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On Cynics and Swords

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James White. "Of Cities and Swords: The Impossible Task of Mormon Apologetics." *Christian Research Journal* (Summer 1996): 28–35.

Reviewed by Matthew Roper

On Cynics and Swords

The *Christian Research Journal* is published by the Christian Research Institute, a California-based "cult-watching" organization founded by the late Walter Martin.[1] The Summer 1996 issue contained a contribution by James White, who heads an anti-Mormon ministry based in Arizona. White complains that Mormon apologists are nasty, sarcastic, and unscholarly. He refers to a lighthearted review by Tom Nibley in which that writer poked fun at Jerald and Sandra Tanner and their book *Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon* (p. 32).[2] I personally found Nibley's style quite funny, although it is understandable that critics like White and the Tanners would not. Perhaps they should lighten up. While White criticizes Nibley for his satirical tone, our somber critic fails to address any of the *substantive* issues Nibley raised in response to the Tanners' book.[3] Neither does he address the more sober and detailed criticisms raised by John Tvedtnes and myself.[4]

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1 On the interesting background of Walter Martin and CRI, see Robert L. and Rosemary Brown, *They Lie in Wait to Deceive: A Study of Anti-Mormon Deception*, vol. 3. (Mesa, Ariz.: Brownsworth, 1986).

2 Tom Nibley, "A Look at Jerald and Sandra Tanner's *Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon*," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 5 (1993): 273–89.

3 I think that Nibley's assessment of the Tanners' claim of deliberate "plagiarism" was particularly astute; see ibid., 286–8.

4 L. Ara Norwood, Matthew Roper, and John A. Tvedtnes, reviews of *Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon*, by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 3 (1991): 158–230; Roper, "A Black Hole That's Not So Black," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/2 (1994): 156–203; Tvedtnes, review of *Answering Mormon Scholars: A*

While White asserts that recent Latter-day Saint scholarship on the Book of Mormon is unscholarly, his article suffers from its own problems. In a brief section on Latter-day Saint views of Book of Mormon geography (pp. 33–4), White refers to John Sorenson's book, *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book,* as one "which presents maps of where cities theoretically might be located, where battles took place, and so on" (p. 33).[5] While this description may aptly refer to Sorenson's book *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, which attempts to place such events in a real-world Mesoamerican setting,[6] it is not an entirely accurate characterization of *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events*, which reviews the history of Latter-day Saint treatments of Book of Mormon geography. In that book Sorenson does not attempt to place Book of Mormon events at specific New World sites, but simply analyzes and develops an *internal* map based on textual references alone. Readers will also be surprised by White's erroneous claim that, "FARMS apologists . . . come up with *two* different *Central America* locations for 'Cumorah'" (p. 34, emphasis added). Oddly enough, White accuses Latter-day Saint writers of using "faulty arguments and inadequate evidence" (p. 34).[7] According to White, "A careful reading of the sources used [by those associated with FARMS] will reveal support outside the LDS community for only non-disputed issues that are not, therefore, *at issue* when it comes to the historicity of the Book of Mormon" (p. 33). White does not offer much by way of evidence for this blanket assertion; however, he does discuss a recent study by William Hamblin and Brent Merrill on swords in the Book of Mormon, which presumably supports that claim. In responding to each of White's criticisms, it will be

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Response to Criticism of the Book "Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon," by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/2 (1994): 204–49.

5 John L. Sorenson, *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1992).

6 John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1985). For a more recent follow-up on Sorenson's views, see Sorenson, "Viva Zapato! Hurray for the Shoe!" *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 297–361.

7 I have addressed the geography question myself in another review in this issue, pages 122–9.

necessary to restate significant points raised by Hamblin and Merrill but not addressed by White; however, lest I be accused of citing only Latter-day Saint scholars, I will also document evidence supportive of those views from relevant non-Mormon scholarly sources.

When Is a "Sword" a "Sword"?

