

Battles in the "Thousands"

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The Jews at Elephantine and those in the Book of Mormon had a tremendous amount of military orientation and encounters, and one might wonder if there is any common denominator between them in the realm of military perspectives? This study discusses some interesting parallels in this vein, as well as a few unique cultural similarities. And also asks: is there a contribution that The War Scroll from the Dead Sea Scrolls might make to Book of Mormon warfare and possibly suggest unique data contained in the Brass Plates?

WARFARE IN THE BOOK OF MORMON:

Wars were extremely frequent in the Book of Mormon, was there ever a generation that did not go to war? Then? Or even today? It seems as if that is one of the first events to begin when they arrived at the promised-land. It seems that more than one-third of the Book of Mormon concerns war. "Warfare is a central and nearly constant element in the history of Book of Mormon peoples." (Largey p. 781) "The Military record [of the Book of Mormon] is also an interesting history for its own sake. The Book of Mormon reports many wars, recounting memorable events and courageous deeds of men, women, and youth. Each war was different and distinct." (Ricks p. 2)

A "Symposium on Warfare in the Book of Mormon, [was] held 24-25 March 1989 at Brigham Young University, under the sponsorship of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (F.A.R.M.S)" (Ricks p. ix). Certainly the publication of the papers presented at that Symposium was more than a step in a systematic study of warfare in the Book of Mormon. The papers were published a year later. "Most military events in the Book of Mormon have both a religious and political importance. The Nephites did not dichotomize their world between church and state as we do." (Ricks p. 4) That alone is worth a study, and no doubt will be undertaken in time. "To the Nephites, the matters of war were all important religious affairs and sacred obligations, not the optional exploits of imperialistic monarchs or of mercenary soldiers of fortune," (Ricks p. 4), as was much the case for the Classic Maya following the destruction of the Nephites after 400 AD, and ancient, horribly distorted, war ceremonies continued and were elaborated by the Mayas. (Freidel pp 291291)

Following the work as a student and a fellow student, of John Sorensen, "he [has] identified approximately one hundred instances of armed conflict in the Book of Mormon." (Ricks p. 5, and Sorenson pp. 445-477)

These have been given names and briefly analyzed in the publication mentioned. (Ricks pp. 6-15) Sorensen did refer to the Elephantine Jewish Colony, mentioning the Temple built there, but only drew attention to the fact that Colony staid in touch with Jerusalem and Persian authorities, "while Lehi's people ...were stripped ...culturally of much of what they knew about calendrical matters at home," (in Ricks p. 451) and never made contact again with the Eastern Hemisphere. The climatic conditions were entirely different, festivals lived so faithfully year round in Israel were not as applicable to the new climate and condition of the Western Hemisphere. New traditions replaced some old ones. For Lehi and his people there were drastic changes. In that Book of Warfare there was little other reference to Elephantine. Of special interest is the treatment by "John W. Welch who identifies fifteen different wars in the Book of Mormon and examines the relationship between Nephites and Near Eastern Law and war." (Welch in Richs pp. 46-102) Welch emphasized the Near East, and did not consider what happened in the southern borders of Egypt such as at Elephantine. Seldom did these writers indicate any important contribution that might have been made by the Brass Plates.

NEPHITE MILITARY STRUCTURE:

The Book of Mormon suggests that the Nephite military structure was based on the decimal system, similar to that in use in the vicinity of ancient Palestine and in many other regions. There are references to units of fifty (Mosiah 11:19), thousands (Alma 43:5, 60:33, 3 Nephi 3:22) and ten thousand (Mormon 6:10-15). (Merrill, in Ricks pp. 268-69) Formations not mentioned among the Book of Mormon people were those of tens and hundreds, found in ancient orders (Yadin p.51) But perhaps "they comprised parts of other units, like fifties and thousands." (Merrill in Ricks p. 269) But were these organizational details in the Brass Plates and incorporated into later Book of Mormon military structure? Where did the ideas of "by tens, or twenties, or fifties" in D&C 103:30 come from? "Units of ten thousand are most frequently mentioned in the Book of Mormon, at least after the time of the judges (ca 91 BC). The use of the larger units may have resulted from increasing population and hence the increased ability or need to support larger armies. The earlier battles speak of units of fifty and thousands

(Mosiah 11:19; Alma 43:5) while later battles speak more of thousands and tens of thousands, (3 Nephi 4:21)." (Merrill in Ricks p. 269). Wars seem to have evolved into larger and more complex campaigns involving more and more warriors, until they numbered in the millions. (Mormon 6:10-15).

