and condescending tone, and by comments about the authors in *New Approaches*. Peterson tells us that he does not "advocate the use" of "insulting or abusive language," but then he allows such bald, unsupported statements as Midgley's referring to Mark Thomas as "inept" (217n42) to stand. We are repeatedly reminded that Brent Metcalfe is only a high

school graduate, that he is an agnostic, and was a close associate of Mark Hofmann (78n92, 211n36, 520, 522, 545, 556). We are informed that Mark Thomas is a banker, and that Edward Ashment is an insurance salesman (54, 79, 526n9). While all of this information may be true, I wonder what its relevance is to the strength of the arguments put forward by the respective authors. Apparently, some contributors to *RBBM* feel that the fact that some contributors to *New Approaches* lack advanced degrees is significant in evaluating their work.

Credentials are interesting things. When one lacks them but one's opponent does not, then they are of little value. (As Hugh Nibley noted, "What on earth have a man's name, degree, academic position, and of all things, opinions, to do with whether a thing is true or not" ["A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price," *Improvement Era*, Jan. 1968].) When one has them however, and one feels that an opponent does not, then they are of great importance. Hamblin presents a lengthy list of associations at whose meetings some FARMS writers have presented papers, publishers who have published their books, and journals in which they have published articles (445). But, as Hamblin well knows, giving a paper is one thing, giving a *good* paper (or publishing a good book or article) is quite another. The relevance of this impressive list of scholarly output is also questionable. How does having an article in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* qualify one to write on the Book of Mormon? I suspect that the contributors to *RBBM* are hoping to discredit *New Approaches* to such an extent that others will not take their arguments seriously.

Daniel Peterson is correct (525)

when he notes that the real point of dispute "between defenders of the Book of Mormon . . . and those who would revise or redefine those truth claims . . . is . . . a clash of opposing world views." This is particularly apparent in the differing approaches to the Bible evident in the two publications. The approach to the Bible adopted by several contributors to *RBBM* has much in common with that of Protestant fundamentalists who see the Bible as largely inerrant and historical. For example, in his response to Mark Thomas's discussion of the account of Jesus' institution of the sacrament among the Nephites, Richard Anderson relies heavily on discourses which the gospel of John attributes to Jesus. He also tells us that he uses "all four Gospels as responsibly quoting the Savior, whether or not word-perfect" (396). When one adopts this approach, Anderson claims, then "each phrase in the Nephite prayers correlates with New Testament teachings of Christ on the sacrament" (*ibid.*), and that "the Book of Mormon sacrament teachings . . . fit our Bible as written" (384). Anderson never really defends this approach, or the substantial reliability of the gospels, but simply asserts it. The closest he comes is when he argues that because Irenaeus, who knew Polycarp, who supposedly knew John, states that John was an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry, then the book can be taken as historical (403). On the other hand, when he refers to Mark Thomas's more critical approach to the gospel record, he refers to it as scrambling the integrity of the gospels, or as witness tampering (387), or as the work of "individualistic scholars" (384).

If Anderson is going to accept John as historical, then he has to ex-

plain how his eyewitness saw things vastly differently from the other gospel authors, one of whom was also supposedly an "eyewitness." The Jesus of John's gospel displays a vastly different teaching style and content from the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels. In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus teaches by means of short proverbial sayings and parables. In John, however, we find Jesus delivering long, involved discourses. The subject matter of these discourses also differs. In the Synoptics, Jesus teaches about the kingdom of God and rarely says anything about himself. In John, Jesus speaks primarily about himself and almost never about the kingdom of God. Differences such as these have led scholars to view the discourses of Jesus in John as later creations and not speeches given by the historical Jesus (see J. D. G. Dunn, *The Evidence for Jesus* [Westminster Press, 1985], 32-43; E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* [Penguin Press, 1993], 66-73). Anderson makes no attempt to support his assumption that the apostle John supposedly known by Polycarp is the author of the fourth gospel. Raymond Brown points out that Irenaeus is not an entirely trustworthy witness and can be shown to have been wrong in certain instances, as when he said that Papias heard John, which contradicts Papias himself (*The Gospel of John I-XII* [Doubleday, 1966], lxxxix-xc). E. P. Sanders has noted that from the present available evidence, the gospels circulated without titles (or authors) until the second half of the second century and that authors were assigned to them beginning about 180, not based on long-standing tradition, but on clues found within the gospels themselves (*Jesus*, 64-65).

Once one accepts that the dis-

courses in John were not delivered by Jesus, then Anderson's argument actually works against Book of Mormon historicity. If Joseph Smith was working with the King James Version of the Bible (KJV) as his basic source of information, then one would expect exactly what Anderson finds in 3 Nephi, i.e., that the material on the sacrament in 3 Nephi is found scattered throughout all four gospels and includes material that does not come from the historical Jesus. Melodie Charles (*New Approaches*, 89) notes a similar phenomenon concerning the information about Jesus' life in the Book of Mormon. She points out that all the details provided by the Book of Mormon concerning the life of Jesus are contained in the New Testament, which could also indicate Joseph Smith's use of the New Testament as his source of information.