Several recent studies by Latter-day Saint scholars suggest that the pre-Columbian Mesoamerican weapon known as the *macuahuitl* or *macana* best fits the criteria for the Book of Mormon "sword."[8] White dismisses this equation as an act of desperation by Mormon apologists. The *macuahuitl*, argues White, cannot be a sword, but "a war club with sharp rocks imbedded in it!" (p. 35). To call such a weapon a *sword* constitutes, in White's view, "the most egregious redefinition of terms" (p. 35). White's criticisms of the *macuahuitl* are seriously misinformed. In a recent article I showed that the earliest Spanish sources *almost universally* describe the *macuahuitl* as a "sword."[9] Many contemporary Mesoamerican scholars call it a sword.[10] White is simply wrong.

Laban's Sword

Nephi records that Laban, a powerful military official in Jerusalem around 600 B.C., possessed a sword with a blade "of the most precious steel" (1 Nephi 4:9).[11] White admits that he finds no problem here (p. 34). It is worth noting, however, that many critics of the Book of Mormon have cited this passage as evidence

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8 Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 262–3; William J. Hamblin and A. Brent Merrill, "Swords in the Book of Mormon," in *Warfare in the Book of Mormon*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and William J. Hamblin (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990), 338–51. See also a forthcoming article by William Hamblin and myself on swords in the Book of Mormon.

9 Matthew Roper, "Eyewitness Descriptions of Mesoamerican Swords," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5/1 (1996): 150–8.

10 For references, see ibid., 151 n. 6.

11 Noah Webster's 1828 English dictionary defines *steel* as "iron combined with a small portion of carbon; iron refined and hardened, . . . particularly useful as the material of edged tools." Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828 ed., s.v. "steel."

against the Book of Mormon's historicity. "Steel," it is argued, "was not known to man in those days."[12] Today, however, it is increasingly apparent that the practice of "steeling" iron through deliberate carburization was well-known to the Near Eastern world from which the Lehi colony emerged. "It seems evident that by the beginning of the tenth century B.C. blacksmiths were intentionally steeling iron."[13] A carburized iron knife dating to the twelfth century B.C. is known from Cyprus.[14] In addition to this,

> A site on Mt. Adir in northern Israel has yielded an iron pick in association with 12th-century pottery. One would hesitate to remove a sample from the pick for analysis, but it has been possible to test the tip of it for hardness. The readings averaged 38 on the Rockwell "C" scale of hardness. This is a reading characteristic of modern hardened steel.[15]

Quenching, another method of steeling iron, was also known to Mediterranean blacksmiths during this period. "By the beginning of the seventh century B.C. at the latest the blacksmiths of the eastern Mediterranean had mastered two of the processes that make iron a useful material for tools and weapons: carburizing and quenching."[16] Archaeologists recently discovered a carburized iron sword near Jericho. The sword, which had a bronze haft, was one meter long and dates to the time of King Josiah, who would likely have been a contemporary of Lehi.[17] Hershel Shanks recently described the find as "spectacular" since it is the only complete sword of its size and type from this period yet

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12 Stuart Martin, *The Mystery of Mormonism* (London: Odhams, 1920), 44.

13 Robert Maddin, James D. Muhly, and Tamara S. Wheeler, "How the Iron Age Began," *Scientific American* 237/4 (October 1977): 127.

14 Ibid. The knife shows evidence of quenching. See Tamara S. Wheeler and Robert Maddin, "Metallurgy and Ancient Man," in *The Coming Age of Iron* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 121.

15 Maddin, Muhly, and Wheeler, "How the Iron Age Began," 127.

16 Ibid., 131.

17 Hershel Shanks, "Antiquities Director Confronts Problems and Controversies," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 12/4 (July–August 1986): 33, 35.

discovered in Israel.[18] Such discoveries lend a greater sense of historicity to Nephi's passing comment in the Book of Mormon.