This present study, then, is another contribution to Warfare

in the Book of Mormon, a small addition, but one that further confirms the veracity and integrity of the Book of Mormon. The question here is the possible contribution made to Warfare by the Brass Plates, and confirmation of this that might be made by some of the Dead Sea Scrolls that the Brass Plates did have all the numbers, and all this further confirmed by the discoveries made at Elephantine in Egypt.

MILITARY STRATEGY AT ELEPHANTINE:

The later half of Alma, chapters 43-62, is a masterpiece of military strategy deployed by the Nephites under the Command of Moroni. The Old Testament is replete with wars that the children of Israel engaged in. The Jews at Elephantine were essentially mercenaries hired by the Egyptians after 650 BC, and later by the Persians down until nearly 300 BC, to protect the southern upper Nile cataracts at Elephantine from excursions from the Nubian south. This is consistent with the Book of Mormon in demonstrating that Jews were at war outside of Palestine using long held tactics and military structure. Tactics employed by the Ten Tribes and contained in the Brass Plates. These tactics do not show up on the Tenakh, but do in other Jewish records, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

As mentioned, (Erickson) Elephantine is an Island in the Nile River, 500 miles south of Cairo. It served as a border fortress between Egypt and the southern territories including Nubia [Sudan today], sometimes under the Egyptians and later the Persian Empire. Elephantine's unique location made it virtually impossible for any boat traffic to negotiate the Nile north or south bound without the knowledge and consent of the garrison at Elephantine. This was an extremely desert land, the Nile was the water source; military expeditions away from the Nile would be most difficult to mount. The Jewish mercenary military garrison at Elephantine was both effective against the use of the Nile River as a highway into Egypt, but also the use of the nearby waterless desert.

In Porten's description of the socio-military organization at Elephantine, three terms are applied to describe various numbers of soldiers. The first, *hyala*, refers to a garrison or group which included soldiers and their families, such as was located at Elephantine. The second is *century*,

referring to a group of one hundred soldiers. The third term is the most important to this parallel discussion. This final term has to do with the basic unit of military organization. The main grouping of men for battle was referred to as the degel which means a thousand. (Porten p. 29).

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS:

Yagael Yadin, the late Jewish archaeologist and former General and Chief of Staff and Head of the Haganah in the Israeli Army, described at Qumran (Where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1945, announced in 1946, and at that time, still under translation), the importance of the degel; the thousand. The War Scroll was finally translated into English in 1962. (Yadin) The degel served as a common denominator for a combat unit and was equivalent to the "thousand." (Yadin pp. 49-51) The concept of a thousand is profoundly significant to students of the Book of Mormon. In describing the battles which took place among the descendants of Lehi, the unit of a thousand is mentioned ninety-three times in the Book of Mormon. You have general No. 1 with his thousand over here, general No.2 leading his thousand over there, and of course, general No. 3 and his thousand on their way! One example of this is found in Mormon 6:11-14.

In 1962, The Dead Sea Scroll THE WAR OF THE SONS OF LIGHT AGAINST THE SONS OF DARKNESS, finally published. (Yadin 2, 1962) is an important and singular confirmation of the Book of Mormon and the content of the Brass Plates. Other scrolls are of use, too, as noted.

THE FAMILY-THE MYRIAD-THE THOUSAND-HUNDREDS-FIFTIES AND TENS:

In the Old Testament and in particular for most of the history of the Ten Tribes, every Tribe must organize itself along proscribed lines. "the conscription unit which was formed from the 'family' (the main

subdivision of the tribe) is the 'myriad'. The myriad is composed of 'thousands' formed by the subdivision of the family." (Yadin p. 49)

There was also a

"tactical unit bearing a similar name...the inscription 'degalim [thousands] of God' ...denotes the point of intersection in the military organization and the conscription units and combat units....The degal [thousand] served as a common denominator for both a conscription and a combat unit." (Yadin p. 49).... "the 'degel' [thousand] constitutes the largest permanent tactical-organization unit...[the Tribal family] has to supply the soldiers need for replacing the losses of the degel." (Yadin p. 50) "This conception is not artificial, but was derived from that of the Biblical texts" (Yadin p. 50) But the Biblical Texts were not that clear nor complete: "The value of the [War] Scroll lies in the fact that it clearly shows the connection...A survey of the principal researches on this subject from the beginning of this century [20th] shows that the identification of the [Tribal] 'family' with the 'thousand' passes through them [the Ten Tribes] like a purple thread and is the one most widely accepted. ...B. Luther in his study on the structure of the tribes of Israel was first amongst the scholars of the [20th] century to arrive at this conclusion, though he added that decisive proof of it was lacking... Ed. Myer took the thousand to be the unit identical with the family, and the myriad with the tribe." (Yadin p. 50)