The results of the critical study of the Synoptic Gospels is not the only field whose results and methods are rejected by contributors to *RBBM*. John Gee (69) and Royal Skousen (122-24) maintain that the whole field of New Testament textual criticism is filled with practitioners who employ faulty methodology and whose results are unreliable. John Sorenson's argument is not so much with Deanne Matheny's article in *New Approaches* as with established scholars in the field of Mesoamerican archaeology (300), whom he derisively refers to as BS (for Big Scholars, 303). The reviewers in *RBBM* ask one to reject the work of many more scholars than just those contributing to *New Approaches*.

The contributors to *RBBM* could have benefitted greatly from reading Matthew 7:3 (NRSV): "Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own

eye?" All of the errors and faults which reviewers in *RBBM* point out in *New Approaches* are also to be found in *RBBM* itself. Note the following example. On page 52 John Gee tells us that *New Approaches* is filled with "deceptive and specious claims." But so is Gee's article. As an example, I call attention to Gee's statement (68) that "any attempt to reconstruct the original text of Matthew which fails to take [the text of Hebrew Matthew] into account may justly be said to be defective." This is hardly the case. In fact, one reviewer of the publication of Hebrew Matthew has stated just the opposite, that the "interesting readings" in Hebrew Matthew may be considered "primitive when and only when corroborated by ancient witnesses" (W. L. Petersen, book review in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108:725; see also S. Cohen, book review in *Bible Review*, June 1988, 9). Rather than being an independent witness to Matthew, Hebrew Matthew is derivative from late versions of canonical Matthew. (In fact, the author of the book being reviewed by Petersen and Cohen, George Howard, has informed me that a second edition of his book on Hebrew Matthew, *The Gospel of Matthew according to a Primitive Hebrew Text* [Mercer University Press], will appear shortly and that in it he argues only that the text is "pre-fourteenth century." Gee's confidence in Hebrew Matthew as a "primitive" text which is to be equated with the text referred to by Papia is misplaced.)

Another charge Gee levels against *New Approaches* is that it contains "shoddy methodology" (52). As an example of such in *RBBM*, note the following. John Tvedtnes and John Sorenson both operate on the assumption that the KJV forms a link between

the Book of Mormon and its original Hebrew text, and that the use of a particular English word in the Book of Mormon indicates that the original record contained the Hebrew word for which the English word served as a translation equivalent in the KJV. Tvedtnes argues that because the KJV mistranslates the Hebrew word for copper or bronze as brass, then when brass appears in the Book of Mormon, it should also be understood to mean copper or bronze (31). In attempting to determine what is meant in the Book of Mormon by the word "sword," Sorenson maintains that one should take into consideration "the Hebrew language meanings of the word translated 'sword'" (325). I fail to see the justification for this methodology, and I am not sure how Tvedtnes and Sorenson understand the idea of translation. We do not have the "original language" of the plates, but only Joseph Smith's translation of them. The key to the meaning of the words in the Book of Mormon is not some hypothetical Hebrew substratum, but how Joseph Smith understood the words in his day. Sorenson uses a methodology which allows him to convert the English text of the Book of Mormon into whatever he pleases. For him, east means north, horse means deer (unless, of course, he can find evidence of horses in Mesoamerica contemporaneous with Book of Mormon civilizations), and ox means tapir (344-47). Apparently God and Joseph Smith were poor translators. At the very least we could have hoped to have, in these instances, a few of the words which Welch finds elsewhere in the Book of Mormon were added during the translation "for clarity" (158).

(In fact, Sorenson's comment [346-47] that Aztecs referred to the

Spanish horses as “deer-which-carried-men-upon-their-backs” actually works against his suggestion that deer were ridden in Mesoamerica. If this is the way Aztecs referred to horses, then obviously the major difference between deer and horses was that horses carried men, while deer did not. The statement quoted by Sorenson in no way provides evidence that “there is nothing inherently implausible in the idea [of men riding deer in Mesoamerica].”)

Daniel Peterson seems to consider it a weakness of *New Approaches* that the contributors are not in total agreement with one another (553; see also Gee, 74, Welch, 183), yet he refers to disagreements among contributors to *RBBM* as “relatively minor” (vii). This is quite an understatement. What William Hamblin calls (451n36) the presentist fallacy, Robert Millet tells us must be the preferred method used to interpret the Book of Mormon and all scripture, and if it is not then “we [LDS] have little or nothing to offer the world in regard to religious understanding” (189). If this is a minor disagreement, I would like to see what Peterson considers major.

