

Don Bradley. *The Lost 116 Pages: Reconstructing the Book of Mormon's Missing Stories*. Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2019. xx + 318 pp. Bibliography, scripture index, subject index. Paperback: \$29.95; eBook: \$25.99.

Reviewed by David Golding

The lost manuscript of the Book of Mormon should need no introduction. Casual readers of the Book of Mormon know how during the initial translation of ancient plates, Joseph Smith loaned an initial manuscript to his associate Martin Harris that Harris subsequently lost. The document has not resurfaced and clues to its contents appear most concretely in the published Book of Mormon and a couple of Smith's revelations. To assimilate other sources and identify features of the lost manuscript—to say nothing of reconstructing its structure and contents—would demand broad fluency and exacting research, an intimidating order for any researcher. Not one to avoid arduous historical topics like Nauvoo polygamy and the Kinderhook plates, Don Bradley embraces the challenge and with this book offers an intrepid study of the lost manuscript.

A section on the history of the lost manuscript concentrates more on Joseph Smith's translation method than the manuscript itself. Bradley explores coincidences between Hebrew symbolism, Jewish festivals, timelines of Smith's custody of the plates, and Smith's styles of scrying and translation, arguing that Smith (perhaps unwittingly) satisfied ancient Israelite priestly rites and requirements (12–13). Extrapolating from accounts of Martin Harris's consultations with Charles Anthon, Bradley insists Harris's transcript of the plates' characters bore a pattern of concentric circles seen in Aztec calendars and that once shown to Anthon, this "seal" satisfied prophecy that cleared the way for Smith to translate a fullness of the plates' record (21–26, 29–35). Smith thereafter utilized sacred instruments in the attitude of a high priest, producing what became the lost manuscript through divine power witnessed anciently in the tabernacle of Moses (56). Bradley sleuths out culprits who might have stolen the manuscript, accusing most forcefully Flanders Dyke (Harris's son-in-law) and Samuel Lawrence. The last chapter of the section argues against numbering the lost manuscript as 116 pages in length, and posits a length approaching 400 pages of the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon.

Bradley hypothesizes a number of narrative features that may have appeared in the lost manuscript's contents. This longer section, about two thirds of the book, deals more thematically than lexically—Bradley considers features of the lost narrative and searches for correspondence in the Book of Mormon. His major assertions about the lost manuscript unpack allusions in the Book of Mormon to Lehi's family and wilderness journey, Nephi's later ministry, Aminadi interpreting God's writings on a temple wall, and the first King Mosiah's reign.

Interpretations of nineteenth-century sources resemble kabbalistic styles and apply abductive reasoning. Bradley employs numerology, symbolism, historical analysis, and narrative analysis throughout, showing a preference toward Hebraic and esoteric correlations. A necessary caveat to practicing gematria and other numerological analyses goes missing, that one instance of a deliberate symbol (like the periodic use in Hebrew literature of the number seven to connote the sacred) does not render all instances symbolically significant. Bradley presents some novel curiosities worth debate, but without new sources, there remain severe gaps in what we can conclude about the lost manuscript.

Bradley's historiographical analyses infrequently take stock of provenance and issues of secondhand allegations in the historical record surrounding Joseph Smith's early career. Commentators who admittedly impugn Smith and amplify hearsay with polemical reporting—particularly David Whitmer, Truman Coe, Ezra Booth, and Willard Chase—generally receive equal interpretive value as contemporaneous accounts by principal observers. In one case, Bradley acknowledges how Charles Brown only possibly told Orsamus Turner that Martin Harris had shown Brown a facsimile of Smith's transcript of plates characters (22n29), but he accepts this arguably thirdhand claim as a reliable description of the characters to infer Mesoamerican calendar engravings on the plates. Similarly distant reports by Emily Coburn Austin, Fayette Lapham, Francis Gladden Bishop, John A. Clark, Brigham Young, Joseph Smith III, and others are used to support assertions about Smith's translation methods, timeline of events, and theft and size of the lost manuscript.

No source besides the Book of Mormon lifts so much weight as Fayette Lapham's late reminiscence of a purported 1829–1830 interview with Joseph Smith Sr., referenced some thirty times throughout the book. Bradley concedes that Lapham confused many elements of the Book of Mormon narrative yet affirms Lapham provides “detail with such explanatory power without ever having read the Book of Mormon” (254) that the account satisfies to verify features essential to Bradley's reconstructed themes. Lapham, however, reported four decades after the interview he described and professed details available in polemical and local literature besides the Book of Mormon; he could just as easily have recirculated treasure-digging allegations promoted by Willard Chase, “golden Bible” stories printed by Abner Cole in local newspapers, and Palmyra-area rumors publicized by Pomeroy Tucker. Lapham's explanatory power rests first on the account's reliability, which manifestly proves inconsistent. Elsewhere, Bradley rightly rejects a 1934 affidavit by William Pilkington (66) for reasons if applied to Lapham would greatly curtail the number of assertions the book makes about the lost manuscript. Weakly provenanced claims add hesitancy to assertions like Joseph Smith dressing as a high priest behind a makeshift veil when translating, and Flanders Dyke stealing (then being himself robbed) of the earliest Book of Mormon manuscript.

Bradley employs a method of “mining nineteenth century sources about the content of the lost Book of Mormon text” (125) to build inferences. In this aspect, the book provides a valuable service by collecting and surveying the many related primary sources and Book of Mormon passages bearing any information about the lost manuscript. Bradley works to harmonize a wide literature of Book of Mormon scholarship with inferences about the lost manuscript’s narrative. Together with his narrative analysis, the book presents a new interpretation of editorial structure evident in Nephi’s and Mormon’s records. Chapters on Aminadi and Mosiah offer the strongest contributions to expanding Book of Mormon thematic studies. As a literary study of the Book of Mormon, this book posits compelling questions about narrative themes that, regardless of the lost manuscript’s contents, further enrich interpretive approaches to Joseph Smith’s translations and revelations.

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James R. Swensen. *In A Rugged Land: Ansel Adams, Dorothea Lange, and the Three Mormon Towns Collaboration, 1953–1954*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2018. ix + 340 pp. Illustrations, index. Softcover: \$34.95.

Reviewed by Jessie L. Embry

In a Rugged Land has won several awards including an honorable mention from the Mormon History Association for Best Book in 2019. It is an informative mixture that describes how photographers struggled to make a living, how popular magazines solicited articles, and how Mormon communities adjusted to post-World War II life. By examining the work of Ansel Adams and Dorothea Lange—two of the best-known photographers from the American West—and explaining how they collaborated on a photographic essay for *Life* magazine, Swensen provides information about the history of photography, magazines, and Mormon life. While Adams was mainly a landscape photographer and Lange usually focused on people, they agreed to combine their skills for this project. As Swensen points out, the different genres led to disagreement but in the end, they put together a piece that *Life* accepted. Swensen adds there were other difficulties in creating the piece by explaining how popular magazines like *Life* solicited and accepted articles.

Finally, of most interest to *Journal of Mormon History* readers, Swensen provides valuable information on three southern Utah towns from outsiders’ viewpoints. Lange described Gunlock, Toquerville, and St. George as towns

Journal of Mormon History

October 2021 | Volume 47 | No. 4

The Journal of Mormon History

Published for: Mormon History Association

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JOURNAL OF MORMON HISTORY

VOLUME 47, No. 4
OCTOBER 2021

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