Yadin then provides a graphic representation of the source materials found incomplete in the Old Testament in Joshua, Judges, and compares that with the Scroll. The essential organization described in the Scroll organizes the sub-division of the tribe into Ten, Fifty, and Hundred, which is the subdivisions for the thousand.

Then into the degel/thousand, and then to the Myriad or Ten Thousand. (Yadin p. 51) For the Nephites, the pattern for this order could have apparently come from the Brass Plates which included a long record of the Tribes, and the Dead Sea War Scroll reflects how the northern tribes organized themselves in great detail. The Jewish Bible did not transmit this information completely, the Book of Mormon only partially, but the Brass Plates did, as confirmed by the Dead Sea Scrolls and Mormon Pioneer Practices. .

"In fact we see that the conception of the [War] Scroll, which identifies the family with the myriad [thousands] and the clan with the thousand, and the degel, and fixes the point of intersection between the tribal conscriptional and tactical units at the level of the thousand, derives from the author's [of the Scroll] understanding of the scriptural data." [referring back to the time of the Ten Tribes] (Yadin p. 52) Gideon's argument in Judges 6:15 were that his thousand was the poorest in Manasseh and that "it would be absurd for the weakest thousand to go to war." (Yadin p. 53) A further connection between the Household and Thousand is in I Sam. 17:17-18, "which shows that David's three brothers served under one chief of a thousand." (Yadin p. 53) Yadin thinks that Josh 22:14, a

difficult

verse, should in essence read "And with him ten princes (of each household), a prince to each of the tribes of Israel and each one (with) the heads of their households for the [ten] thousands of Israel" (Yadin p. 53)
each prince the head of a thousand,
ten princes for ten thousand.

The whole pattern, interestingly enough, was followed by the Pioneers on their trek west. (D&C 136:58)
All of this seems to be a singular conformation of the Brass Plates and the role they played in the organization and military structure of the Nephites throughout all their generations, and adsorbed from the Book of Mormon by the Pioneers in their trek west.

BANNERS-ENSIGNS AND SLOGANS:

In addition to this stunning confirmation of the Brass Plates, which would have had the order of battle and the organization of the tribes and the units of a thousand and tens of thousands, from which the Nephites could have obtained their knowledge of military strategy, there is also the Banner and the Ensign of God as well. "The basic 'slogan' on the [main] banner of the tribe [of Israel] is 'ensign of God'. (Yadin pp. 48, 51) On this the War Scroll and the Book of Mormon agree! An expression the LDS are quite familiar with, but almost meaningless to none LDS. A complete Table provided by Yadin "Makes clear the system of the banners and the division of the congregation into groupings...The Banners and Units of the Whole congregation."(Yadin pp. 41-43) The Table provides details as to the name of the banners and groupings, the inscriptions on them, changing inscriptions for different phases of War, and the length and size of the banners. Because Yadin is describing all of this as understood and applicable to the Tribes, it can be assumed that something like this information was contained in the Brass Plates. Other evidence that this is so is provided below. In fact, the Brass Plates are really the only authentic history of the Northern Tribes and remnants of the tribes down until Nephi obtained the plates from Laban. While the Jewish Scriptures does contain information about the Ten Tribes down until their deportation northward about 722 BC, we understand from the many quotes made by Nephite Prophets that the Brass Plates also contained a lot of additional information, historical and theological, that was lost to the Jews, just recall the references to the Prophets Zenos, and Zenock (Hel. 8:19, I Ne 19:10, 21). (Largey p. 803) Nibley thinks there are some parallels to these prophets in the Thanksgiving Psalms of the Dead Sea Scrolls. (Nibley 2, 303-327)

AN ENSIGN TO ALL NATIONS:

The Hebrew word, Ensign, meaning Banner, is not found in the Old Testament nor the Jewish Tanakh (Mandel) but it is found in the War Scroll and the Book of Mormon (2 Ne 23:2). It also means standard (1 Ne 21:22, Num 2:2), as employed by Isaiah to represent a rallying or gathering point. (2 Ne 29:2) The Ensign also points to the restored gospel or church as the Ensign to all Nations. (2 Ne 15:26, 21:10, 6:6, 1 Ne 22:8). Captain Moroni did "raise the standard [banner] of liberty...and thousands did flock unto his standard," as an ensign. (2 Ne 23:2, 1 Ne 21:22, Alma 62:4-6, Largey p. 245)

"The Roman Army used banners in a whole system of signals and arrangement of units in battle." (Yadin p. 63) But their system would have been developed many centuries after the Ten Tribes had developed the basic outline of such military organization. So what is being outlined in this study clearly had great antiquity. It is clear from the Book of Mormon that the banners, in the thick of battle, served as means of identification and rallying points for combatants of different units. (Alma 62:5) Certainly Captain Moroni was "encouraging the combatants by keeping before the eyes of the warriors the fighting slogans whose principal aim was to show that the war of the Sons of Light was a 'war of God', and that the soldiers of the congregation are the 'chosen ones of God', exactly as reflected in the Scrolls and ancient records. (Yadin p. 64) The Book of Mormon has stolen the thunder of the Scrolls and scholars with a record available to all since 1829. Why did they ignore it? Why still ignore it?

ANCIENT TACTICS AND ORGANIZATION AND THE BOOK OF MORMON:

"The book of Joshua [he was an Ephraimite, was his record in the Brass Plates?] clearly shows the system of the division of the congregation for mustering into tribes, families and 'clans'. (Yadin 51) The organization of the Tribes as laid out in the War Scroll and most probably reflecting exactly how it was laid out in

the Brass Plates, "corresponds perfectly to the 'reorganization' attributed in Ex. 18 to Jethro, for the needs of administrating Justice and the security of the wanderers under Moses...The organization is the same as that when Judas Maccabaeus put his army on a regular footing, he divided it into thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens." (Yadin p. 59) The name Jethro means 'His Excellence'. (Mandel p. 272) He was Priest of Midian, gave the Priesthood to Moses, (D&C 84:6) and admonished Moses to organize his peoples into 'tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands'. (Ex. 18:21) From the record it would appear that it was Jethro who established, through Moses, the organization that persisted with the Tribes in Israel down to the Nephites and to the Pioneers on their trek west. The very same organization and terms were used by Josephus in describing his own army when he fought against the Romans. (Wars 11, xx, 7) Another scroll, the CDC, tells of the groupings of ten men, as the minimum, the fifties, and the hundreds, and the thousands. (CDC xii, 22-23; xiii, 1:2) "We will take ten men of a hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand, to fetch victuals for the people." (Yadin p. 51, Ju. 20:8-10) The Book of Mormon had preempted all of these when it was published in 1829.

When the Combatants were readied for war, detailed formations were proscribed as outlined in the War Scroll. (Yadin pp. 162-163) The frontal formation "shall be ...a thousand men, seven frontal arrays [one thousand each] to one formation, depending on men available, there could be seven frontal arrays each of seven thousand men. The 'skirmishing battalion numbers 1,000 men'." (Yadin p. 166) A defined distance is designated for "each front formation [which] numbers 3,000, made up of 3 battalions of 1,000 men each." (Yadin p. 162) "A front formation of 3,000 combatants divided into three units of 1,000 men each, fits in well with the tradition of the Israelite army." (Yadin p. 174) Yadin's study of the War Scroll provides much more detail beyond what this study intends. But it is evident that the Book of Mormon and its predecessor, the Brass Plates, are authentic historical texts, now confirmed in this aspect by various discoveries made in Egypt and Palestine-Israel.

THE TEN THOUSAND:

Mormon relates, "And when they had gone through and hewn down all my people save it were twenty and four of us, (among whom was my son Moroni) and we having survived the dead of our people, did behold on the morrow, when the Laminates had returned unto their camps, from the top of the Hill Cumorah, the ten thousand of my people who were hewn down, being led into the front by me. And we also

beheld the ten thousand of my people who were led by my son Moroni. And behold, the ten thousand of Gidgiddonah had fallen, and he also in the midst. And Lamah had fallen with his ten thousand; and Gilgal had fallen with his ten thousand; and Limhah had fallen with his ten thousand; and Jeneum had fallen with his ten thousand; and Cumenihah, and Moronihah, and Antionum, and Shiblom, and Shem, and Josh, had fallen with their ten thousand each. And it came to pass that there were ten more who did fall by the sword, with their ten Thousand each..." (Mormon 6:11) Did you count how many had fallen? Count again, more than 230,000 fell on the Nephite side alone, including the ten thousand Mormon led himself. If they killed close to that many enemy, and most likely they did, perhaps as many as million were involved in the battle, let alone the uncounted members of families for both sides.