White reasons that since Nephi possessed Laban's "sword of most precious steel," all subsequent "swords" mentioned in the Book of Mormon must also resemble Laban's. After his arrival in the land of Nephi, he wrote,

> And I, Nephi, did take the sword of Laban, and *after the manner of it* did make many swords, lest by any means the people who were now called Lamanites should come upon us and destroy us. (2 Nephi 5:14)

White insists that this passage proves that all subsequent Book of Mormon swords were made of steel. This, however, is an erroneous claim since at the very most it *might* indicate that the swords Nephi made *in the sixth century B.C.* to defend his small colony were made of steel. It is of course possible that Nephi's "swords" were metal weapons modeled after the sword of Laban, but this is not the only or even the most plausible interpretation. Whatever metallurgical knowledge Nephi had of "steel" could have been subsequently lost. *Macuahuitl* style blades might then have replaced earlier ones made of steel.[19] This argument for subsequent loss of steel and iron technologies among the Nephites finds support in the Book of Mormon text. Chronologically speaking, steel is never mentioned after Jarom's day (Jarom 1:8). And iron, although known to some of the Zeniffites in the land of Nephi, is never mentioned after Noah's day (Mosiah 11:3, 8). This tends to support the idea that some metallurgical technologies possessed by Nephi and others may have been lost over time. Other interpretations are also possible. For instance, the phrase "after the *manner* of" is ambiguous and could simply mean that subsequent Nephite blades were made after the *general pattern* of Laban's sword—a straight double-edged blade.[20] Many Near Eastern

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18 Ibid., 33.

19 Hamblin and Merrill, "Swords in the Book of Mormon," 345.

20 Webster's 1828 *An American Dictionary of the English Language* offers a variety of definitions for "manner," including: "1. Form; method; way of performing or executing. . . . 3. Sort; kind. . . . 4. Certain degree or measure. It is in a *manner* done already. . . . This use may also be sometimes defined

blades from Nephi's day were of the sickle-sword variety. Nephi may mean that he followed the straight-sword variety as opposed to the cimeter. While these New World blades might have been steel, they could just as easily have been of meteoric iron,[21] obsidian, flint, jade, or even fire-hardened wood.[22] The obsidian blades of some *macuahuitl* were often placed closely together, forming an almost continuous cutting edge similar in many respects to metal swords.[23]

Stains and "Brightness"

White does not address one of the more interesting reasons for equating Book of Mormon swords with a *macuahuitl*-like weapon. King Anti-Nephi-Lehi admonished his fellow converts, "Since God hath taken away our stains, and our swords have become bright, then let us stain our swords no more with the blood of our brethren" (Alma 24:12). Concerning this passage, Hamblin observes,

> Although today we speak of "stainless steel," in Joseph Smith's day, metals were not generally thought of as becoming stained. Staining was a term that generally applied to wood, cloth, or other substances subject to discoloration. Reference to staining swords with blood is not found in the Bible. Thus, although not impossible, the metaphor of staining metal swords with blood is somewhat unusual. However, if the Nephite

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by *sort* or *fashion*; as we say, a thing is done after a sort or fashion, that is, not well, fully or perfectly."

21 Ixtlilxochitl affirms that the Toltecs had "clubs studded with iron." Alfredo Chavera, ed., *Obras Historicas de Don Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl* (Mexico: Editora Nacional, 1952), 1:56. The Aztecs possessed knives and daggers made of meteoric iron, but another West Mexican tradition relates that Cuanomoat and Ceutarit, the pre-Columbian cultural heroes of several native west Mexican groups, "taught them to make fire and gave them also machetes or cutlasses of *iron*." Robert H. Barlow, "Straw Hats," *Tlalocan* 2/1 (1945): 94, emphasis added. These were primarily possessed by the elite. H. Hensoldt, "Meteorites and What They Teach Us," *American Geologist* 4 (1889): 28–38.

