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It Took a Village to Prepare for the Restoration

Daniel C. Peterson

Abstract: "No man," wrote the early seventeenth-century English poet John Donne, "is an island entire of itself." Likewise, nothing in human history springs entirely from a vacuum, ex nihilo. Even the Restoration, although it was initiated by God and is orchestrated in the heavens, draws on resources created by previous generations of men and women. We are borne on a tide of scriptural texts and freedoms bequeathed to us by our ancestors, whom we should not forget.

On a beautiful sunny day many years ago, I found myself standing in the Piazza of St. Peter in Vatican City with Elder V. Dallas Merrill and two or three others. We had just emerged from a relatively lengthy meeting with Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy, the genial Australian who was then serving as president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and whom some regarded as, after the Vatican Secretary of State and Pope John Paul II himself, the third most powerful person in the Roman Catholic Church.

Among other things, Cardinal Cassidy had invited us to meet with the newly named cardinal Walter Kasper, until recently archbishop of Stuttgart, who had been appointed to succeed him after his impending retirement as president of the Pontifical Council. He had also arranged for us to attend a gathering at the Papal Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls (the Basilica Papale di San Paolo fuori le Mura). Pope John Paul II joined with representatives of the eastern churches in an effort to bridge the longstanding gap between the bishopric of Rome and the other ancient episcopal sees of the first centuries of Mediterranean Christianity.[1]

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1. Dressed in our Latter-day Saint ecclesiastical uniforms of dark suits, white shirts, and ties, we stood out somewhat in the sea of scarlet and purple worn by the

Elder V. Dallas Merrill, an emeritus member of the Seventy, had been a pioneer in building a relationship between leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and high-ranking Catholic leaders, and specifically with Cardinal Cassidy. He had brought us to visit with the cardinal.

As we stood there talking, Elder Merrill turned to me and, referring to the high-ranking prelates with whom we had been meeting, asked, "Well, what are we as Latter-day Saints to make of these men?"

The answer came clearly and immediately into my mind, and I responded that I felt that we should honor and respect them as true successors, in a very real sense, to the leaders of the earliest Christian community in Rome. While, from the Latter-day Saint perspective, genuine priesthood authority had long since been lost, and many doctrines had become garbled, they had kept the flame of basic Christianity alive, often through great tribulation and at great cost. They had preserved and disseminated the scriptures. They had sent missionaries throughout the world. They had served and sought to imitate the Savior.

Yes, there had been periods when the popes and others in high leadership positions had sometimes been corrupt, greedy, power-hungry, and tyrannical. The "Renaissance papacy" offers several especially terrible specimens. The notorious "warrior pope" Julius II (1443–1513), for example, who commissioned Michelangelo's paintings in the Sistine Chapel and for whom Michelangelo created his famous statue of Moses, fathered an illegitimate daughter, had at least one mistress while a cardinal, and likely gained election to the pontifical throne via bribes and sometimes insincere campaign promises. But Julius II's reputed misdeeds pale into insignificance compared to those attributed to his predecessor, Pope Alexander VI Borgia.[2]

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assembled cardinals and bishops. Incidentally, the choice of St. Paul's Outside the Walls as the place of the meeting was plainly quite deliberate. The vast Basilica of St. Peter's was built as a statement of pontifical power, and symbols and inscriptions emphasizing the primacy of Peter — according to Catholic belief, the first bishop of Rome (whose successor the pope claims to be) — are omnipresent throughout it. John Paul II, I'm sure, didn't want to remind his separated brother-bishops, representing cities where other apostles were credited with the founding of the local episcopal lines, of the traditional Catholic claim of papal supremacy. While I'm at it, I might mention how thrilled I was to be so close to a man (now a canonized Roman Catholic saint) whom I regarded even then as one of the pivotal figures of the twentieth century.

2. Actually, one brief pontificate intervened between those of Alexander VI and Julius II: Pius III reigned for twenty-six days, from September 22, 1503, until

"I will not live in the same rooms as the Borgias lived," Julius is reported to have declared. Explaining his vow, he said:

> He desecrated the Holy Church as none before. He usurped the papal power by the devil's aid, and I forbid under the pain of excommunication anyone to speak or think of Borgia again. His name and memory must be forgotten. It must be crossed out of every document and memorial. His reign must be obliterated. All paintings made of the Borgias or for them must be covered over with black crepe. All the tombs of the Borgias must be opened and their bodies sent back to where they belong — to Spain.[3]

Although I haven't sought to confirm the claim, a well-informed Italian academic specialist on Vatican history said in my hearing just a few years ago that Julius II actually summoned an exorcist in order to drive the demons from the rooms in the Vatican associated with Pope Alexander VI.[4]

But such fascinatingly lurid and salacious stories shouldn't mislead us. The vast majority of those who have led and served the Roman Catholic Church have historically been, within their human limitations, good and sincere and faithful men. And, overwhelmingly, they still are. My encounters with Cardinals Cassidy and Kasper and others, and with other Catholic priests and leaders and nuns, and my readings about the popes of my own lifetime — Pius XII, St. John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul I, St. John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis — leave me with no doubt about this. And it's part of the point I want to stress in this essay.

As I write, my wife and I have just returned from a showing of Martin Scorsese's new film *Silence*, based on the late Japanese Catholic author Shusaku Endo's powerful 1966 novel of the same name. It's a disturbing, painful, but, in the end, theologically profound story of the persecution of Japanese Christians and of the Portuguese Jesuit missionary-fathers

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his death on October 18, 1503. He may have been poisoned by Pandolfo Petrucci, the ruler of Sienna, although he had already been in frail health.

3. Cited in Nigel Cawthorne, *Sex Lives of the Popes* (London, Prion, 1996), 219.

4. Julius's determination to build new apartments in the Apostolic Palace rather than to live in those polluted by his papal predecessor, by the way, led to multiple artistic commissions. One of them yielded Raphael's great fresco *The School of Athens*. So, in a way, we owe a debt to the abominable Alexander VI.

who sought at great risk to serve them during an episode in the Edo Period known as the time of *kakure kirishitan* or "Hidden Christians."[5]

Any serious Christian believer encountering the film or the novel *Silence* will come away wondering how he or she would have reacted under such excruciating circumstances and marveling at the faith and dedication of those European priests and of the humble Japanese men and women who gave their lives for their religious convictions.[6] And much the same story has taken place many times over the past twenty centuries; it continues today, sadly, in such places as North Korea, Libya, Iraq, and Syria.

Which brings me to my theme: We owe an enormous debt to those who have cherished the news of Jesus Christ and have spread it throughout the world. And this debt is not confined to the early apostles and disciples, who paid so high a price. Rodney Stark has argued that early Christianity spread so rapidly partly because of the reputation for love and caring that the early Saints — many of them women — earned during times of plague and death, when the pagans, even the foremost pagan physicians, often fled in terror to save their own lives.[7] And that tradition has continued, carried on by (among others) generation after generation of medical missionaries and virtually anonymous nuns.

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5. The persecutions followed in the wake of the abortive Shimabara Rebellion (extending from December 17, 1637, to April 15, 1638) in which Catholic Christian peasants played a significant role.

6. We saw the film, incidentally, with my longtime friend and colleague (and former department chair and dean) Professor Van C. Gessel, who was the primary English translator for Shusaku Endo and who served for three years as a consultant during the production of the movie. (His name appears in the credits and in the Wikipedia article about the Scorsese film.) He was not, however, the translator of *Silence*, which came too early for him. Fortunately, at the crucial point in the plot where Father Rodrigues is confronted with the choice of either putting his foot upon a *fumie*, a Christian religious image, and thus denying his faith, or else sending several faithful Japanese Christians to martyrdom by torture, Gessel pointed out to the filmmaker a misleading translation in the 1969 English published version. (Spoiler alert: Read the rest of this note at your own risk.) When the voice of Christ breaks the silence that provides the title of both novel and film, instead of the imperative "Trample! Trample!" in the published translation, the voice tells Rodrigues, "You may trample. You may trample. I more than anyone know of the pain in your foot. You may trample. It was to be trampled on by men that I was born into this world. It was to share men's pain that I carried my cross."

7. Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries* (San Francisco: Harper, 1997).

We are deeply indebted to the scholars and monks who preserved and copied and translated the gospels and the rest of the Bible. We cannot repay what we owe to the faithful compilers of the Hebrew Bible, to St. Jerome and his Latin Vulgate, to the translators of the Greek Septuagint, to Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli, to John Wycliffe and William Tyndale, to the almost forgotten translators of the King James Bible, and to their counterparts for languages around the world. Certainly those of us who produce and read *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* should be grateful every day for the riches that have been handed down to us by others.

One early sixteenth-century day, it is said, a priest confronted John Wycliffe near his residence in Little Sodbury, Gloucestershire, denouncing him and his beliefs. Wycliffe was both unabashed and unimpressed. "If God spare my life," Wycliffe replied, "before very long I shall cause a plough boy to know the scriptures better than you do!"

It proved not to be an idle boast. The vernacular translations of the Bible produced by Wycliffe and eventually others, coupled with the invention of movable type and thus the introduction of printing, by Johannes Gutenberg in the fifteenth century, played a central role in many areas of human endeavor, from the Renaissance to the rise of modern science. Notably, Gutenberg's press was a major engine of the Reformation and a principal factor in the wide distribution of the Bible.

When the time came for the restoration of the Gospel — in a society that, thanks to the great Reformers and to advocates of limited government from the Magna Carta through John Milton and the American Founders, offered a space for religious liberty and freedom of conscience — Christian preachers were drawing on readily available Bibles to summon their audiences in western New York to repent and to join themselves to the true church. Joseph Smith heard them, and his mind and spirit were awakened. He was able to read James 1:5 in his family's copy of the King James Bible, and that impelled him to go into the grove of trees near his home and to inquire directly of God.

When the first Latter-day Saint missionaries were dispatched across the early United States and eventually beyond, they were able to preach to men and women who were often quite familiar with the Bible and with the story of Jesus. Even in far distant Japan, the seed had been sown, often painfully and in suffering. The importance of this cannot be overstressed; early Mormon preachers typically didn't need first to tell their audiences the basic story of Christianity. The groundwork had already been laid. In a metaphorical but very real sense, much as Moses

had promised the children of Israel, those early missionaries — like those of us who've succeeded them — were given "great and goodly cities" that they hadn't built, "houses full of all good things" that they had not filled, wells that they had not dug, vineyards and olive trees that they had not planted.[8]

None of this is, by any means, to diminish the greatness of the founding prophet of the Restoration, let alone to minimize the role of divine revelation in the recovery of the Book of Mormon, the founding of the Church, and the unfolding of its doctrines. But we have also been the recipients of untold blessings from the generations who have gone before us, and we would do well to recognize and remember them. It is with us as it was with Sir Isaac Newton: "If I have seen further," he wrote in a 1676 letter to Robert Hooke, "it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."[9]

William Ernest Henley's famous Victorian-era poem "Invictus" provided the title and the theme for Clint Eastwood's inspiring 2009 film about Nelson Mandela. It also provided the memorable claim: "I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul."

It's a stirring assertion and, in a very real sense, true. A great proportion of what we are and do rests upon our own decisions, upon our own efforts. We're not mere playthings in the hands of fate. We're intended to rise above our circumstances. But not everything is within our power, under our control, or created by us, and many of the most important things are not. Henley's claim contains truth, but it's also false and misleading.

"I thank whatever gods may be," says Henley, "for my unconquerable soul." But our souls can be conquered. We cannot save ourselves. That's why we need the Atonement of Christ.

Thirty-five years ago, my wife and I traveled with our infant firstborn son from southern California to her parents' house in Denver, Colorado, where the whole extended family were gathering for a Christmas trip to Florida. We participated in a *Messiah* sing-along and then went home to prepare for our flight to Orlando the next morning, serenely and complacently aware that a storm was coming but confident that, unlike those we were leaving behind, we would be spending the time of that storm among palm trees and blue skies.

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8. Compare Deuteronomy 6:10–11.

9. Isaac Newton, "Letter from Sir Isaac Newton to Robert Hooke," Historical Society of Pennsylvania, http://digitallibrary.hsp.org/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/9285.

But then came what's been called "the Christmas Eve blizzard of 1982." Stapleton International Airport closed at 9:30 AM on December 24, remained closed for thirty-three hours and, for several days thereafter, was open only for severely limited operations. Ten-foot-high snowdrifts were left throughout greater Denver, highways into and out of the city were shut down, power outages darkened large portions of the metropolitan area, roofs collapsed, supermarkets closed because their employees couldn't get to work, hospitals were reduced to minimal staff on emergency power, and snowmobiles dominated suburban streets. It was astounding to me and revealing to see how easily a simple snowfall could shut down a major modern city quite accustomed to seeing snow.

We're plainly not entirely the masters of our fates, the captains of our souls. Rather, from one very important perspective, as Elder Orson F. Whitney (d. 1931) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles put it in "The Soul's Captain," his response to "Invictus," "Men are as bubbles on the wave, as leaves upon the tree."

We're fragile creatures. In our earliest years, we are entirely dependent upon our parents and especially upon our mothers. But we remain fragile even as adults. A few days without food, even fewer without water, a few minutes without oxygen, and we're gone. If our hearts miss just a few beats, none of our plans, ambitions, schemes, or careful investments will mean a thing. And, in the end, no matter how we fight it, we'll die.

Our comfort and survival in the meantime depend upon cycles of evaporation and precipitation that few of us really understand, and we rely upon complex networks of exchange and transportation that very few of us could begin to explain.

The ground on which most of us live and where our food is grown was cleared of rocks, trees, and stumps by millions of hardworking people whose names we've forgotten. Our cities, big and small, feature innumerable large buildings erected by generations of construction workers to whom we've probably never given the slightest thought.

We owe a debt of gratitude that we can never repay. "For behold, are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon … God, for all the substance which we have, for both food and raiment, and for gold, and for silver, and for all the riches which we have of every kind?"[10] The Book of Mormon's Amulek wisely counsels us that we should "humble ourselves even to the dust, and worship God, in whatsoever place we may

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10.   Mosiah 4:19.

be in, in spirit and in truth; and that we live in thanksgiving daily, for the many mercies and blessings which he doth bestow upon us."[11]

It is never inappropriate for us to remember the debt that we have to God, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being," but also to the men and women in our church — and beyond our church — who've preceded us and who've done so much to make what we have possible.[12]

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11. Paraphrased slightly from Alma 34:38.
12. The scriptural citation is from Acts 17:28.