It is interesting to note that the wars among the Nephites and Lamanites the term "million" is not used once. But this term is used twice in military references in the Book of Ether, (Ether 16:2) one where a million people had been slain, another where a million mighty men had been slain. This is important for a number of reasons. First, it identified that even though the Nephites did not use an equivalent word to designate "million" in their battles, a numerical unit of million was had among the Nephites, since Mormon, who abridged the records and knew of the translated Jaredite record prepared by Mosiah, must have known of the numerical terms. And when Moroni translated and abridged the 24 plates and included them in the sealed portion of the gold plates, he would also have known of the terms, so Joseph Smith could have translated the word. Secondly, it shows that Joseph was familiar with the word "Million" and used it in the Book of Mormon when a word in reformed Egyptian with equivalent value was found on the plates. Third, the military unit degel was in military usage among the ten tribes with that record, as the Brass Plates, becoming part of the legacy Lehi brought to the Americas in the sixth century, which would be over 2000 years later than the time of Ether. At that time another unit may have been in vogue.

The question is placed to the reader: How could Joseph have known in 1829 that in the Middle East during the history of the Ten Tribes, with their records kept by Laban into the sixth century BC, that the unit of a "thousand" (degel) was the most common military unit, and then use it correctly in the Book of Mormon? The answer I propose is the same as purported throughout the Book: Joseph translated an authentic ancient record by the gift and power of God. It is a record actually written and abridged by prophets of old who held the same customs as their contemporaries in other lands. This is now being confirmed from the "dust of the ground." This is a major contribution of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Archives of Elephantine to the substance and correctness of the Book of Mormon.

BANNERS AND THEIR INSCRIPTIONS:

"Before passing onto the examination of the division into thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens and its relation to the structure of the [Qumran] sect, we have to consider the organization of the families...and their banners, and to sum up the system of inscription on the banners of the congregation." (Yadin pp. 53-54) There was a banner and an inscription on the banner for the "sub-units in accordance with the military organization of the host of service and of war...it [the War Scroll] describes the banners and inscriptions of the sub-units (thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens)....For the Levites as well as the banners for all the others would have on them: (1) A slogan, Indicating the character of the grouping. (2) The name of the leader of the grouping. (3) The name of the heads of the sub-groupings under his command." (Yadin p. 54) For most this would mean "at least six inscriptions (tribe, family, thousand, hundred, fifty, tens)" (Yadin p. 54) and included such inscriptions as 'Truth of God,' 'Justice of God,' 'Glory of God' 'Judgement of God'. Compare that with the inscription put on the Banner created out of his own torn garment made by Moroni: "and he did raise the Standard of Liberty." (Alma 62:4-5) and "he caused the 'title of liberty' to be hoisted." (Alma 46::36)

In the Scroll there was also a banner for the Congregation and one for the Camp. "The length of the banners varies, the largest, that of the entire congregation, being 14 cubits [21 feet] down to the banner of the ten which was 7 cubits [10.5 feet]." (Yadin p. 57) Yadin provides a chart and summary of the system of banners on page 57 of his book.

In the War Scroll, "The heading of this list [of banners and inscriptions] is: 'Disposition of the banners of the whole congregation according to their groupings.' iii, 12." (Yadin p. 40) and "The disposition of the banners of the congregation on going out to war." (Yadin p. 42) There were two types of banners: "the banner of the whole congregation both of the host of service and the host of war, in contrast to the rest of the banners of the congregation and of the families of Levi." (Yadin p. 44)

divided into camps under four tribes, Judah, Reuben, Ephraim and Dan, each of these tribes had three tribes in their camp. The prince of the tribe, under which each group of three served was the leader. Each had a 'banner of the tribe'. (Yadin p. 46) This would have been before the split of Israel and Judah into two groups. The Ten Tribes continued to utilize the old manner of organization. There is much the Dead Sea Scrolls have to contribute to understanding the Book of Mormon. The War Scroll was published in 1962; Ty made his preliminary study in 1977, but it seems few people are really studying the Scrolls today. In the future we will have occasion to return to them many more times. The Scrolls and many other discoveries have a great deal to say about the integrity of the Book of Mormon.