22 The Lamanites are often said to fight without armor and nearly naked (Enos 1:20; Mosiah 10:8; Alma 43:20).

23 See Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, 82, fig. 10.

> sword were the Mesoamerican *macuahuitl* with a wooden shaft, blood would naturally stain and discolor the wood when an enemy was wounded. Furthermore, if a metal weapon becomes bloody, the blade can be easily wiped clean. Removing a bloodstain from wood is virtually impossible since the blood soaks into the fibers of the wood. Thus the metaphor of the great mercy of God in removing bloodstains from the swords becomes much more powerful and understandable if it refers to wood stained with blood, which only a miracle would remove, rather than if it refers to metal stained with blood, which a piece of cloth would clean.[24]

White asserts without evidence that the reference to Lamanite weapons being made "bright" can only make sense in terms of steel swords (p. 35). Hamblin notes, however, that "brightness can refer to any object that shines—metal, stars, or stone. Many types of obsidian have a fine luster and the stone edges of the *macuahuitl* could easily be described as bright."[25] Torquemada, for example, described obsidian as "a stone which might be called precious, more beautiful and *brilliant* than alabaster or jasper, so much so that of it are made tablets and mirrors."[26]

Drawing a Sword

White argues that since Laban's Old World sword had a sheath, all other Book of Mormon swords must have had one (p. 34); yet, as Hamblin indicated, Laban's sword is the *only* Book of Mormon weapon said to have had a sheath. White assumes that subsequent references to men "drawing" their swords imply a sheath; however, weapons could just as easily be "drawn" from a bag or basket in which weapons were stored or carried.[27] Hamblin and Merrill noted that the mural from Chichen Itza shows a Toltec soldier carrying a bag or basket holding several *macuahuitl* on his

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24 Hamblin and Merrill, "Swords in the Book of Mormon," 342–3.

25 Ibid., 343.

26 P. Marcou, "Procédé des Aztèques pour la taille par éclatement des couteaux ou rasoirs d'obsidienne," trans. by Edward B. Tylor, *Journal de la Société des Americanistas de Paris* 13 (1921): 19, emphasis added.

27 Hamblin and Merrill, "Swords in the Book of Mormon," 343.

back.[28] The Maya in highland Guatemala had portable ammunition carts that carried weapons.[29] Mesoamerican soldiers sometimes wore belts in which weapons could be carried. The Toltecs, for example, had a round shield which they carried into battle, "and the swords were fastened with belts."[30] While the Nephites may have had sheaths, they could also have "drawn" their swords from a bag, basket, or belt. Another possibility is that "these references could describe grasping or brandishing a sword before combat rather than actually 'drawing' it from a sheath."[31] Support for this view can be found in several accounts from Spanish chroniclers that describe native American *macuahuitl* as being "drawn."

> And he flattered himself, that his Sword being once *drawn*, he might have a Chance to reach the Crown.[32]
>
> None of the caciques dared to *draw* a sword against them.[33]

Using White's reasoning, we would have to conclude that these historians had reference to steel swords with sheaths, yet they refer to the stone-bladed *macuahuitl*. If these historians can describe warriors brandishing the *macuahuitl* as "drawing their swords," then why must there be a problem when Mormon, the Nephite chronicler, uses similar language?

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28 Prescott H. F. Follett, "War and Weapons of the Maya," *Middle American Research Series Publication* 4 (New Orleans: Tulane University of Louisiana, 1932): 388, fig. 20.

29 Domingo Juarros, *A Statistical and Commercial History of the Kingdom of Guatemala* (London: Dove, 1823), 390.

30 Margaret R. Bunson and Stephen M. Bunson, eds., *Encyclopedia of Ancient Mesoamerica* (New York, N.Y.: Facts on File, 1996), 262.

31 Hamblin and Merrill, "Swords in the Book of Mormon," 343.

32 Antonio de Solis, *The History of the Conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards*, trans. Thomas Townsend (London: Woodward, 1724), book IV, chap. 2, emphasis added.

33 Francis A. MacNutt, ed. and trans., *De Orbe Novo: The Eight Decades of Peter Martyr D'Anghera* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1912), 2:360, emphasis added.