Improvisation and Extemporaneous Change in the Book of Mormon

Part 1: Evidence of an Imperfect, Authentic, Ancient Work of Scripture

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Gerald E. Smith

Abstract: *Joseph Smith made various refining changes to the Book of Mormon text, most of them minor and grammatical in nature. However, one type of textual change has been virtually unstudied in Book of Mormon scholarship:* extemporaneous change *that was present the moment Smith dictated the original text to his scribes. This type of change appears to have been improvisational, a fix or repair made in the middle of a thought or expression. I study these improvisations in depth — where they might appear historically, their purpose, and their authorship — in two articles. The evidence points to ancient authors and editor-engravers whose extemporaneous changes appeared during the early layers of the Book of Mormon's construction. In this paper, Article One, we study the improvisations found in the quoted ancient texts of ancient prophets, then in the embedded texts of authors who improvise, and finally in the improvisational narratives of the major editor-engravers — Mormon, Nephi, and Moroni. The findings tell us much about the Book of Mormon as scripture, and about the construction and compilation of scripture by ancient editors and authors.*

Introduction

Over the 15 years of his life after completing translation of the Book of Mormon in 1829, Joseph Smith returned to its text to make minor refinements. "In his editing for the 1837 and 1840 editions, he made several thousand changes, virtually all grammatical or stylistic in nature,

in an attempt to modernize the language," said Grant Hardy.[1] According to Royal Skousen: "[T]he second edition, published in Kirtland, Ohio … shows major editing by Joseph Smith towards standard English," and "the third edition, published in Nauvoo, Illinois … shows minor editing by Joseph Smith (including a few restored phrases from the original manuscript)."[2] Skousen provides a list of 719 important changes in the Book of Mormon across all editions to the present day; simple inspection shows them to be minor grammatical changes.[3]

However, another type of textual change has been virtually unstudied in Book of Mormon scholarship: *extemporaneous change* that was present the moment Joseph Smith dictated the original text to his scribes. This type of change appears to be improvisational in nature, not planned or thought through in advance, a fix or repair made in the middle of a thought or expression. (I use the terms *extemporaneous change* and *improvisation* interchangeably.) I have studied these native changes in depth, contextually where they appear in the Book of Mormon narratives, temporally how they are treated over time and across editions, and serially when they appear in the overall translation process. I am interested in why they appear, what was their purpose, and who wrote them.

These improvisations are important because they enable us to explore the composition, design, and construction of the Book of Mormon at a deep and elemental level using the corrective tools that all authors use. Their usage patterns — the types of improvisations used and the contexts in which they are used — become identifiers of the patterns of authorship of the various texts and narratives within the broader complete work. Were the improvisations we see the work of many authors, a few authors, or one single author? Is there evidence that they are either ancient or modern in origin?

Remarkably, Smith virtually never modified these extemporaneous changes in subsequent Book of Mormon editions — even though one would have expected him to change them. Many of these improvisations include seemingly obvious errors, while others appear as clearly awkward or clumsy expressions to a modern reader. He must have noticed at least some of these in his later proofreading; he made minor single-word grammatical changes in only a few but otherwise left the entire sample of these inelegant improvisations untouched. Why were they treated so deferentially, preserved virtually intact across manuscript and print editions prepared under the prophet's supervision? Amidst a proclivity to make "thousands" of minor grammatical changes, his persistent

inclination to retain these inelegant improvisations is a paradox we need to understand.

Conjunctions and Corrective Conjunction Phrases

One of the essential skills of an orator, writer, editor, or translator is the ability to readily make textual corrections and alterations while composing a text to ensure that the author's original intent is adequately conveyed in the final written or spoken word. One such tool is the use of conjunctions to append or stitch together sentence phrases or sometimes complete and complex sentences that correct, fix, or modify what was just spoken or written — a spontaneous correction made "on the fly." I call these *corrective conjunction phrases* (CCPs).[4] I have identified 170 CCPs in the Book of Mormon.[5] Orators and writers use corrective conjunctions all the time to correct or clarify, often while speaking extemporaneously, to achieve greater precision in the point they want to make. For example, in September 1859, during the American presidential Lincoln-Douglas debates, Abraham Lincoln said to an audience in Columbus, Ohio, "In 1784, I believe, this same Mr. [Thomas] Jefferson drew up <u>an ordinance for the government of the country upon which we now stand,</u> **or, rather** *a frame or draft of an ordinance for the government of this country.*"[6] After articulating his initial thought (underscored) Lincoln used a corrective conjunction (bolded) to convey a corrected rendition (italicized). Brigham Young, speaking during a discourse on the Sabbath in the Tabernacle in Ogden City, June 4, 1871, said, "This is as simple as anything can be, and yet it is one of the hardest things <u>to get people to understand,</u> **or rather** *to practice; for you may get them to understand it, but the great difficulty is to get them to practice it*"[7] Similar to Lincoln, Young used a corrective conjunction to correct and then amplify on his intended point.

Brant Gardner suggests that extemporaneous change was especially typical of cultural settings reliant primarily on oral communication in which written texts were designed mostly as a support — evident in the records seen in Book of Mormon cultures:

> What we have in the Book of Mormon is representative of extemporaneous self-correction. … When it occurs, it occurs just as it would in spontaneous speech and I suggest that it is an artifact of the oral style that is [then] replicated in writing precisely because the oral style informs the literary. It becomes pseudo-spontaneity only in literature that is subject to revision and editing before being committed to final written form. …

[S]elf-correction in the Book of Mormon is an indication that there was some spontaneous writing on the plates. [8]

An Example of Extemporaneous Change

CCPs are usually constructed out of two thought expressions or ideas that are connected by a conjunction such as "or," or hybrid conjunctions such as "or rather," "or in other words," "or in fine," or similar variations. To illustrate, let us look at the editorial improvisations of one Book of Mormon editor-engraver, Mormon, with an excerpt from the book of Alma as the sons of Mosiah prepare to embark on separate missions to the Lamanites. The text describes Ammon's leadership role among them as follows:[9]

> Now <u>Ammon being the chief among them,</u>
> **or rather** *he did administer unto them,*
> *he departed from them,*
> *after having blessed them according to their several stations,*
> *having imparted the word of God unto them,*
> **or** *administered unto them before his departure.*
> And thus they took their several journeys throughout the land.
> Earliest Text,[10] 340, Alma 17:18

The passage is difficult to follow, but note carefully how its complete meaning gets constructed through improvisation. The phrase at the beginning of the account, <u>Ammon being the chief among them</u>, is important but ambiguous, triggering an improvisational clarification (italicized, lines 2–5), signaled by "**or rather**." Note that <u>being chief among them</u>, as clarified, has a decidedly sacred meaning — administering, blessing, and imparting the word of God. But pause to clarify yet again, signaled by another corrective conjunction "**or**." What is most important (clarified and stressed a second time) is that Ammon *<u>administered</u> unto them before his departure* — as in administer a sacrament, according to Noah Webster[11] — suggesting a ritual act of blessing, giving, or bestowing by administration on Ammon's missionary companions.

In sum, this text in Mormon's work constructs through improvisation — though not necessarily eloquently or elegantly — what it means to be <u>chief among them</u>, including teaching, blessing, imparting the word of God, and most important, *administering* by dispensing or bestowing sacramentally a sacred consecration to teach the word of God in their

forthcoming missionary stations. Note too that the passage betrays Mormon's distinctive persona as a military commander, documented in the later book of Mormon: "<u>chief</u> among them" is noticeably a military metaphor relating to rank, leadership, and command, which therefore evokes the improvisation we see needed to adapt the metaphor to this sacred setting.

After studying this extemporaneous passage, the reader comes away with a richer appreciation of what Mormon apparently wants to convey, even though patching and improvisation are required to bring it about. Most readers never notice such a passage and take it for granted. Yet closer inspection reveals an improvisation that is a work of considerable effort and authentic accomplishment for the author despite its imperfections; it lets us peer into his mind to see his creative impulse in this challenging but important authorial situation, important enough here to interrupt his writing to clarify two times. Most of all, this improvisation is original to this author, an authentic and inimitable expression as a writer and editor, etched into the recorded pages of his history. Improvisations are jewels of ingenuity, dexterity, and resourcefulness; they reveal nuances, subtleties, and character — like Leonardo da Vinci's personal notes written using mirror writing because Leonardo was left-handed and mirror writing came easily to him, preserved today as authentic portals into the mind of a brilliant artist and composer.[12]

Research Design

It is sometimes difficult to know precisely who inserted the corrective conjunction phrase into a passage; whether Smith did while translating in the nineteenth century; whether the engravers of the actual plate text did, such as Mormon, Nephi, or Moroni;[13] or whether even earlier authors or orators did, those whose words are quoted or embedded by the engravers, such as Alma, Abinadi, Limhi, or Benjamin. We should expect that the improvisations of different authors or editor-engravers will be manifest in different extemporaneous change patterns. Alternatively, if the improvisations of the entire Book of Mormon corpus are the product of one person — such as Joseph Smith, or possibly Moroni, as composite contributors of the overall text — then there should appear a predictable pattern consistent with that of one solo contributor rather than many smaller co-contributors. These are alternative hypotheses that we will explore, the first in this paper, Article One, and the second in Article Two.

I organize my research into layers or strata, similar to an archeological dig (see Figure 1), starting with the improvisations discovered in the deepest layers of the Book of Mormon's literary construction, and then move up level by level. We will study:

Figure 1
Where Extemporaneous Change Appears by Level of Book of Mormon Contributor

Modern Day

Level 5

| Translator, Scribes, Typesetters |
| Joseph Smith, his Assistants |

Early 19th Century AD

Level 4

| Compiler, Finishing-Editor, Conservator |
| Moroni |

4th – 5th Century AD

Level 3

| Editor-Engravers |
| Mormon, Nephi, Moroni |

6th Century BC – 5th Century AD

Level 2

| Authors, Embedded Authors |
| Alma, Benjamin, Limhi, Abinadi, etc. |

6th Century BC – 5th Century AD

Level 1

| Quoted Ancient Texts |
| Moses, Isaiah, Jared, etc. |

8th Century BC, 2nd – 3rd Millennium BC

Early History

1. *Extemporaneous Changes of Quoted Ancient Texts* (Level 1), those found in the ancient writings of seminal prophets such as Moses or Isaiah who are quoted by later authors and editor-engravers.

2. *Authors' Extemporaneous Changes* (Level 2), those improvisations appearing in the embedded author texts of Nephite and Lamanite

authors such as Alma, Benjamin, Jacob, Limhi, Abinadi, Samuel, and others.

3. *Editor-Engravers' Extemporaneous Changes* (Level 3), from the three major editor-engravers Mormon, Nephi, and Moroni, who improvise while designing, constructing, composing, and editing the book's narratives.

4. *Extemporaneous Changes of the Compiler, Finishing-Editor, and Conservator* (Level 4), from Moroni, apparently acting alone, who compiled and proofread the entire Book of Mormon codex, and whose fingers made the last impressions on the ancient plates.

5. *Extemporaneous Changes of the Translator, Scribes, and Typesetter* (Level 5), from Joseph Smith and his assistants, whose improvisation appears during the modern period of translation and publication, visible across successive manuscript editions of the Book of Mormon from 1829 to 1840.

We will explore these layers in two sequential articles. This paper, Article One, studies the improvisations of the authors and engravers of the Book of Mormon (Levels 1–3 of Figure 1), with a more statistical focus. Article Two studies the improvisations of Moroni and Joseph Smith, particularly in their roles as final contributors to the complete work as presented in the modern day (Levels 4–5). Article Two especially explores how extemporaneous changes are constructed, providing a way to judge the historical composition of these improvisations, whether ancient or modern. I conclude with a discussion of why these findings are significant and what the improvisational patterns and constructions enable us to infer about the Book of Mormon as an apparent collection of ancient texts, and about the meaning, makeup, and character of ancient scripture as presented by Smith to the modern world.

Extemporaneous Change in the Book of Mormon

First we view the overall presentation of extemporaneous changes as they appear to a modern reader. Table 1 shows the incidence of CCPs organized by engraver and associated Book of Mormon internal texts, as well as the incidence of CCPs normalizing for the sizes of the internal texts in which they appear (Table 1, right column). For example, because there are more words in larger books like Mosiah and Alma, on average, we should expect to see more CCPs in those books and fewer in smaller books like Fourth Nephi, Jacob, or Enos. To facilitate comparison across

various internal texts I use as a metric the number of CCPs per 7,000 words. This is called "normalizing" and we will compare average (or mean) normalized CCPs for different texts throughout this paper. For example, I find in the books of Mosiah and Alma 7.62 and 7.13 CCPs, respectively, for every 7,000 words; in Helaman there are 1.70; in First Nephi there are 4.42.[14]

Table 1

Extemporaneous Change in Book of Mormon Texts

Engraver	Internal Texts	Words §	CCPs	CCPs Per 7,000 Words
Engravings of Nephi	1 Nephi	25,346	16	4.42
	2 Nephi	29,426	11	2.62
Engravings of Jacob's Priestly Lineage	Jacob	9,179	0	0.00
	Enos	1,172	0	0.00
	Jarom	731	2	19.15
	Omni	1,406	0	0.00
Engravings of Mormon	Words Mormon	858	0	0.00
	Mosiah	31,235	34	7.62
	Alma	85,393	87	7.13
	Helaman	20,548	5	1.70
	3 Nephi	28,768	7	1.70
	4 Nephi	1,965	0	0.00
	Mormon 1-7	6,150	2	2.28
Engravings of Moroni	Mormon 8-9†	3,276	0	0.00
	Ether	16,622	4	1.68
	Moroni 1-6	2,633	0	0.00
	Moroni 7-9*	2,054	2	6.82
	Moroni 10	1,151	0	0.00
	Title Page	267	0	0.00
Total		268,180	170	4.44

† Authored by Moroni, Engraved by Moroni

* Authored by Mormon, Engraved by Moroni

§ Word Count 1830 Edition, my count

Table 2 shows the incidence of CCPs by author text, together with their normalized CCPs per 7,000 words. Several author texts immediately stand out as prolific with regard to extemporaneous change: Limhi 16.90 CCPs per 7,000 words, Gideon 17.28, Giddianhi 14.08, and Jarom 19.15. Alma (20,227 words of total text) is quoted at length by editor Mormon; the improvisations of his texts appear with nearly twice the intensity as those of Mormon's texts when Mormon writes as an author (9.00 CCPs per 7,000 words for Alma versus 4.95 for Mormon).

Now let us turn to our deeper exploration of extemporaneous change at the five levels of contributors to the Book of Mormon manuscript, shown in Figure 1.

Extemporaneous Changes in Quoted Ancient Texts

We begin at the deepest level (Level 1, Figure 1) with what I identify as *quoted ancient texts* and some of the earliest chronologically appearing extemporaneous changes of the Book of Mormon. Most of the improvisations we will study appear in the writings of Nephite and Lamanite authors and embedded authors (Level 2) and editor-engravers (Level 3), which we begin studying in the next section. But the *earliest* improvisations found in the quoted ancient texts appear at a level deeper as texts that get quoted by these Level 2 and Level 3 authors and editor-engravers.