PROPHET GENERALS:

Let us turn now to some cultural comparisons. In the Old Testament at any given time the scribe, who recorded scriptures, was a different person from the leader of the people i.e. Kings were separate individuals. Except for the Book of Psalms, nearly all of scriptures were written by prophets who did not hold political office. This is unlike the Book of Mormon where nearly the entire 1000 years span is recorded by men who acted as the spiritual and political leaders and military leaders in addition to being scribes. On the surface, this seems to be radically different from the Old Testament. The Book of Mormon is true, pointing out contradictory styles in political and scribal life between the two hemispheres. Joseph did not try to conform with old world styles.

Porten describes two Jewish related documents from Egypt, one in demotic from approximately 92 BC , and the other in Aramaic from 426 BC which indicate that the political [or military] leader and scribe could have been held by the same individual. This is a significant confirmation of the style found throughout the Book of Mormon. (Porten p. 56) And it is an indictment of the Old Testament for not having been transmitted down through time correctly and fully.

Another area of comparison is in the area of textiles. It is interesting to note that garments worn by the Elephantine Jews included materials such as: linen, wool, and leather. (Porten pp. 89-90) All three of these materials are also mentioned in the Book of Mormon (Mosiah 10:5, 2 Nephi 8:8, Mosiah 10:8) Little details perhaps, but

the Devil is in the detail, and the Book of Mormon ought to have the details correct.

PRESERVING LANGUAGE

One final idea concerns the people's willingness to preserve Hebrew as their language. We learn in the Book of Mormon that, at least among the People of Zarahemla (commonly termed the Mulekites) there was no concern for linguistic preservation. In Omni 1:17 it states, "And at the time that Mosiah discovered them, they had become exceeding numerous. Nevertheless they had many wars and serious contentions, and had fallen by the sword from time to time; and their language had become corrupted; and they had brought no records with them; and they denied the being of their creator; and Mosiah, nor the people of Mosiah could understand them." This same tendency is found at Elephantine. "The Elephantine Jews were apparently not overly concerned that their children could not speak the language of Judah." (Porten p. 250). It seems that many of the Jews from Elephantine ended up in Alexandria, Egypt, where they spoke Greek. About 250 BC things were so bad they had to bring some 70 Jewish Scholars from Jerusalem to Alexandria to translate the Jewish Scriptures into Greek. This became known as the Septuagint. (Miller p. 662)

We learn two important points from these passages. First, both the Elephantine Jews and the Mulekites were consistent in their lack of feeling that Hebrew was important. Secondly, there was a connection between belief in God and an understanding of Hebrew - probably since the scriptures were written in Hebrew. This may be one of the reasons that Nephi was sent back to Jerusalem to retrieve the Plates of Brass so that even though the people may have changed their spoken and written language over the generations the important aspects of their language, and their religion, could still be understood even 1000 years after they left Jerusalem. This is attested to by the fact that Moroni was fluent in Hebrew. (Mormon 9:33) For brevity they wrote in reformed Egyptian, but their doctrines and history were explained in Hebrew, though slightly altered by them.

Unfortunately no sacred documents have been found at Elephantine so a comparison of religious thought and practices is not yet possible with the Book of Mormon. But we do know that they were monogamous. In one of the Elephantine papyri it states in quite personal terms, "It shall not

be lawful for Heraclides to bring home another wife, in insult of Demetria nor to have children by another women nor to do any evil against Demetria on any pretext." (Porten pp 297-98) Compare this with Jacob's condemnation recorded in Jacob 2. "And also it grieveth me that I must use so much boldness of speech concerning you, before your wives and your children, many of whose feeling are exceedingly tender and chaste and delicate before God...Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord; for there shall not any man among you have save it be on wife; and concubines he shall have none."

We can therefore see that there are substantial parallels between the life styles and military practices of the Elephantine Jews and the Peoples of the Book of Mormon, especially when comparing military organization with the Dead Sea Scrolls. There is no way Joseph Smith could have predicted such evidences would be forthcoming had he alone written the Book of Mormon. "The Archives of Elephantine are the most important single discovery confirming the Book of Mormon ever found [up to that time]." (Nibley p. 53) Then came the discovery of more than 500,000 tablets, and then the Dead Sea Scrolls, and a hundred other discoveries after that. .

No, it must have been an inspired translation of an actual ancient document just as he claimed.

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