Sharpness of Blades

White cannot understand how Ammon could cut off the arms of his Lamanite enemies at the waters of Sebus (Alma 17:37), or how the Nephite soldier could cut off a part of Zerahemnah's scalp with one defensive blow, if they were using a *macuahuitl* which White thinks was just a club (p. 34). Those familiar with Mesoamerican warfare and historical descriptions of this weapon would not view this as a problem. Those Spaniards who encountered Mexican "swords" in battle were deeply impressed by their deadly cutting power and razorlike sharpness.[34] Here are a few statements that adequately illustrate this point:

> These swords cut naked men *as if they were steel.*[35]
>
> Their swords, which were as long as broadswords, were made of flint which cut worse than a knife, and the blades were so set that one could neither break them nor pull them out.[36]
>
> They slashed at his mare, cutting her head at the neck so that it only hung by the skin.[37]
>
> They killed the mare *with a single sword-stroke.*[38]
>
> There were shields large and small, and a sort of broadsword, and two-handed swords set with flint blades *that cut much better than our swords.*[39]

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34 George G. Maccurdy, "The Obsidian Razor of the Aztecs," *American Anthropologist* 2/3 (July–September 1900): 417–21.

35 Samuel E. Morison, trans. and ed., *Journals and Other Documents on the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (New York: Heritage, 1963), 327, emphasis added.

36 Bernal Diaz, *The Conquest of New Spain*, trans. J. M. Cohen (New York: Penguin, 1963), 142–3.

37 Ibid., 145.

38 Ibid., 158, emphasis added.

39 Ibid., 228, emphasis added.

Pointed Swords

White cites two Book of Mormon references which suggest that at least some Nephite swords were pointed (p. 34–5).[40] In Alma 44:12–3 Mormon describes Zerahemnah's unsuccessful attempt to kill Moroni in which a Nephite soldier wounds the Zoramite, taking off part of his scalp. White correctly notes that the soldier's weapon in this case definitely has a "point," yet it may be significant that the scalp is apparently not spitted as one might expect, but picked up and "laid" on the point of the soldier's sword. The second passage cited by White (Alma 57:33) may suggest that some Nephites had pointed swords, but it is more ambiguous. White unfortunately only cites a part of the passage in support of his point; however, the full passage may suggest another possibility:

> And it came to pass because of their rebellion *we did cause that our swords should come upon them.* And it came to pass that they did in a body run upon our swords, in the which, the greater number of them were slain; and the remainder of them broke through and fled from us. (Alma 57:33)

Contrary to White's assertion, it is not clear that these prisoners were impaled, since they were attempting to escape while the Nephites were *already using their weapons*. Even if we assume that some of these prisoners were impaled on the end of the Nephite swords, those weapons would not necessarily have to be pointed, since the top edge may have been sharpened without coming to a point.

Be that as it may, some pre-Columbian "swords" were clearly pointed, as several Mesoamerican codices clearly show. According to Hassig, "Drawings indicate rectangular, ovoid, and pointed designs.[41] The Mendoza Codex, for example, shows Aztec and

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40 It is worth noting that not all swords, even in the Old World, were pointed. See Yang Jwing-Ming, *Introduction to Ancient Chinese Weapons* (Burbank, Cal.: Unique, 1985), 9.

41 Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, 83.

Tlaxcalan warriors with pointed, wood-bladed swords.[42] One of the most impressive battle scenes portrayed in Maya art can be found at the three-room palace of Bonampak in Chiapas, Mexico. On the west wall of room 2, "A large leaf-shaped blade with a short handle is brandished by a warrior at the top center left of the battle." This weapon is clearly pointed.[43] Some Mesoamerican stone-bladed swords were definitely pointed as well. According to Solis, when marching to battle, the Tlaxcalans "carried their Macanas, or two-handed Swords, under the Left Arm, with their *Points* upward."[44] White ignores evidence for this in Hamblin's original article, which shows an early representation of a pointed *macuahuitl* in the right hand of the warrior figure at the Loltun Cave.[45] The structure of this weapon is very similar to the obsidian-pointed *macuahuitl* held in the hand of a Tlaxcalan noble during Aztec times.[46] Examples of the curved Mesoamerican blade, which Hassig calls a "short sword,"[47] are also known to have had points of obsidian. Clearly, Book of Mormon references to pointed swords can be easily explained in terms of the *macuahuitl.*

Hilts

White notes that the Book of Mormon contains several references to sword "hilts,"[48] but makes the erroneous claim that this poses a problem in equating Book of Mormon "swords" with Mesoamerican blades such as the *macuahuitl* (pp. 34–5). Again he simply ignores Hamblin's discussion of this issue: "Struc-

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42 Kurt Ross, ed., *Codex Mendoza: Aztec Manuscript* (Barcelona, Spain: Miller Graphics, 1978), 97–8.