The Level 1 improvisations come from writings apparently preserved in the brass plates of Laban or the gold plates of the Jaredite people recorded in the book of Ether. Note the types of texts that get quoted in these quoted ancient texts: excerpts of Moses (Mosiah 12–13), biblical patriarch Jacob (Alma 46:24–25), high priest Melchizedek (Alma 13), and Joseph "who was carried captive into Egypt" (2 Nephi 3:4), in narratives dating approximately to the second millennium BC. Isaiah texts (eighth century BC) were also frequently quoted by Book of Mormon authors and editor-engravers, as they were also in later biblical texts such as Ezekiel, Habakkuk, Nahum, and Proverbs.[15] Among the Qumran community's Dead Sea Scrolls, the books of Deuteronomy and Isaiah are the most and third-most represented of biblical books, respectively, evidence of the importance of Moses and Isaiah to that ancient community.[16] The brass plates also quote or reference the texts of four non-biblical prophets: Zenock, Neum, Zenos, and Ezias,[17] who likely "date between 900 BC and the end of the Northern Kingdom in 721 BC," according to John Sorenson,[18] though we find no improvisations in these texts.

Table 2
Extemporaneous Change by Authors Who Improvise

Authors	CCPs	Words*	CCPs Per 7000 Words
Mormon	69	97,515	4.95
Nephi	18	28,220	4.46
Alma	26	20,227	9.00
Mosiah (Ether)	4	14,282	1.96
Jesus	3	10,213	2.06
Jacob	2	8,491	1.65
Isaiah	4	7,951	3.52
Helaman	4	5,600	5.00
Lehi	2	4,689	2.99
Benjamin	7	4,221	11.61
Amulek	2	3,182	4.40
Samuel	2	3,078	4.55
Moroni1	3	3,074	6.83
Abinadi	5	2,806	12.47
Ammon	2	2,727	5.13
Limhi	6	2,485	16.90
Angel	1	2,252	3.11
Zeniff	1	1,824	3.84
Alma1	1	1,144	6.12
Pahoran	1	817	8.57
Jarom	2	731	19.15
Anti-Nephi-Lehi	1	542	12.92
Giddianhi	1	497	14.08
Moses	2	458	30.57
Gideon	1	405	17.28
Totals	170	227,431	5.23

*Roger Keller (1996), source of word counts for Mormon, Alma, Nephi, Lehi, Benjamin, Abinadi, Helaman, Isaiah, Jesus, Moroni1, Ammon, Amulek, Jacob, Samuel, Angel, and Zeniff. All others are mine. Roger R. Keller, "Prophets and Theologies: The Beginnings of an Approach," in *Book of Mormon Authors: Their Words and Messages* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1996), 1–19.

Types of Corrective Conjunction Phrases in Ancient Scripture

In studying extemporaneous change I discovered three different types of corrective conjunction phrases, each with differing traits or characteristics designed to achieve different purposes:

1. *Type 1: Correcting an apparent error or mistake* in the text. This usually rewrites a specific idea or replaces the original expression that is judged extemporaneously to be incorrect.

2. *Type 2: Amplifying, clarifying, or augmenting the meaning* of an original expression. This adds to the original expression with further amplifying details to clarify an apparently ambiguous, indefinite, or difficult to articulate expression.

3. *Type 3: Explanatory, providing a helpful literal translation* of an unknown or unfamiliar original text. This addresses unfamiliar words or phrases marked by the author's deliberate attempt to provide a literal definition, usually marked by the words "which by interpretation is;" the New Testament sometimes uses the words "that is to say."[19]

In the Book of Mormon we see these three types of CCPs in the quoted ancient texts of seminal prophets, as well as in the writings of other authors. For example, the following improvisation illustrates a Type 2 Amplifying extemporaneous change that amplifies, clarifies, and augments the meaning, found in a quoted ancient text of Isaiah appearing as a quotation in an oration by the Book of Mormon's Jacob:

> Yea, for thus saith the Lord:
> <u>Have I put thee away</u> **or** *have I cast thee off forever?*
> For thus saith the Lord:
> Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement?
> <u>To whom have I put thee away?</u>
> **Or** *to which of my creditors have I sold you?*
> *Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves,*
> *and for your transgressions is your mother put away.*
> Earliest Text, 94; 2 Nephi 7:1; see also Isaiah 50:1

This passage is a call to Nephite listeners to remember their Israelite heritage taken from an oration by Nephite chief priest Jacob following the establishment of a new Nephite nation and new temple patterned after the Temple of Solomon (2 Nephi 5). The call itself is actually structured as a layered corrective conjunction phrase articulated by

Jacob (line 2) that builds on the original Isaiah corrective conjunction phrase (lines 6–8), as a preface — both CCPs are marked in bold by "**or.**" The improvisational preface is thus an emphatic repetition of Isaiah's original improvisational call as recorded in Jacob's oration, or perhaps added for emphasis by a later editor-engraver (Nephi, Moroni), or still later translator (Joseph Smith).

Another example from an embedded author text of Jesus during an appearance at Bountiful shows a corrective conjunction phrase that is designed to correct an apparent error or mistake (Type 1 Correcting):[20]

> Therefore if ye shall come unto me **or** *shall desire to come unto me*
> Earliest Text, 599; 3 Nephi 12:23

The Book of Mormon also contains the third type of corrective conjunction phrase, Type 3 Explanatory, with a helpful literal translation of an unknown or unfamiliar original text, as seen in this quoted ancient text of Jared from the book of Ether:

> And they did also carry with them <u>deseret</u>,
> **which by interpretation is** *a honey bee.*
> And thus they did carry with them swarms of bees
> Earliest Text, 675; Ether 2:3

The improvisations we see among the quoted ancient texts of Nephite authors and engravers often provide some of the earliest examples of extemporaneous change in the Book of Mormon. But why were these particular ancient texts selected for quotation by later authors and editors? One reason, of course, is that these texts come from some of the most broadly revered figures of ancient religion — for example, Isaiah or Moses. Moses is mentioned 704 times in the Old Testament, 79 times in the New Testament, and 75 times in the Book of Mormon. Jewish scholar Benjamin Sommer said, "One might view all previous revelations as leading to the event [of Moses] at Sinai and all subsequent ones as echoing it, repeating it, building upon it, or pointing toward its importance; certainly that is the way Jewish tradition has come to regard the Sinai revelation."[21] Similarly, Isaiah is quoted in twelve books of the New Testament (66 times)[22] and in four books of the Old Testament;[23] he is quoted by Jesus in the New Testament eight times.[24] "Thirty-two percent of the book of Isaiah is quoted in the Book of Mormon; another three percent is paraphrased."[25]

A second possible reason for the selection of these improvisational quoted ancient texts is that extemporaneous changes are often striking

and noteworthy, catching the reader's (and the author's or editor-engraver's) attention. This can be seen in a Moses improvisational ancient text, quoted in a narrative of Nephite martyred prophet Abinadi, which contains "the commandments [the Ten Commandments] which the Lord delivered unto Moses in the mount of Sinai" (Mosiah 12:33). In the narrative, Abinadi condemns his accusers using their own self-proclaimed religious belief system based on the Law of Moses. But note how the quotation of the commandments of Sinai pivots at the point of improvisation in the passage. The quotation begins but gets only as far as the improvisation "**or** any likeness of any thing."

> Thou shalt have no other God before me.
> Thou shalt not make unto thee <u>any graven image</u>,
> **or** *any likeness of any thing in the heaven above,*
> *or things which is in the earth beneath.*
> Now Abinadi saith unto them:
> Have ye done all this?
> I say unto you:
> Nay, ye have not.
> Earliest Text, 228; Mosiah 12:35–37

The quotation of the commandments is paused midway extemporaneously at the moment of improvisation as Abinadi castigates the priests of King Noah to the point that "his face shone with exceeding luster even as Moses' did while in the mount of Sinai while speaking with the Lord" (Mosiah 13:5) — the deliberate parallels to the Moses vision are striking. Then, after an extended confrontation with Abinadi's accusers, notice where the quotation of the ancient text begins again — *repeating in full the improvisation* in the passage.

> And now ye remember that I said unto you:
> Thou shalt not make unto thee <u>any graven image</u>,
> **or** *any likeness of things which is in heaven above,*
> *or which is in the earth beneath,*
> *or which is in the water under the earth.*
> *And again, thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them nor*
> *serve them,*
> *for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.*
> [The quotation of the Ten Commandments then continues.]
> Earliest Text, 229; Mosiah 13:12[26]

The pivot point in this account, the corrective conjunction phrase itself centered on "graven image, **or** any likeness," seems to be a facilitator,

like a mnemonic that helps organize the way the Sinai account is restated — presented here as if the improvisation had been at the forefront of the martyr's memory, or the memory of those documenting the account. Abinadi's discourse departs from it extemporaneously to wrestle with his accusers and then returns again later to the same point of improvisation to ensure it completes the full presentation of the commandments. The emphatic repetition of the improvisation is memorable and is a Type 2 Amplifying and clarifying improvisation to ensure a definitive and thorough understanding of "graven image." Thus, rather than a rote recitation of the biblical Ten Commandments, instead the passage appears in context as a martyr's improvisational restatement of the seminal Sinai revelation to Moses, essential to all Nephite believers, that was noticed, selected, and retained by editor-engraver Mormon as foundational to the identity of the Book of Mormon itself as a Mosaic text.

In summary, at its deepest level the Book of Mormon incorporates quoted ancient texts from seminal figures of ancient religion that evidently were very important to the Nephite and Lamanite communities in often compelling narratives. Improvisation is an essential element found within the ancient texts themselves but also an essential tool in the retelling of these texts by the orators, authors, or editors who quote them. Sometimes it is used to make a minor local clarification as we saw in the Ether text above, but other times it is used to add emphasis and call attention, as in Jacob's layered improvisation that places added emphasis on Isaiah's call to Israelite identity at the beginnings of the new Nephite nation, or the emphatic restatement of the Mosaic commandments by Abinadi using improvisation as a mnemonic pivot point to organize the retelling of the narrative.

Authors' Use of Extemporaneous Change

Next we move up a level to study the improvisations of the authors in the Book of Mormon, usually found in a variety of embedded documents and discourses (see Level 2, Figure 1) from Nephite and Lamanite prophets, teachers, priests, kings, military leaders, and judges; Hardy provides a list of 36 embedded documents.[27] The embedded documents from many of these authors include letters, epistles, speeches, decrees, memoirs, discourses, instructions, revelations, and recorded words. Embedded documents "provide an 'original' context," said Paola Ceccarelli, who studied letter writing of the ancient Greeks.[28] "[E]mbedded letters often carry a meaning that goes beyond the literal import of the letter

itself and are used to give strength to the argument."[29] This kind of historical perspective should inform our understanding of how and why extemporaneous change was used by Book of Mormon authors.

Types of Extemporaneous Change by Authors

Of the 25 authors whose texts contain improvisations, or CCPs (see Table 2), I select six that number five or greater, including Mormon's texts written as an author (69 CCPs), Nephi's texts written as an author (18 CCPs), and the embedded texts of authors Alma (26 CCPs), Benjamin (7 CCPs), Limhi (6 CCPs), and Abinadi (5 CCPs). First let us view types of extemporaneous change by author — Type 1 Correcting, Type 2 Amplifying, and Type 3 Explanatory. Figure 2 shows the empirical patterns of extemporaneous change for the six authors cited in Table 2 with five or more CCPs.

The improvisations found in Nephi's author texts are 4.46 CCPs per 7,000 words (Table 2). But note how these improvisations are distributed among the three types of extemporaneous change (Figure 2). The improvisations of Nephi's texts almost always use Type 2 Amplifying phrases (3.72 CCPs per 7,000 words), 83 percent of the time; seldom use Type 1 Correcting of mistakes or errors (0.50 CCPs per 7,000 words), 11 percent; and even less frequently use Type 3 Explanatory improvisations (0.25 CCPs per 7,000 words), 6 percent.

The improvisations found in Mormon's author texts are 4.95 CCPs per 7,000 words, slightly more than Nephi's. But note how differently these improvisations are distributed by type. Mormon's texts more frequently use Type 1 Correcting phrases (2.80 CCPs per 7,000 words), 57 percent of the time; Type 2 Amplifying phrases (2.01 CCPs per 7,000 words), 41 percent; and quite infrequently Type 3 Explanatory phrases (0.14 CCPs per 7,000 words), 3 percent.

The improvisations found in Limhi's embedded author texts are 16.90 CCPs per 7,000 words, but these improvisations primarily use Type 2 Amplifying phrases (11.27 CCPs per 7,000 words), 67 percent of the time, and secondarily Type 1 Correcting phrases (5.63 CCPs per 7,000 words), 33 percent, and never use Type 3 Explanatory phrases.

The improvisations found in Alma's embedded author texts are 9.00 CCPs per 7,000 words, almost equally distributed between Type 1 Correcting phrases (4.50 CCPs per 7,000 words), 50 percent of the time, and Type 2 Amplifying phrases (4.15 CCPs per 7,000 words), 46 percent. Used less frequently are Type 3 Explanatory phrase (0.35 CCPs per 7,000 words), 4 percent.

Figure 2
Types of Extemporaneous Change by Author
CCPs per 7,000 Words, Percent of CCPs by Type
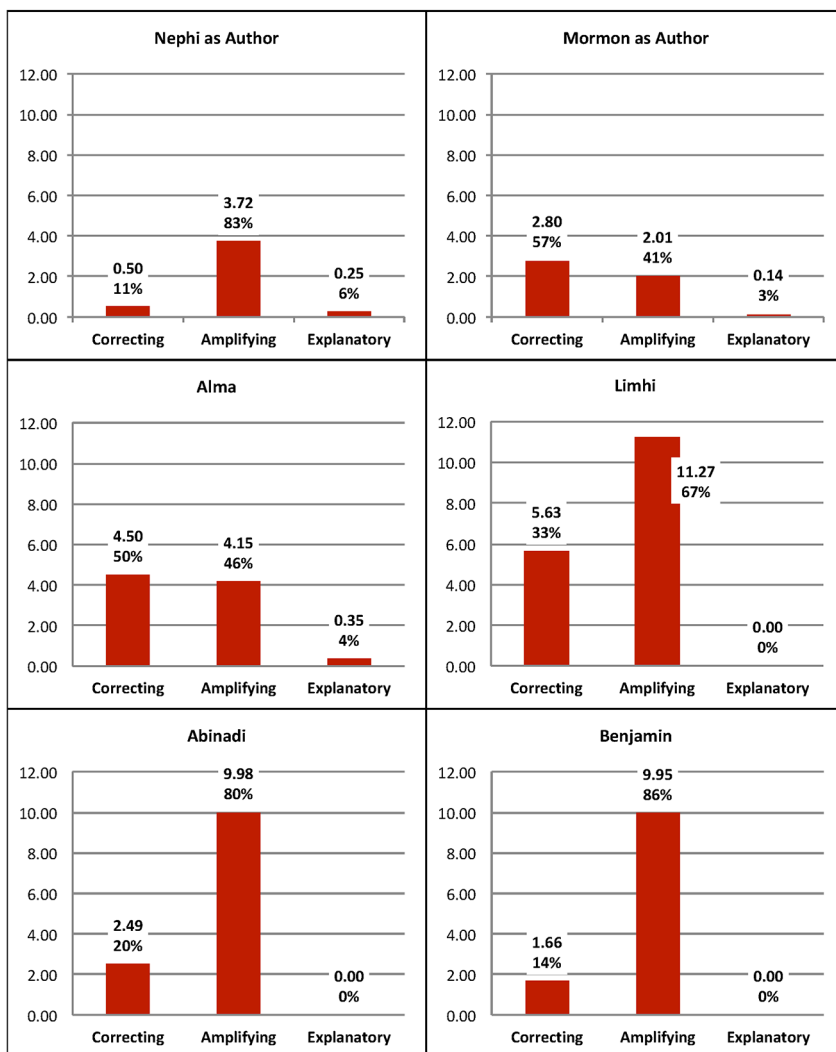
The improvisations found in Abinadi's embedded author texts are 12.47 CCPs per 7,000 words, mostly using Type 2 Amplifying phrases (9.98 CCPs per 7,000 words), 80 percent of the time, and less frequently Type 1 Correcting phrases (2.49 CCPs per 7,000 words), 20 percent, and never use Type 3 Explanatory phrase.

