

Lexical Tools to the Syriac New Testament. By GEORGE KIRAZ. Sheffield, JSOT Press, 1994. Pp 137, £12.50

APART from its importance for certain early versions of parts of the New Testament, Syriac is the language of a sizeable body of neglected Patristic material. With this tool, George Kiraz fills a gap and crams together a great deal of information which is crucial for the beginner in Syriac.

To enable a student quickly to learn relevant vocabulary he groups and lists words according to the frequency of their occurrence in the Syriac New Testament. Besides word lists, and lists of proper nouns and Greek words, he provides a list of consonantal homographs (which is very useful for the beginner with an unpointed text). There are two lists of verbs, one giving the perfect and imperfect of common verbs, and the other supplying paradigms. There is an eleven page 'skeleton Syriac grammar' supplied by Dr Sebastian Brock. This is extremely useful for the person wanting to acquire some Syriac quickly, from a basis, say, in Hebrew. A selected bibliography is added which lists all of the really useful material, texts, sources, dictionaries and grammars, giving the publishers' addresses, and noting limited (US only) reprinting of certain scarce works.

I wish this book had been available when I began Syriac more than 20 years ago. It gives invaluable information, which is simply not listed elsewhere. We are much in George Kiraz's debt: he has already developed Syriac computer fonts and a computer-generated concordance to the Syriac New Testament.

IAIN TORRANCE (*University of Aberdeen*)

The Refiner's Fire. The Making of Mormon Cosmology 1644-1844. By JOHN L. BROOKE. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994. Pp. xix+421 incl 13 ills and 3 maps. £30.00.

SINCE 1830, when the Book of Mormon was published and the Mormon Church founded, many have offered psychological, sociological and historical theories to account for these creative acts of Joseph Smith.

One current perspective, popularised in D. Michael Quinn's *Early Mormonism and The Magic World View* (1987. Signature Books, Salt Lake City), sets Mormonism within the popular folk-world of superstition and magical belief underlying late eighteenth and nineteenth century culture. Brooke's volume adds considerably to this perspective by detailing and specifying seventeenth and eighteenth century beliefs in hermeticism, and its practical corre-

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