Errors of fact are not infrequent in *RBBM*. Contrary to John Sorenson’s claim, there is no Egyptian word *ss* meaning horse (345, the word is *ssmt*), *shs* is not the Egyptian word for antelope (which is *šs3w*), and there is no etymological relationship between the two Egyptian words. Martin Tanner completely misunderstands the Egyptian text he quotes (432) as evidence of the concept of “universal salvation” among Egyptians. The text refers to the fact that everyone will eventually end up in the cemetery, i.e., dead, and not that all will achieve “salvation.” That Egyptians believed

in a postmortal punishment for certain individuals would have been plain to Tanner if he had read the passage by Eric Hornung which Gee quotes on page 108 of *RBBM*.

Other errors include John Tvedtne’s reference to an Aramaic text written in “Coptic” (read Demotic) script, and John Welch’s claim that the prefix *apo* in Greek *apodidomi* is sufficient to indicate that “the openness of the reward is implicit in the verb itself” (161). Actually, *apodidomi* means “to make a payment, with the implication of such a payment being in response to an incurred obligation” (J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, et al., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains* [UBS, 1989], 1:575). Welch cites no examples in support of his contention that in *apodidomi* “the openness of the reward is implicit in the verb itself,” and until he can do so, his argument against Stan Larson’s examples 5-7 showing that Joseph Smith relied on the KJV for the text of the Sermon on the Mount in Nephi 3 has no merit.

(In an earlier work, *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount: A Latter-day Saint Perspective* [Deseret Book Co. and FARMS, 1990], Welch stated only that *apodidomi* “may convey . . . the idea of being rewarded . . . openly.” Apparently Welch has now become more sure of this point, to judge by the tone of his statement in *RBBM*.)

The most bitter irony of *RBBM* is that its contributors frequently accuse contributors to *New Approaches*, and its publisher Signature Books, of trying to “impose their world view and understanding of the past on the Church as a whole” (461, cf. 210). From what position of power do these individuals seek to impose their views

on the rest of the church? Their only "power" comes from the force of persuasion. It is rather the LDS church that attempts to impose its view of these issues on its members. Two contributors to *New Approaches* were called in by their church leaders and questioned about their contributions, and one was told never to publish with Signature Books again. David Wright was excommunicated in large measure because of his contribution to *New Approaches*. The only "force" being applied in this debate is by the institutional church, and its activities have a bearing on the extent to which much of FARMS scholarship can be considered "critical."

William Hamblin includes a lengthy discussion of the "critical" method and asks, "In what element of the critical method have I failed?" (438, see 438-44) There is one important ingredient which Hamblin lacks, which makes one consider that his work on the Book of Mormon is not critical, and that is freedom. James Barr has noted that freedom is an essential element in any scholarly endeavor which hopes to be truly critical. He states that "criticism implies freedom, and there is much scholarship which feels itself bound to reach the results required by this or that religious tradition and which in this sense is not critical" (Barr, *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism* [Westminster Press, 1983], 107-108).

Eight of the contributors to *RBBM* are employed by BYU, as are many of the frequent contributors to FARMS's other publications. Beginning with David Wright's dismissal from BYU in 1988 for holding attitudes about scripture which "differ so significantly from those generally accepted" by the

church (Jae Ballif to David Wright, 13 June 1988) to last year's failure to renew the contracts of some scholars because of their controversial views on issues deemed sensitive by the church (see "BYU Fires Two Controversial Faculty Members," *Sunstone* 16/5:74-77) and the "purge" of September 1993 (see "Six Intellectuals Disciplined for Apostasy," *Sunstone* 16/6:65-73), the church has shown that the intellectual freedom of its employees is considerably circumscribed. Now it may be true that Hamblin is a virtuous, courageous individual, who could come to conclusions unacceptable to his employer and then resign his position. But without knowing Hamblin, a reader cannot judge the extent to which he, or any church employee, is truly "free" when it comes to matters of LDS scholarship. Perhaps through no fault of their own, the work of many FARMS researchers does not qualify as "critical" because they lack the essential ingredient of freedom.

While *RBBM* is seriously flawed, it is not wholly without merit. *New Approaches* does have its faults, and *RBBM* points these out. Unfortunately one has to wade through far too much dross and bile to find the worthwhile portions of *RBBM*. Hamblin (506-20) is correct when he points out that those who consider the Book of Mormon nineteenth century in origin should make some attempt at explaining the numerous accounts of "witnesses" to the plates. Brent Metcalfe, in his *Dialogue* article, made a beginning by discussing the testimony of the three witnesses, but there are other testimonies, some of which are pointed out by Hamblin, which also need to be considered. Scholars who view Mormon scripture as non-histor-

ical need to go beyond arguing the case against the traditional understanding of Mormon scripture and begin to develop an interpretation of Mormon scripture and events from early Mormon history from such a perspective. One can only hope that all scholars will heed John Welch's call for those who write on the Book of Mormon to "become more explicit about their methods, their assump-

tions, their purposes, and the degree to which their conclusions are based on various forms of evidence or dependence on various theoretical predilections" (146). It is especially hoped that FARMS authors will take to heart Welch's plea for scholars to maintain "a posture of good will and openness toward each other and to the subject matter" (186). Unfortunately, the contributions to *RBBM* fail to do so.