Finally, the improvisations found in Benjamin's embedded author texts are 11.61 CCPs per 7,000 words, almost exclusively using Type 2

Amplifying phrases (9.95 CCPs per 7,000 words), 86 percent of the time, compared to Type 1 Correcting phrases (1.66 CCPs per 7,000 words), 14 percent, and never using Type 3 Explanatory phrase.

Statistically, the patterns of extemporaneous change (CCPs, normalized) for Authors and Type of improvisation, shown in Figure 2, are significantly different from each other (see footnote for test statistics),[30] confirming that the variations in patterns observed for the three types of improvisation shown in the figures are statistically dependent on variation among the Authors studied.

The Authors' Narrative Context – Improvisation Pattern Signatures

Let us extend our exploration further by studying the editorial content within which corrective conjunctions are found. Among the 170 various extemporaneous change passages I discovered among them six types of editorial content: (1) Prophecy Narrative, (2) Historical Narrative, (3) Doctrinal Narrative, (4) Exhortation Narrative, (5) Geographic Narrative, and (6) War or Battle Narrative. Table 3 shows examples of CCPs of each of these types.

By combining the corrective conjunction phrase data with editorial content for each author, I construct profiles of extemporaneous change — I call them *improvisation pattern signatures* because they show the extemporaneous propensities exhibited by each author, shown in Figures 3a, 3b, and 3c. The patterns are distinct and different from each other. I hypothesize that extemporaneous change should appear in an author's texts that (a) were perceived to be *important* — authorial accuracy and descriptive integrity were deemed essential — and (b) were *challenging* and difficult to communicate with accuracy or fidelity to the actual historical content or intended message meaning. Therefore, the patterns shown in Figures 3a through 3c are not merely representative of Nephi's or Mormon's editorial content, for example. Instead, they represent where *extemporaneous change* is found contextually in their work — that is, *where they improvise.* Figures 3a through 3c thus show us implicitly what appears to have been important and challenging for each author because the flow of the narrative is interrupted to improvise — to make a sudden and brief, or sometimes quite involved extemporaneous change.[31]

Table 3
Narrative Contexts of Extemporaneous Change:
Editorial Content

Prophecy Narrative , e.g., Nephi paraphrases Lehi's prophecy: "And he also spake concerning the prophets, how great a number had testified of these things, concerning this Messiah, of whom he had spoken, **or** *this Redeemer of the world*" (1 Nephi 10:5).

Historical Narrative , e.g., "And now, behold, our brethren will deliver us out of our bondage, **or** *out of the hands of the Lamanites,*" (Mosiah 7:15).

Doctrinal Narrative , e.g., "knowing good from evil, placing themselves in a state to act, **or** *being placed in a state to act according to their wills and pleasures,*" (Alma 12:31).

Exhortation Narrative , e.g., "which has wrought a mighty change in us, **or** *in our hearts,* that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually, (Mosiah 5:2).

Geographic Narrative , e.g, "concerning the people who went up to dwell in the land of Lehi-Nephi, **or** *in the city of Lehi-Nephi,*" (Mosiah 7:1).

War or Battle Narrative , e.g., "he slew and drave them back. And thus he cleared the ground, **or rather** *the bank* which was on the west of the river Sidon," (Alma 2:33-34).

I test for statistically significant differences in extemporaneous change for editorial content, author, and type of improvisation using analysis of variance (called ANOVA, a common statistical method). I will explain the results in non-statistical narrative terms here, reporting the detailed statistical test results in the footnotes. Overall, the ANOVA test results generally confirm that the differences in the visual patterns we see comparing the chart panels of Figures 3a, 3b, and 3c are statistically significant.[32]

Figure 3a

Improvisation Pattern Signatures -- Nephi, Mormon as Authors

CCPs per 7,000 Words, Correcting (Left Striped Bars), Amplifying (Right Solid Bars)

Nephi as Author

Prophetic and Doctrinal Improvisations that Mostly Amplify

Mormon as Author

Historical and Military Improvisations that Mostly Correct, then Amplify
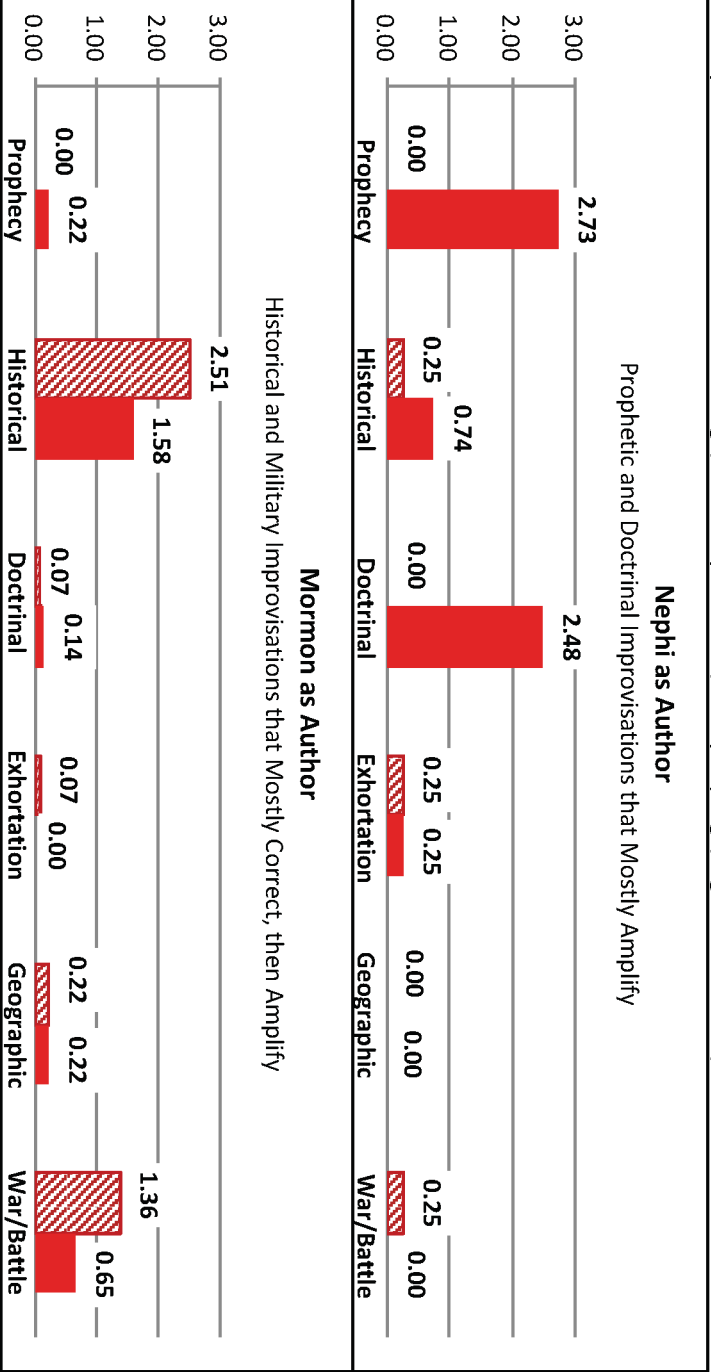
Figure 3b
Improvisation Pattern Signatures -- Embedded Authors Alma, Abinadi
CCPs per 7,000 Words, Correcting (Left Striped Bars), Amplifying (Right Solid Bars)

Alma
Diverse Improvisations Mostly in Doctrine, History, and Exhortation that Amplify and Correct

Abinadi
Doctrinal Improvisations that Mostly Amplify
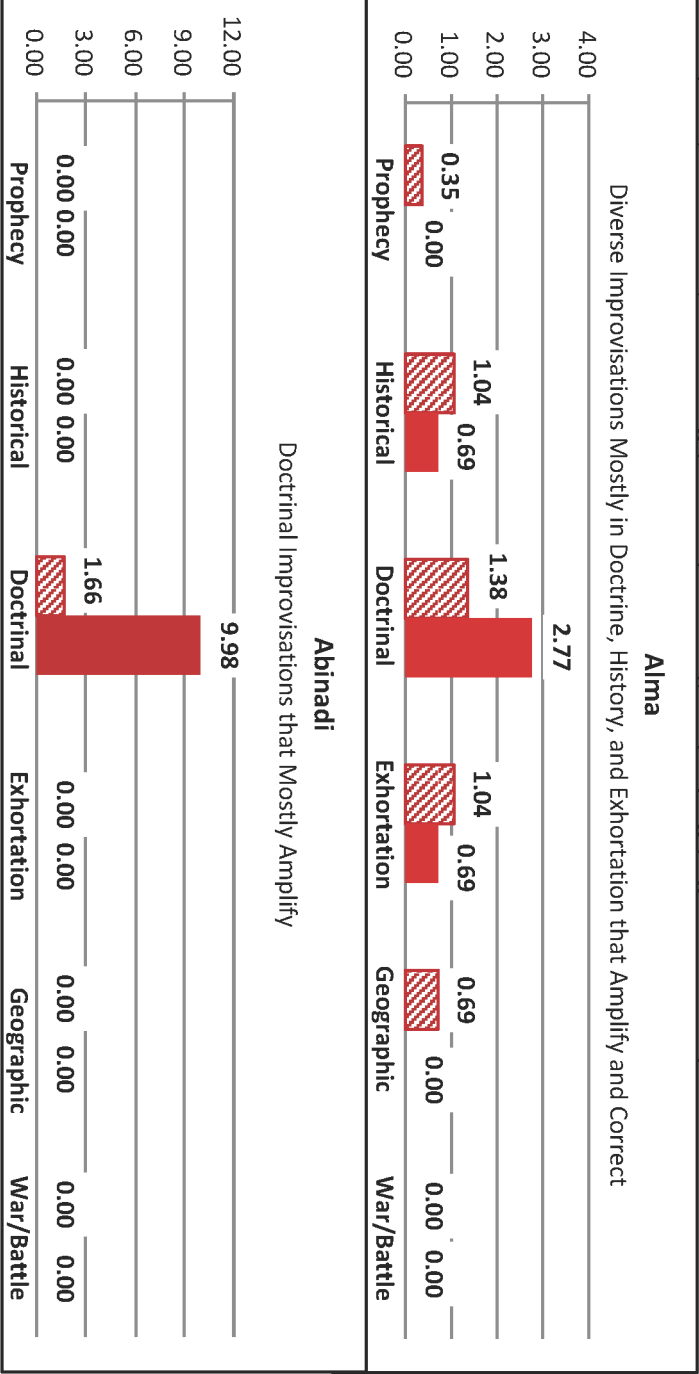
Figure 3c
Improvisation Pattern Signatures -- Embedded Authors Limhi, Benjamin
CCPs per 7,000 Words, Correcting (Left Striped Bars), Amplifying (Right Solid Bars)

Limhi
Historical, Military, Doctrinal, Geographic Improvisations that Amplify and Correct

Benjamin
Exhortation, Prophecy, Doctrinal, Historical Improvisations that Mostly Amplify
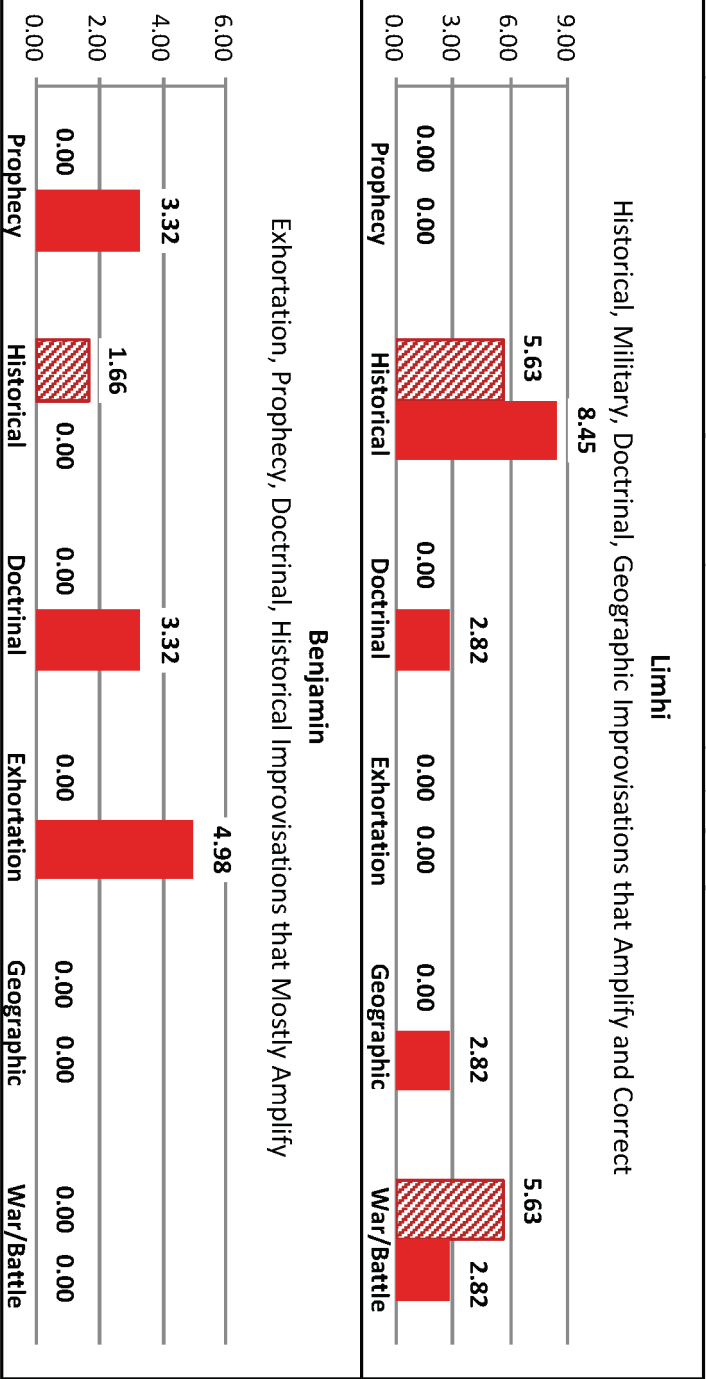
For our purposes, we are especially interested in the "interaction effects" that show relationships between variables to confirm statistically how the CCPs (average, or mean CCPs normalized) that we see with one variable depend on, or are influenced by, another variable. Thus, for example, the interaction effect of variables *Author* by *Editorial Content* is significant, confirming that the CCP pattern we see in editorial content *depends* on the author — that is, the different patterns of CCPs across the six editorial content categories are influenced statistically by the different authors of our study. The interaction effect of variables *Type of Improvisation* by *Editorial Content* is also significant, suggesting that the different patterns of CCPs across the six editorial content categories also depend on variation in type of improvisation.