43 Karl Ruppert, J. Eric S. Thompson, Tatiana Proskouriakoff, "Bonampak, Chiapas, Mexico," *Carnegie Institution of Washington Publication* 602 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1955), 62.

44 Solis, *History of the Conquest of Mexico,* book V, chap. 9, emphasis added.

45 Hamblin and Merrill, "Swords in the Book of Mormon," 339, fig. 3.

46 Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, 84, fig. 11.

47 Ross Hassig, *War and Society in Ancient Mesoamerica* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 243 n. 121. For additional representations see my article on Mesoamerican cimeters in a forthcoming issue of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies.*

48 The term *hilt* simply refers to a handle.

turally, the *macuahuitl* does have a hilt. The lower portion of the weapon lacks obsidian blades so it can be held, which thus functionally distinguishes the handle or hilt from the blade." Zerahemnah's sword, it will be remembered, "broke by the hilt." Concerning this passage Hamblin notes, "If a *macuahuitl* were to be broken when struck by another weapon, one expected place for such breakage would be where the obsidian blades did not protect the wood of the shaft, leaving the wood directly exposed to the blades of the other sword."[49] According to Gomara, "The swords could *cut cleanly through a lance* or the neck of a horse, and even penetrate or nick iron, which seems impossible."[50] This seems to have been what occurred to Zerahemnah's sword.

In any case, Mesoamerican swords definitely had "hilts." According to one conquistador, the Mexicans "have swords that are like broadswords, but their *hilts* are not quite so long and are three fingers wide."[51] According to the Spanish historian Solis, Montezuma possessed "Two-handed Swords, and others of extraordinary Wood with flint Edges, and most curious and costly *Handles*."[52] Ross Hassig, a historian who specializes in Mesoamerican warfare, also notes, "Some swords had thongs through which the user could put his hand to secure the weapon in battle."[53] Mexican codices frequently show the *macuahuitl* as being knobbed at the bottom of the handle, a feature which would obviously help keep the weapon from slipping out of the hand during combat.[54]

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49 Hamblin and Merrill, "Swords in the Book of Mormon," 341–2.

50 Lesley B. Simpson, ed. and trans., *Cortés: The Life of the Conqueror by His Secretary Francisco Lopez de Gomara* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 152, emphasis added.

51 Patricia de Fuentes, ed. and trans., *The Conquistadors: First-Person Accounts of the Conquest of Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 169, emphasis added.

52 Solis, *History of the Conquest of Mexico,* book III, chap. 14, emphasis added.

53 Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, 83.

54 Doris Heyden, ed. and trans., *The History of the Indies of New Spain by Fray Diego Duran* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), plates 12, 14, 21–5, 27, 31, 35, and 39–40. The Inca also apparently possessed a *macana.* According to Fray Bernabe Cobo this double-bladed weapon "ends in a rounded *hilt* and a pommel like a sword." Roland Hamilton, ed. and trans., *Inca Religion and Customs by Father Bernabe Cobo* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 218, emphasis added.

L. Ara Norwood recently observed that White "evidently didn't read Hamblin's work on the subject carefully." That also seems clear to me, based on my own examination of White's arguments on the sword issue, which I have discussed above. He also suggests, "Perhaps White can be excused for commenting on fields in which he has no training."[55] I am not so sure. After all, White himself argues that he and fellow Christians should seek "the highest level of accuracy and integrity" in their scholarly endeavors. "In a culture accustomed to sound bites and surface-level thinking, we need to learn to look below the surface and ask logical, insightful questions" in order to avoid a hollow "veneer" of scholarship (p. 35). With *that* statement at least I can agree. Unfortunately, the author's recent article falls far short of that worthy goal.

55 L. Ara Norwood, "Of Cities and Swords," Letter to the Editor, *Christian Research Journal* (Fall 1996): 5.