Otherwise, the statistical tests also confirm that CCPs (again mean normalized) across the three *Types of Improvisation* are significantly different from each other — this is a significant main effect. And CCPs across the six *Editorial Content* categories are significantly different from each other, again a significant main effect. The CCPs across different *Authors* are not statistically different in this analysis.

Let me summarize, with some brief contextual background, the *improvisation pattern signatures* we see in Figures 3a, 3b, and 3c.

Mormon: *Historical and Military Improvisations that Mostly Correct, Then Amplify*. Mormon's improvisations as an author appear to be driven by an impulse in history and war — evidence of an occupational orientation as a military historian. In these two categories we find the greatest incidence of Mormon's extemporaneous changes — those places deemed important and challenging because there we see pauses to make corrections. According to the text, Mormon received a military commission at age 16 as commander "of an army of the Nephites" (Mormon 2:2), like Alexander the Great who was 16 when he led his first small Macedonian army against the Thracian Maedi tribes.[33] Mormon's improvisations are focused on Type 1 Correcting, and to a lesser degree on Type 2 Amplifying, consistent with the work of a historian first, and less so a prophet, with an apparent focus on detail.

Nephi: *Prophetic and Doctrinal Improvisations that Mostly Amplify.* The improvisations found in Nephi's texts appear most frequently in prophecy and doctrinal narratives, and much less so in historical narratives. These improvisations are almost always Type 2 Amplifying and rarely Type 1 Correcting mistakes or errors. These improvisations reveal a scribal impulse in amplifying, expanding, and augmenting,

often based on the sacred writings of others, consistent with the Small Plates of Nephi commission as a sacred record.

Alma: *Diverse Improvisations Mostly in Doctrine, History, and Exhortation that Amplify and Correct.* The improvisations found in Alma's texts appear notably in doctrinal narratives, but also quite broadly in history, exhortation, geography, and prophecy narratives. His improvisations are Type 2 Amplifying and clarifying, but also just as frequently Type 1 Correcting and fixing. These improvisations appear in texts that apparently were important and challenging to Alma, showing evidence of both a sacred and a civic leadership impulse as high priest as well as chief judge of the Nephite nation, described in the Alma embedded text narratives.

Abinadi: *Doctrinal Improvisations that Mostly Amplify.* The prolific improvisations found in Abinadi's texts appear solely in doctrinal texts, and mostly are Type 2 Amplifying and clarifying. They appear as remnants of the doctrinal impulses of the beginnings of formal religion among the Nephite people in Alma's Church of God, or Church of Christ, that continued in some form for some 600 years — including the seminal Mosaic doctrines stemming from the revelations of Sinai that get amplified with respect to doctrines of atonement, Messiah, Christ as God, resurrection, and the salvation of man.

Limhi: *Historical, Military, Doctrinal, and Geographic Improvisations that Amplify and Correct.* The prolific improvisations found in Limhi's texts (third-most in the Book of Mormon) appear mostly in history, then military, geography, and doctrine texts, with extemporaneous changes that are both Type 2 Amplifying or clarifying, and Type 1 Correcting or fixing. These improvisations from a king of a reclaimed lost Nephite sect preserve the historic context of the seminal beginnings of Alma's Church of God, or Church of Christ, noted above.

Benjamin: *Exhortation, Prophecy, Doctrinal and Historical Improvisations that Mostly Amplify.* The prolific improvisations found in Benjamin's texts appear in exhortation, prophecy, doctrine, and history, and are virtually always Type 2 Amplifying and clarifying. These extemporaneous changes preserve the improvisational vestiges of a royal covenant community from a notable coronation ceremony recorded in detail in Nephite sacred history.

What is noticeable from these six author improvisation pattern signatures is how distinctly different they are from each other. Some are narrowly focused in editorial content (Abinadi, Mormon, and Nephi), and others have greater content diversity (Alma, Limhi, and Benjamin),

and emphasizing different types of improvisation — Type 1 Correcting and fixing versus Type 2 Amplifying, clarifying, and augmenting. What we see here is evidence, statistically, and visually, that the improvisations found in the texts of Book of Mormon *authors* appear to be works of multiple authors, rather than a single author like Joseph Smith or Moroni — both later contributors to the Book of Mormon's construction.

Engravers' Use of Extemporaneous Change

We now proceed to Level 3 of contributors to the Book of Mormon chain of authoring, editing, and construction (see Figure 1), to study extemporaneous change among the *editor-engravers* who decide and choose which texts to include and which authors to quote and embed into their respective edited works. The Book of Mormon is primarily the work of three editor-engravers: Mormon edited and engraved nearly two-thirds of the text, Nephi about one-fifth, and Moroni about one-tenth. Another eight *author-engravers* are self-identified in the text; all descend from the priestly lineage of the first Nephite chief priest Jacob, including Jacob, Enos, Jarom, Omni, Amaron, Chemish, Abinadom, and Amaleki.

Table 4 shows total CCPs across the eleven engravers, broken out separately for editor-engravers and author-engravers. The level of improvisation found in Mormon's edited engravings (5.41 CCPs per 7,000 words), including embedded author texts, is 56 percent higher than the improvisations found in Nephi's engravings (3.46), and 238 percent higher than those in Moroni's engravings (1.60 CCPs per 7,000 words). The level of improvisation in Nephi's engravings is 116 percent higher than in Moroni's.

Table 5 shows the overall picture of the improvisations of the editor-engravers, with a contrasting summary of the improvisations appearing in their edited works, their authored works, and the embedded texts of other authors. Here we begin to see, through extemporaneous change, the editorial designs of the editor-engravers, whether they are creators of improvisation, or managers of the improvisations of themselves and others.

Table 4
Engravers and Extemporaneous Change

Authors	CCPs	Words*	CCPs Per 7000 Words	
Mormon	135	174,610	5.41	Editor Engravers
Nephi	27	54,688	3.46	
Moroni	6	26,270	1.60	
Jacob	0	9,103	0.00	Author Engravers
Enos	0	1,157	0.00	
Amaleki	0	919	0.00	
Jarom	2	731	19.15	
Omni	0	160	0.00	
Amaron	0	154	0.00	
Abinadom	0	96	0.00	
Chemish	0	69	0.00	
Totals, Weighted Average	170	267,957	4.44	

*Word counts by engraver based on Wayne A. Larsen and Alvin C. Rencher, "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon? An Analysis of Wordprints," in *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins,* ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1982), 157–88.

Note that in Mormon's editor-engraver texts there are 135 total CCPs, which include the texts of embedded authors, but in his author texts there are 69. Nearly half of the extemporaneous change we see in Mormon's edited engraved texts is in fact attributable to other author texts embedded in his engravings (66 CCPs, or 49 percent). Mormon appears to be managing improvisational texts — between his own, and those of others. In Nephi's editor-engraver texts there are 27 CCPs, but in his author texts there are 18. About two-thirds of the extemporaneous change we see in Nephi the engraver's edited texts come from his authored texts; the remainder is attributable to other authors' texts embedded in his engravings (9 CCPs, or 33 percent). Nephi appears to be more reliant on creating his own improvisations. We explore these editorial designs in detail in Article Two.

Table 5
Acting as Editor-Engravers versus as Authors

As Editor-Engravers	CCPs	Words*	CCPs Per 7000 Words
Mormon	135	174,610	5.41
Nephi	27	54,688	3.46
Moroni	6	26,270	1.60

As Authors			
Mormon	69	97,515	4.95
Nephi	18	28,220	4.46
Moroni	0	18,278	0.00

Embedded, Quoted Texts of Others			
Mormon	66	77,095	5.99
Nephi	9	26,468	2.38
Moroni	6	7,992	5.26

*Word counts by engraver based on Wayne A. Larsen and Alvin C. Rencher, "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon? An Analysis of Wordprints," in *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins,* ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1982), 157–88.

Note too that Mormon's level of improvisation is higher as an editor-engraver, 5.41 versus 4.95 CCPs per 7,000 words as an author, because of the improvisational texts he embeds in his edited work from the texts of others — 5.99 CCPs per 7,000 words. Nephi's level of improvisation is lower as an editor-engraver, 3.46 versus 4.22 CCPs per 7,000 words as an author — the opposite of Mormon — because of the less improvisational texts he embeds (2.38 CCPs per 7,000 words). Moroni's improvisation as an editor-engraver, 1.60 CCPs per 7,000 words, is completely driven by the improvisations found in the texts of others that he embeds in his own work. These include two epistles from Mormon addressed to Moroni (containing two extemporaneous changes, in Moroni 8:22, and

8:27) and the translated portions of the record of Ether (containing four extemporaneous changes). "The book of Ether was discovered by the Nephites about 92 BC and translated by the prophet Mosiah with the aid of the Urim and Thummim (see Mosiah 28:11–19)," said H. Donl Peterson. "The 24 plates containing Ether's abridgment appear to have been passed down, along with Mosiah's translation of them, from prophet to prophet until they came into Mormon's hands. … Moroni completed the abridgment of the book of Ether on the plates of Mormon, which we often call the gold plates."[34]

Types of Extemporaneous Change by Engravers

Again, we extend our study by examining extemporaneous change for editor-engravers — Mormon, Nephi, and Moroni — across the three types of CCPs: Type 1 Correcting, Type 2 Amplifying, and Type 3 Explanatory. Figure 4 shows the empirical patterns by type of extemporaneous change for each editor-engraver.

Figure 4
Types of Extemporaneous Change by Editor-Engraver
CCPs per 7,000 Words, Percent of CCPs by Type
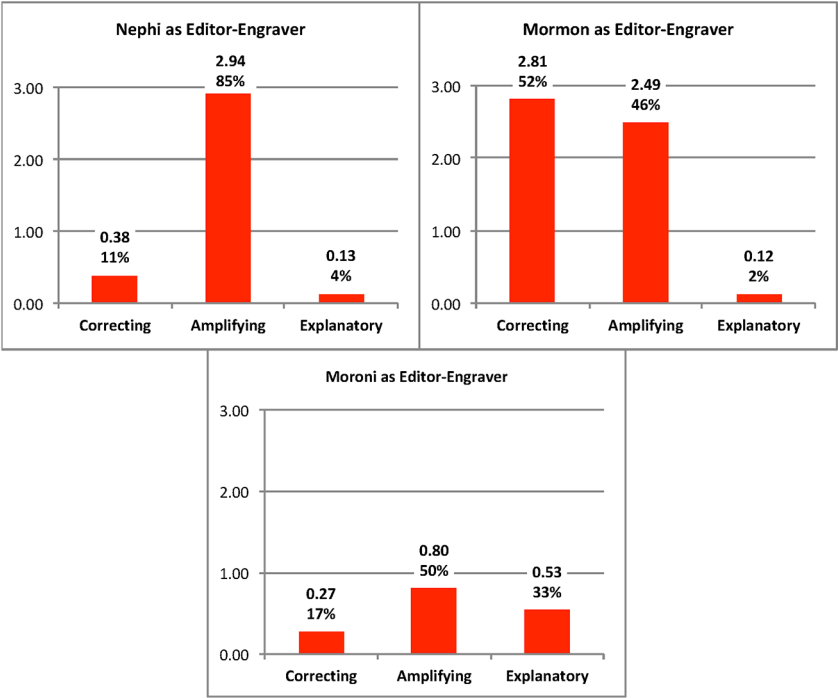
Let us contrast the improvisational patterns we see in the works of the editor-engravers (Figure 4) with those we saw in their works as authors (Figure 2). The improvisational patterns of Mormon's edited texts (Figure 4) are similar to those we saw in Mormon's authored texts (see Figure 2), except that Mormon's edited texts contain a higher share of Type 2 Amplifying, clarifying, and augmenting improvisations (46 percent as editor-engraver, versus 41percent as author), and a lower share of Type 1 Correcting and fixing errors (52 percent as editor-engraver, versus 57 percent as author). Type 3 Explanatory improvisations are about the same, 2 percent as editor-engraver versus 3 percent as author. In other words, Mormon appears to *embed* more Type 2 Amplifying, clarifying, and augmenting improvisations into his edited works from other authors, and he *creates* more Type 1 Correcting and fixing improvisations in his authored texts.

By contrast, the improvisational patterns of Nephi's edited texts (Figure 4) are nearly the same as those we saw in Nephi's authored texts (see Figure 2), mostly using Type 2 Amplifying improvisations (2.94 CCPs per 7,000 words), 85 percent of the time; and then Type 1 Correcting phrases (0.38 CCPs per 7,000 words), 11 percent; and quite infrequently Type 3 Explanatory phrase (0.13 CCPs per 7,000 words), 4 percent.

However, the improvisations found in Moroni's edited engravings exhibit a different pattern than the other two editor-engravers, with a mix of Type 2 Amplifying improvisations (0.80 CCPs per 7,000 words), 50 percent of the time, and Type 3 Explanatory phrase (0.53 CCPs per 7,000 words), 33 percent, and then less frequently Type 1 Correcting phrases (0.27 CCPs per 7,000 words), 17 percent (see Figure 4). Here in Moroni's engravings we see the highest levels of Type 3 Explanatory improvisations (0.53 CCPs per 7,000 words, 33 percent of the time) of all editor-engravers and authors. This is consistent with the nature of the Jaredite book of Ether, a discovered and translated record of a lost civilization with terms and proper nouns requiring definition and explanation.

The Engravers' Narrative Context – Improvisation Pattern Signatures

Once again, we examine extemporaneous change by comparing across editorial content categories, similar to the last section on authors. However, because editors work with the texts of other authors using varying voices, we now also cross-tabulate across different types of

Editorial Voice. I identified the following five types of editorial voice in which corrective conjunctions occur (see Table 6 for examples of CCPs of each):

1. First Person Own Voice.

2. Editorial Narrative/Editor's Voice.

3. Quote of Another Person's First Person Voice.

4. Quote of Another's Quote of Another's First Person Voice, such as Nephi quoting Jacob, who quotes Isaiah in 2 Nephi 7:2.

5. Editor Paraphrasing Another's Words, as in Nephi paraphrasing Lehi's words.

As with authors in the last section, I again construct *improvisation pattern signatures* that describe the improvisational propensities of each engraver, including now both editorial voice and editorial content (Figures 5a through 5c). I test for statistically significant differences in extemporaneous change, this time using two different ANOVA models: the first focuses on the variable *Editorial Voice*, together with *Editor-Engraver* and *Type of Improvisation*; the second focuses on *Editorial Content*, together with *Editor-Engraver* and *Type of Improvisation*. Once again, we are especially interested in the interaction effects that show relationships between these variables.

For *Editorial Voice*, the ANOVA test confirms that the pattern differences we see across the chart panels (top) of Figures 5a, 5b, and 5c are statistically significant.[35] The interaction effect is significant for *Editor-Engraver* by *Editorial Voice*, confirming that the CCP pattern we see in editorial voice *depends* on the editor-engraver — that is, the CCP patterns across the five editorial voice categories are influenced statistically by variation in the editor-engravers of our study. The interaction effect of *Editor-Engraver* by *Type of Improvisation* is also significant, confirming that the CCP patterns we see in type of improvisation also depend on editor-engraver and are influenced statistically by variation in the editor-engravers. Otherwise, the statistical tests also confirm that CCPs (again mean normalized) are significantly different across the five *Editorial Voice* categories, and are significantly different across the three *Types of Improvisation*, both significant main effects. The CCPs for the three different *Editor-Engravers* are different from each other, with a marginally significant main effect.

Table 6
Narrative Contexts of Extemporaneous Change:
Editorial Voice

First Person Own Voice , e.g., "This is according to the account of Nephi; **or in other words,** *I, Nephi, wrote this record* " (1 Nephi 1 Introduction).

Editorial Narrative/Editor's Voice, e.g., "Noah sent his armies against them, and they were driven back, **or** *they drove them back for a time* " (Mosiah 11:18).

Quote of Another Person's First Person Voice, e.g., Nephi quoting Lehi in "Behold, I have dreamed a dream; **or, in other words,** *I have seen a vision* " (1 Nephi 8:2).

Quote of Another's Quote of Another's First Person Voice, e.g., Nephi quotes Jacob, who quotes Isaiah in his temple oration: "O house of Israel, is my hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem, **or** *have I no power to deliver?* " 2 Nephi 7:2.

Editor Paraphrasing Another's Words , as in Nephi paraphrases Lehi's words in "And he also spake concerning the prophets, how great a number had testified of these things, concerning this Messiah, of whom he had spoken, **or** *this Redeemer of the world* " (1 Nephi 10:5).

For *Editorial Content*, the ANOVA test confirms that some of the pattern differences we see across the chart panels (bottom) of Figures 5a, 5b, and 5c are statistically significant.[36] One interaction effect is significant, *Editor-Engraver* by *Type of Improvisation*, confirming that type of improvisation *depends on* editor-engraver — that is, the CCP patterns across the three types of improvisation are influenced statistically by variation in the editor-engravers of our study.

Figure 5a
Improvisation Pattern Signature -- Mormon as Editor-Engraver
CCPs per 7,000 Words, Correcting (Left Striped Bars), Amplifying (Right Solid Bars)

Mormon as Editor-Engraver -- Editorial Voice

Mormon as Editor-Engraver -- Editorial Content

Diverse Improvisation Focused in Military, History and Doctrine that Mostly Corrects
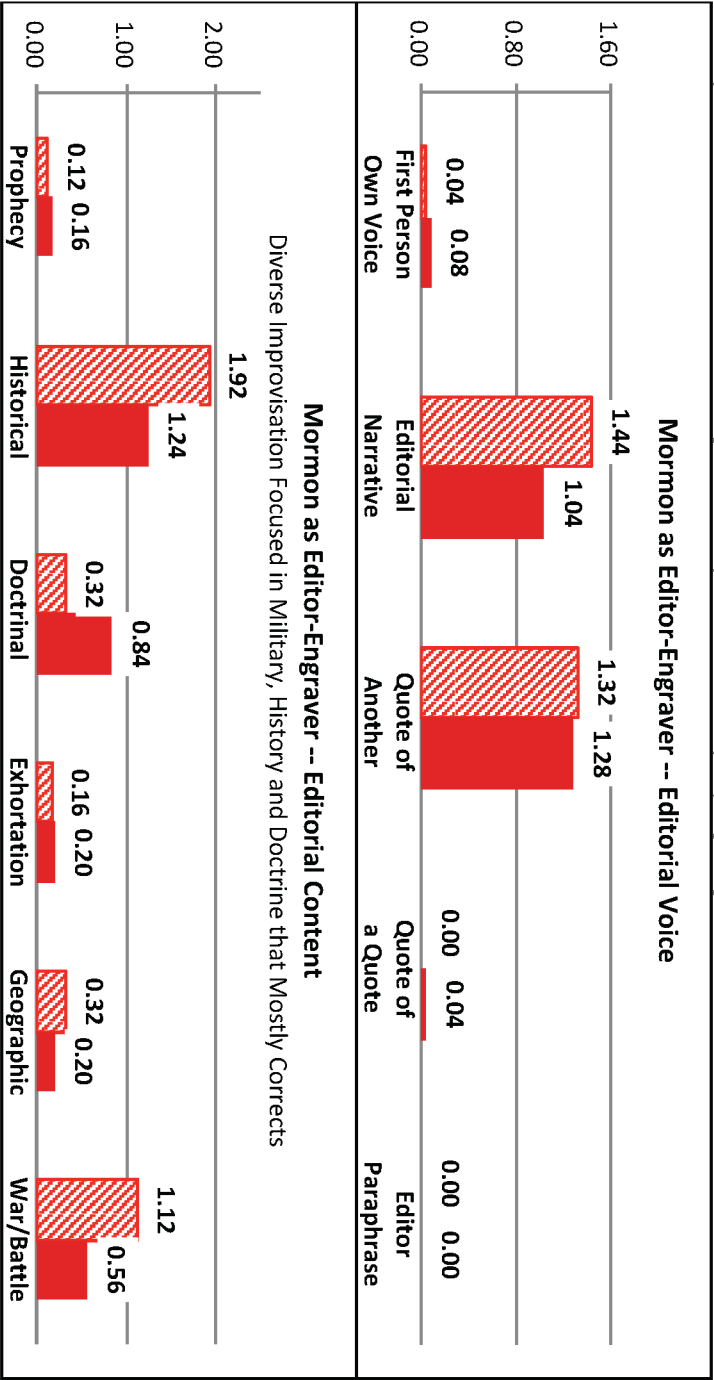
Figure 5b

Improvisation Pattern Signature -- Nephi as Editor-Engraver

CCPs per 7,000 Words, Correcting (Left Striped Bars), Amplifying (Right Solid Bars)

Nephi as Editor-Engraver -- Editorial Voice

Nephi as Editor-Engraver -- Editorial Content

Editorial and Personal Prophetic Improvisations That Mostly Amplify.
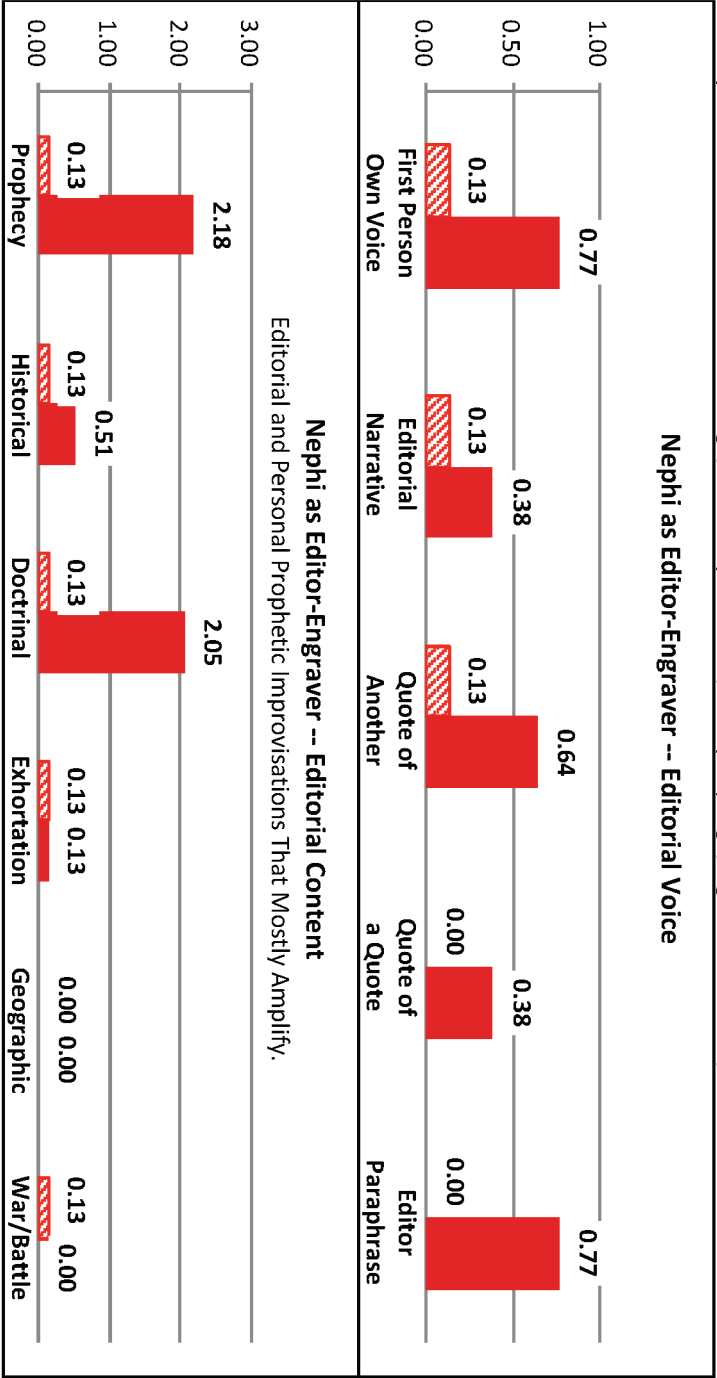
Figure 5c
Improvisation Pattern Signature -- Moroni as Editor-Engraver

CCPs per 7,000 Words, Amplifying (Left Solid Bars), Explanatory (Right Striped Bars)

Moroni as Editor-Engraver -- Editorial Voice

Moroni as Editor-Engraver -- Editorial Content
Editorially Embedded Improvisations in Broad Sacred History That Explain and Amplify

The other interaction effects are not significant in this editorial content model. Otherwise, the statistical tests also confirm that CCPs (again mean normalized) are significantly different across the three *Types of Improvisation*, a significant main effect, are marginally significant across the three *Editor-Engravers*, also a main effect, and are not significant across the six categories of *Editorial Content*.

Taken together, these statistical results point to interesting significant findings. The important interaction effects suggest the different editor-engravers have a significant influence on the types of improvisation we see in the Book of Mormon, and also on the editorial voice in which their improvisations appear. Although we did not find a significant *Editor-Engraver* by *Editorial Content* interaction in these editor-engraver models, we did find a significant *Author* by *Editorial Content* interaction in the author model of the last section, which confirms that the different authors have a significant influence on the improvisation patterns associated with their editorial content. Generally, differences across the three *Types of Improvisation*, and across the five categories of *Editorial 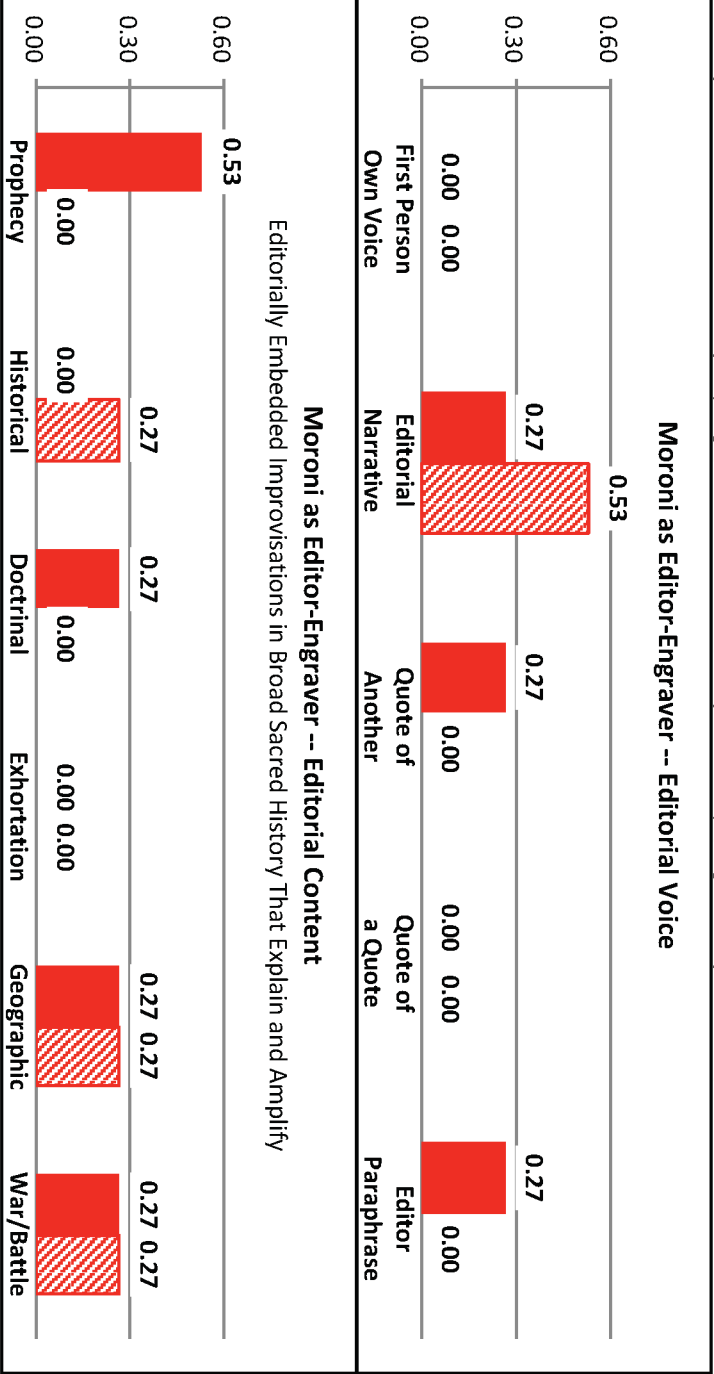Voice*, are consistently significant; both are main effects. Yet, although differences across the six categories of *Editorial Content* were not significant in the editor-engraver models, the differences were significant in the author model of the last section, again a main effect in the author model that complements the findings of the editor-engraver models.

So statistically, the overall results point to Levels 2 and 3 in the chain of authoring, editing and construction of the Book of Mormon (Figure 1) as the key to understanding extemporaneous change. The improvisational patterns we see are broadly driven by its editor-engravers (with respect to type of improvisation and editorial voice), but also in a complimentary way by its authors (regarding editorial content). The results confirm that extemporaneous change is the product of not one, but multiple actors using an array of improvisational means (types, editorial voice, editorial content) that appear to be statistically complimentary — editor-engravers improvising while using the improvisational works of authors to complement their own editorial designs. We see this in the *improvisation pattern signatures* of Figures 5a, 5b, and 5c, which, similar to the Author section, I summarize briefly.

Mormon: *Diverse Improvisation Focused in Military, History, and Doctrine that Mostly Corrects:* As an editor-engraver, Mormon's improvisations now appear in broader, more diverse editorial content than we saw with Mormon as author, as he imports the

improvisational texts of other authors whose improvisations appear in doctrine, exhortation, and prophecy texts. His personally-authored improvisations are driven by his impulse as a military historian, but his imported editorial improvisations are driven by his impulse as a prophet with a commission to compile and engrave "all the sacred engravings concerning this people" (Mormon 1:3).

Nephi: *Editorial and Personal Prophetic Improvisations that Mostly Amplify.* Nephi's improvisation patterns appear to be nearly the same whether acting as editor-engraver or author —centered in prophecy and doctrinal narratives, and occasionally in historical narratives, with diverse editorial voices, but especially his own first person voice or paraphrasing another's words (often his father Lehi's), and with Type 2 Amplifying improvisations. Though Nephi's career is spent as first king and nation builder of the Nephite people, navigating the separation from the Lamanite tribes, his impulse is to improvise more as a prophet than as a king.

Moroni: *Editorially Embedded Improvisations in Broad Sacred History that Explain and Amplify.* Moroni's improvisations are editorially imported mostly from the Jaredite record and appear broadly across prophecy, history, doctrine, geography, and war/battle narratives. He retains an unusual mix of Type 2 Amplifying and Type 3 Explanatory, but little Type 1 Correcting improvisations, reflecting the sacred and historical character of the hitherto unknown book of Ether, translated centuries earlier by Mosiah. His career involves immersion in sacred texts and religious service — he preserves the ordination, sacramental, and administration protocols of Christ's first century church in the new world (Moroni 1–6) — and we get a glimpse of how he works by viewing the improvisational texts he chooses to import.

Discussion

We have explored and then tested the patterns observed in the first three layers of successive strata of the Book of Mormon's compilation and construction studying extemporaneous change and improvisation, beginning with the *quoted ancient texts* where we find improvisations of seminal prophets of ancient religion, such as Moses and Isaiah (Level 1, Figure 1); then the improvisations in the *authors' texts* from Nephite and Lamanite prophets, judges, kings, military leaders, and teachers (Level 2); and finally the improvisations found in the larger *editor-engraver works* of Mormon, Nephi, and Moroni (Level 3), all spanning a thousand years of narrative history. In so doing we begin to see up

close the workings of ancient writers, editors, engravers, and translators of the Book of Mormon. Through extemporaneous changes that appear in their writings and orations we see evidence of their personas, their editorial decisions, their improvisations, and the creative impulses that enable them to construct a many-faceted, complex, and rich narrative sacred history. These awkward extemporaneous changes at different levels and strata underscore that this is an imperfect work, apparently from its earliest and deepest contributors, constructed over layers of time and setting.

The evidence we have seen of statistically significant improvisational patterns across authors and editor-engravers is compelling. These improvisational patterns appear evident at deeper levels of the Book of Mormon's construction (Levels 2 and 3, Figure 1), as if they had been preserved through temporal layers of later copying, editing, engraving, and translating — and therefore likely originating with the early authors and editor-engravers of these levels. Yet we cannot be certain of this, and still must address, in Article Two, the roles of Moroni and Joseph Smith as late contributors to the Book of Mormon's compilation and translation in either preserving or inscribing their own improvisations onto the narrative texts that lay before them. In any event, the statistical work shown here points to multiple authors and editor-engravers whose improvisational impulses speak from the text of the Book of Mormon.

Our findings dovetail with existing research on the authors and engravers of the Book of Mormon. According to Brant Gardner, Nephi shows evidence of having been trained as a formal scribe in ancient Jerusalem, and some of his scribal training is consistent with the extemporaneous change patterns uncovered in my research. "Nephi not only includes passages from Isaiah *but also uses Isaiah as a foundation and springboard for his own revelation. As with the pesharim [interpretive commentary on Hebrew scripture], the scripture served as the springboard for a text that applied that scripture to a current situation. …* What Nephi begins in chapter 25 is *not an explanation of Isaiah but rather an expansion of Isaiah.*"[37] Gardner's description parallels closely Nephi's improvisation pattern signature shown earlier — rarely prone to Type 1 Correcting, and almost always inclined to Type 2 Amplifying of mostly prophetic or doctrinal texts, usually with a first-person editorial voice or telling another's words. Hardy said: "[I]n the postnarrative chapters we come to know Nephi as a reader — poring over ancient texts, *offering alternative interpretations*, interweaving his own revelations with the words of past prophets."[38]

Regarding Mormon, Hardy said, "Mormon's historiographical impulse, by contrast, is manifest in his *meticulous attention to chronology and geography*."[39] "[H]e is a historian rather than a memoirist."[40] "Unfortunately, the demands of *historical accuracy*, literary excellence, and moral clarity do not always fit well together, and if we read closely *we can see Mormon struggling to reconcile them*."[41] Richard Neitzel Holzapfel said, "[A]n examination of the editorial devices used by Mormon shows his sincere concern for *credibility and editorial honesty. …* [His work] is clearly the product of an excellent ancient historian *concerned with naming and adhering to his sources* while presenting an edited account that exhibits a spiritually motivated understanding of history and purpose."[42] These descriptions are consistent with my findings of Mormon's improvisation pattern signature as a detailed military historian, primarily focused on Type 1 Correcting and secondarily on Type 2 Amplifying, who weaves in the improvisational texts of others to create a more sacred scriptural record.

Regarding Moroni, Hardy said: "[W]e might expect [Moroni] to take a different approach to the task of writing history than his father [Mormon], and that is exactly what we find. Moroni apparently did not feel the tension of competing agendas in the same way that Mormon did … there is *much less reworking of historical sources*."[43] "Moroni is not so much composing [his own] conclusion as constructing it, *extracting phrases from particular texts by Nephi and Mormon* in order to weave them together and thereby unify the voices of these two illustrious predecessors."[44] This is what we see too with Moroni's improvisational work, never authoring his own improvisation (compared to his father's many improvisations), but selecting and importing those key improvisational texts that help explain the complexities of the unknown Jaredite people.

With these initial explorations behind us, in the next paper we turn to the design and construction of extemporaneous change as found in the Book of Mormon to address this important question: Despite the evidence for multiple author and editor improvisation, is there evidence still that the improvisations of the Book of Mormon are ancient or modern in origin? Certainly it seems plausible that a translator such as Smith, or even Moroni, would need to lean on extemporaneous change as an instinctive tool to produce a better dictation or translation of an ancient work. Therefore, what kind of improvisation do we see by these later contributors as viewed from the perspective of the entire

Book of Mormon corpus? There is more to discover in our investigation into extemporaneous change.

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Endnotes

1   Grant Hardy, "Introduction," in Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), xix–xx.

2   Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 739–40.

3   Skousen, *Earliest Text,* 745–789. The 719 changes cited by Skousen represent only a small subset of the various changes made to the Book of Mormon during Smith's life. For a complete presentation see Skousen's *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon: Part One* (2004), *Part Two* (2005), *Part Three* (2006), *Part Four* (2007), *Part Five* (2008), and *Part Six* (2009), Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship.

4   Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary defined *conjunction* as "a connective or connecting word; an indeclinable word which serves to unite sentences or the clauses of a sentence and words, joining two or more simple sentences into one compound one, and continuing it at the pleasure of the writer or speaker." Conjunction, American Dictionary of the English Language, Webster's Dictionary 1828 – Online Edition, accessed 12 May 2014, http://webstersdictionary1828.com. Of the various types of conjunction

phrases that join sentence clauses together — concatenating (A and B), sequential (A and then B), alternative (either A or B) and corrective (A1, or rather A2) — I focus specifically on conjunction phrases that are *corrective*.

5 Mary Lou Treat reports early research on clarifying and correcting phrases in the Book of Mormon. "All of these thoughts finally jelled together to the point where I could ask, 'What happens when an engraver makes a mistake?' It seemed logical that a clarifying phrase could correct an unclear sentence. Hence the phrase 'or rather' or something similar would be utilized." Mary Lee Treat, "No Erasers," in *Recent Book of Mormon Developments*, ed. Raymond C. Treat (Independence, MO: Zarahemla Research Foundation, 1984), 54.

6 Speech of Hon. Abraham Lincoln (At Columbus, OH, September, 1859), accessed 14 May 2014, http://www.bartleby.com/251/8.html.

7 Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses,* 14:161, accessed 9 Sept 2016, http://jod.mrm.org/14/156.

8 Brant A. Gardner, "Literacy and Orality in the Book of Mormon," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* (Volume 9, 2014), 73. Accessed 9 Sept 2016, http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/literacy-and-orality-in-the-book-of-mormon/.

9 For corrective conjunction phrases throughout this paper, I use three forms of emphasis for presentation: the phrase to be corrected is <u>underscored</u>; the corrective conjunction is **bolded**; and the modification or fix is *italicized*.

10 All Book of Mormon references cite *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* by Skousen (2009). Skousen used "sense lines" to break up the text into phrases and clauses (the original manuscript contained no sentence breaks or punctuation). Skousen explained that, since the Book of Mormon translation was dictated orally by Joseph Smith to scribes, "the first verbalization of the text would have sounded something like the result of reading the sense-lines out loud. … Sense-lines can assist readers in differentiating phrases and clauses, identifying constituent grammatical units, and keeping track of subjects, main verbs, and modifiers." Skousen, *Earliest Text,* xlii–xliii.

11 "To dispense, as to *administer* justice or the sacrament," Administer, American Dictionary of the English Language, Webster's

Dictionary 1828 — Online Edition, accessed 4 September 2016, http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/administer.

12   "Leonardo da Vinci: Italian artist, engineer, and scientist," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed 24 April 2016, http://www.britannica.com/biography/Leonardo-da-Vinci/The-Last-Supper.

13   I refer to Moroni, son of Mormon, author of the last book in the Book of Mormon, as Moroni. I refer to an earlier Moroni, Nephite military leader recorded in the book of Alma, as Moroni[1]. I refer to Alma (the Younger), high priest and chief judge of the Nephite people, as Alma. His father, founder of the first Nephite Church of Christ, will be referred to as Alma[1]. I refer to Nephi, son of Lehi, as Nephi.

14   Roger Keller uses a similar approach in which he measures thematic word occurrences per thousand words of author text. Roger R. Keller, "Prophets and Theologies: The Beginnings of an Approach," in *Book of Mormon Authors: Their Words and Messages* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1996), 1–19. This type of normalizing count data for statistical comparison is used in various settings, such as normalizing census data counts for different towns, cities, or neighborhoods of varying size (Normalizing Census Data, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, accessed 14 July 2016, http://web.mit.edu/11.520/www/labs/lab5/normalize.html).

15   Ezekiel (4:16, quoting Isaiah 3:1), Habakkuk (2:14, quoting Isaiah 11:9), Nahum (1:15, quoting Isaiah 52:7), and Proverbs (1:16, quoting Isaiah 59:7). See John A. Tvedtnes, "Was Joseph Smith Guilty of Plagiarism?" *The FARMS Review* 22/1 (2010), accessed 4 July 2016, http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1466&index=11.

16   The Qumran caves included 21 copies of the book of Isaiah, 26 copies of Deuteronomy, and 36 copies of Psalms. See Emanuel Tov, *Hebrew Bible, Greek Bible, and Qumran: Collected Essays* (Tuebingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 42.

17   Zenock is referenced and quoted in 1 Nephi 19:10, Alma 33:15–17; 34:7; Helaman 8:20; 3 Nephi 10:15–16; Neum in 1 Nephi 19:10; Zenos in 1 Nephi 19:10–17, Jacob 5:1, 6:1, Alma 33:3–15, 34:7, Helaman 8:19, 15:11, 3 Nephi 10:15–16, and Ezias in Helaman 8:20. See Tim Barker, "The Lost Books of the Book of Mormon,"

17 October 2010, LDS Studies, accessed 4 July 2016, http://lds-studies.blogspot.com/2010/10/lost-books-of-book-of-mormon.html.

18 John L. Sorenson, "The Brass Plates and Biblical Scholarship," *Dialogue* Volume 10, Number 4 (Autumn, 1977), 34.

19 Here are examples of extemporaneous change from the New Testament. Galatians 4:9: "But now, after that ye <u>have known God</u>, **or rather** *are known of God*, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" First Corinthians 4:3: "But with me it is a very small thing that <u>I should be judged of you</u>, **or** *of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.*" And Acts 1:19: "And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, <u>Aceldama</u>, **that is to say**, *The field of blood.*" For examples from the Old Testament and the Apocrypha see Exodus 20:4, "Thou shalt not make unto thee <u>any graven image</u>, **or** *any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above.*" Ruth 1:16: "And Ruth said, Entreat me not <u>to leave thee</u>, **or** *to return from following after thee.*" Or 2 Maccabees 6:23: "But he began to consider discreetly, and <u>as became his age, and the excellency of his ancient years, and the honour of his gray head, whereon was come, and his most honest education from a child</u>, **or rather** *the holy law made and given by God; therefore he answered accordingly, and willed them straightways to send him to the grave.*" *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments: Translated Out of the Original Tongues and with the Former Translations Diligently Compared and Revised* (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little, and Wilkins, Richardson and Lord, Lincoln and Edmands, Crocker and Brewster, Munroe and Francis, and R. P. and C. Williams, 1828), 124.

20 I include this to provide an example of a Type 1 Correcting improvisation, from Jesus, although technically the embedded texts of Jesus in Third Nephi are Level 2 *author* texts, included in the larger narrative by editor-engraver Mormon.

21 Benjamin D. Sommer, *Revelation and Authority: Sinai in Jewish Scripture and Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 39.

22 See Ron Graham, Background to Isaiah, simplybible.com, accessed 1 August 2016, http://www.simplybible.com/f591.htm.

23 Ezekiel (4:16, quoting Isaiah 3:1), Habakkuk (2:14, quoting Isaiah 11:9), Nahum (1:15, quoting Isaiah 52:7), and Proverbs (1:16, quoting Isaiah 59:7). See John A. Tvedtnes, "Was Joseph Smith Guilty of Plagiarism?" *The FARMS Review* 22/1 (2010), accessed 4 July 2016, http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1466&index=11.

24 Jeffrey Kranz, Which Old Testament Book Did Jesus Quote Most?, Biblia blog, accessed 1 August 2016, http://blog.biblia.com/2014/04/which-old-testament-book-did-jesus-quote-most/.

25 "Old Testament Prophets: Isaiah," *Ensign* (September 2014), accessed 1 August 2016, https://www.lds.org/ensign/2014/09/old-testament-prophets-isaiah?lang=eng.

26 I count in this passage one CCP, signaled by "or," which is followed by the amplification "any likeness of things which is in heaven above, or which is in the earth beneath, or which is in the water under the earth." The remaining repetitions of "or" relate to another use of conjunctions to concatenate ideas together in a series or chain, as in: "written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation." Skousen, *Earliest Text*, 3 [title page].

27 Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Readers Guide* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), see chapter 5, footnote 6.

28 Paola Ceccarelli, *Ancient Greek Letter Writing: A Cultural History (600 BC–150 BC)* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press), v.

29 Ceccarelli, *Ancient Greek Letter Writing,* 276.

30 CCPs normalized, two-way chi square, Author by Type, *Fisher's exact test* using Monte Carlo estimation. The relation between these variables was significant, X^2 (10, n=18) = 19.374, p=0.010. We can reject the null hypothesis of independence. Monte Carlo estimation of p values based on 95 percent confidence interval and 1,000,000 sampled tables. CCPs normalized per 15,000 words for statistical algorithm assumptions.

31 To facilitate presentation clarity I show chart plots in Figures 3a through 3c that include Type 1 Correcting and Type 2 Amplifying improvisations but do not include Type 3 Explanatory improvisations because of their low frequency counts. I do include all three types of improvisation in the statistical analyses reported throughout this paper.

32 The CCP count data is measured in whole number form, but after normalizing for text size is converted to real number form with decimal representations. In this form I use Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test the null hypothesis. Examination of the response variable showed a right skew, so the response variable was transformed using a log transformation. The data then appeared to be more normally distributed. The ANOVA test is significant, rejecting the null hypothesis that there is no difference in mean CCPs (normalized), for main effects Editorial Content ($F(5,50)=3.759$, $p=0.006$), and Type of Improvisation ($F(2,50)=17.160$, $p=0.000$), and is not significant for Author ($F(5,50)=1.577$, $p=0.184$). The ANOVA also is significant for the two-way interactions Author by Editorial Content ($F(25,50)=1.952$, $p=0.022$), and Type of Improvisation by Editorial Content ($F(10,50)=2.343$, $p=0.023$), and is not significant for Author by Type of Improvisation ($F(10,50)=1.302$, $p=0.255$), R Squared=0.745. CCPs normalized per 15,000 words for statistical algorithm assumptions.

33 Michael Thomas, "History: Top 10 Teenage Military Leaders," accessed 31 August 2016, http://listverse.com/2013/06/29/top-10-teenage-military-leaders/.

34 H. Donl Peterson, "Moroni, the Last of the Nephite Prophets," in *Fourth Nephi, From Zion to Destruction,* ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1995), 235–49. John Welch offers a similar explanation from his research on the book of Ether. John W. Welch, *Preliminary Comments on the Sources behind the Book of Ether* (Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, 1996).

35 Examination of the response variable showed a left skew, so the response variable was transformed using a log transformation. The data then appeared to be more normally distributed. The ANOVA test is significant, rejecting the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the mean CCPs (normalized) for main effects Editorial Voice ($F(4,24)=6.472$, $p=0.001$) and Type of Improvisation ($F(2,24)=10.908$, $p=0.000$), and marginally significant for Editor-Engraver ($F(2,24)=2.603$, $p=0.095$). The ANOVA is also significant for the two-way interactions Editor-Engraver by Type of Improvisation ($F(4,24)=3.587$, $p=0.020$) and Editor-Engraver by Editorial Voice ($F(8,24)=2.363$, $p=0.049$), R

Squared=0.782. CCPs normalized per 15,000 words for statistical algorithm assumptions.

36 Examination of the response variable showed a left and right skew, so the response variable was transformed using a log transformation. The data then appeared to be more normally distributed. The ANOVA test is significant, rejecting the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the mean CCPs (normalized) for main effect Type of Improvisation ($F(2,20)=9.479$, $p=0.001$), is marginally significant for Editor-Engraver ($F(2,20)=3.081$, $p=0.068$), and is not significant for Editorial Content ($F(5,20)=1.916$, $p=0.137$). The ANOVA is also significant for the two-way interaction Editor-Engraver by Type of Improvisation ($F(4,20)=3.382$, $p=0.029$) but not for Editor-Engraver by Editorial Content ($F(10,20)=1.732$, $p=0.142$) or Type of Improvisation by Editorial Content ($F(10,20)=1.581$, $p=0.184$), R Squared=0.803. CCPs normalized per 15,000 words for statistical algorithm assumptions.

37 Brant A. Gardner, "Nephi as Scribe," *Mormon Studies Review* 23/1 (2011), 52–53, emphasis added.

38 Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 59, emphasis added.

39 Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon,* 91, emphasis added.

40 Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon,* 99, emphasis added.

41 Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon,* 102, emphasis added.

42 Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, "Mormon, the Man and the Message," in *Fourth Nephi, From Zion to Destruction,* ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1995), 117–31.

43 Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon,* 225, emphasis added.

44 Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon,* 254, emphasis added.

The Council of Fifty and Its Minutes: A Review

Stephen O. Smoot

Review of Matthew J. Grow et al., eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Administrative Records, Council of Fifty, Minutes, March 1844–January 1846* (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press, 2016). 525 pp. + introduction, appendixes, reference material, index, etc. $59.95.

Abstract: *The publication of the Council of Fifty minutes is a momentous occasion in modern studies of Mormon history. The minutes are invaluable in helping historians understand the last days of Joseph Smith and his project to establish the Kingdom of God on the earth. They offer an important glimpse into the religious and political mindset of early Latter-day Saint leaders and shed much light on events once obscured by lack of access to the minutes. The Joseph Smith Papers Project has outdone itself in its presentation of the minutes in the latest volume of the series. The minutes are essential reading for anyone interested in early Mormon history.*

The Council of Fifty has maintained something of a mythic status in Mormon historical consciousness. Created by the Prophet Joseph Smith just months before his death in June 1844, the council served to fulfill a primarily twofold (but interlocking) mission: to secure the rights and safety of the Latter-day Saints and to prepare the world for the return of Jesus Christ by establishing a theocratic government that would anticipate His kingly reign.

> By March of [1844], significant opposition was growing toward the Church in and around Nauvoo, in part because of the practice of plural marriage and the Saints' growing political power. Members of the Council of Fifty were drawn both to the possibility of relocating significant numbers of

> Saints outside of the United States, where they could create their own government, and to the possibility of creating a better form of government within the United States.
>
> Though council members generally used the term *theocracy* to describe what they viewed as an ideal form of government for the kingdom of God, their model also incorporated democratic elements. They believed that a "theodemocratic" government would protect the rights of all citizens, allow for dissent and free discussion, involve Latter-day Saints and others, and increase righteousness in preparation for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.[1]

Historians have long been aware of the council's minutes kept by William Clayton but have been restricted in being able to view them (let alone publish and disseminate their contents). Without direct access to the council's minutes themselves, those wishing to piece together the organization and aims of the council have been compelled to rely on reminiscences and journal entries from council members or other sources. While this has not proven to be an entirely vain endeavor, without the minutes themselves, discussions of the Council of Fifty have heretofore largely felt much like attending a Thanksgiving dinner with no turkey.

This is not to dismiss the treatments of past historians who have done tremendous work in shedding light on the Council of Fifty,[2] but rather to acknowledge what was once a burdensome handicap in our ability to understand the council's history. Thankfully that handicap has been lifted with the full publication of the Council of Fifty minutes by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Announced in 2013 with the

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1   R. Eric Smith and Matthew J. Grow, "Council of Fifty in Nauvoo, Illinois," online at https://history.lds.org/article/council-of-fifty-minutes-joseph-smith-papers?lang=eng.

2   See e.g. Klaus J. Hansen, *Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967); D. Michael Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844 to 1945," *BYU Studies* 20, no. 2 (1980): 163–97; Andrew F. Ehat, "'It Seems Like Heaven Began on Earth': Joseph Smith and the Constitution of the Kingdom of God," *BYU Studies* 20, no. 3 (1980): 253–80; Kenneth W. Godfrey, "Council of Fifty," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:326–327; Jedediah S. Rogers, ed., *The Council of Fifty: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2014).

full backing of the First Presidency of the Church,[3] the publication of the minutes is undoubtedly a watershed event in Mormon historical studies.

The publication of the Council of Fifty minutes was preceded by significant media fanfare. Besides a number of conferences held in 2016 that raised awareness of the soon-to-be published minutes, including the Mormon History Association and FairMormon conferences,[4] the Church released several press reports, articles, and additional social media content to herald the momentous occasion.[5] Nearly simultaneously with the publication of the minutes themselves, the Fall issue of *BYU Studies Quarterly* published an excerpt from the minutes and accompanying commentary by Ronald K. Esplin, one of the editors of the minutes.[6] All of this goes to show that the Church has taken the publication of the minutes very seriously and has done an admirable job in raising public awareness of this occasion.

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3   R. Scott Lloyd, "Newest volume published for the Joseph Smith Papers Project," *Church News*, September 7, 2013, online at http://www.ldschurchnewsarchive.com/articles/63917/Newest-volume-published-for-the-Joseph-Smith-Papers-Project.html; "Council of Fifty minutes to be published in latest Joseph Smith Papers release," *Deseret News*, September 15, 2016, online at http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865662506/Council-of-Fifty-minutes-to-be-published-in-latest-Joseph-Smith-Papers-release.html?pg=all.

4   Matthew J. Grow, "'We, the People of the Kingdom of God': Insights into the Minutes of the Council of Fifty, 1844-1846," FairMormon Conference, August 4, 2016, online at http://www.fairmormon.org/perspectives/fair-conferences/2016-fairmormon-conference/people-kingdom-god; R. Scott Lloyd, "Joseph Smith apparently was not Josephine Lyon's father, Mormon History Association speaker says," *Deseret News*, June 13, 2016, online at http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865656112/Joseph-Smith-apparently-was-not-Josephine-Lyons-father-Mormon-History-Association-speaker-says.html?pg=all.

5   R. Eric Smith and Matthew J. Grow, "Council of Fifty in Nauvoo, Illinois," online at https://history.lds.org/article/council-of-fifty-minutes-joseph-smith-papers?lang=eng; "Administrative Records, Council of Fifty, Minutes, March 1844–January 1846," online at http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/articles/administrative-records-council-of-fifty-minutes; "Council of Fifty Minutes Featured in New Joseph Smith Papers Volume," online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNkQQd9WLs4; "Council of Fifty Minutes Featured in New Joseph Smith Papers Volume," Mormon Newsroom, September 9, 2016, online at http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/council-of-fifty-minutes-featured-new-joseph-smith-papers-volume; R. Scott Lloyd, "Council of Fifty Minutes to Be Published in Joseph Smith Papers Release," *Church News*, September 20, 2016, online at https://www.lds.org/church/news/council-of-fifty-minutes-to-be-published-in-joseph-smith-papers-release?lang=eng.

6   Ronald K. Esplin, "Understanding the Council of Fifty and Its Minutes," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (2016): 7–33.

The volume itself, edited by a team at the Joseph Smith Papers Project (Matthew J. Grow, Ronald K. Esplin, Mark Ashurst-McGee, Gerrit J. Dirkmaat, and Jeffrey D. Mahas), is a masterful achievement in presentation. The minutes are divided into dated entries and organized into chronological groups (Part 1: March–June 1844; Part 2: February–May 1845; Part 3: September–October 1845; Part 4: January 1846). As one would expect from a Joseph Smith Papers volume, practically every page of the minutes is peppered with copious transcription and historical notes. Additionally, each entry and chronological grouping is prefaced with an overview of the contents and other helpful historical background to the events discussed therein. This is wonderfully useful in helping the reader navigate through the minutes, which touch on several crucial moments in early Mormon history at an almost whirlwind pace and introduce the reader to the *dramatis personae* that played roles in the council's operations. All of this is in addition to introductory material, a detailed chronology, geographical and biographical glossaries, a bibliography, and an index.

Some of the accompanying commentary to the minutes is not only helpful in orienting the reader but is also remarkably candid. For instance, the council's meeting on March 11, 1844, included council member Lucien Woodworth's vow that "every member of [the council was] to be bound to eternal secrecy as to what passed here" (p. 42). This was in accord with Joseph Smith's own injunction that the council was to keep its discussions entirely secret (p. 42 n. 74). To put a fine point on the seriousness of council members' vow of secrecy, Woodworth swore that "the man who broke the rule 'should lose his cursed head' [sic]" (p. 42). The accompanying commentary by the editors notes, "Nearly all the men present belonged to the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge, and most had taken part in the Mormon endowment ceremony. Both the Freemasonry and endowment ceremonies included oaths of secrecy with associated penalties" (pp. 42–43 n. 75). As the editors go on to explain, these penalties found antecedents in English law, which stipulated decapitation for high treason. While there's no evidence of any Council of Fifty member being executed in such a grisly manner (or at all, for that matter), presumably Joseph Smith approved such language, as there's no indication he repudiated or corrected Woodworth.

Similarly, on March 22, 1845, Brigham Young thundered,

> If [Lilburn W.] Boggs and the ring leaders of the mob who exterminated the saints would come to Nauvoo and cast themselves at our feet, and say that they had sinned a sin unto death, and they are willing to submit to the law, let their heads be severed from their bodies, and let their hearts blood run and drench the earth, and then the Almighty would say they should finally be saved in some inferior kingdom. (p. 351)

The editors accompany these lines with the following:

> Drawing from passages in the Old Testament, Young later made many statements similar to his comments here, teaching that some sins were so serious that the perpetrator's blood would have to be shed for the individual to receive forgiveness. This concept came to be known as "blood atonement." Preachers in various American Christian traditions had a long history of utilizing intimidating rhetoric in their sermons. Young's listeners probably understood his rhetoric as hyperbole; three years later, Young stated, "I av [have] feelings — I frequently sa[y] 'cut his infernal throat' I don't mean any such thing." (p. 351 n. 521)

As a final example there is the matter of Joseph Smith's being proclaimed a prophet, priest, and king by the council. As recorded in the minutes, on April 11, 1844, Erastus Snow "concluded by offering a motion that this honorable assembly receive from this time henceforth and forever, Joseph Smith, as our Prophet, Priest & King, and uphold him in that capacity in which God has anointed him" (pp. 95–96). Joseph Smith being upheld as a "king" among his followers has scandalized anti-Mormons and others. Thus Jerald and Sandra Tanner: "Toward the end of his life Joseph Smith seems to have become obsessed with a desire for power and fame. He set up a secret 'Council of Fifty' and had himself ordained to be a king."[7]

Thanks to the publication of the minutes, we need no longer look to later (and sometime hostile) reminiscences, as the Tanners did, to understand this affair.

> This action dramatically demonstrates the council members' view of theodemocracy, under which the ecclesiastical leader

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7   Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *The Changing World of Mormonism* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 455.

of the church (prophet and priest) would be chosen by them as a political leader (king). Council participants understood that this action would have no immediate political consequences, but it symbolized their desire to be prepared for the millennial kingdom of God. Joseph Smith and others in the council emphasized that leaders in the kingdom of God would govern by fostering free discussion, by respecting the people, and by serving as a conduit for revelation and God's law. (p. xxxviii)

The editors likewise remind us that "proclaiming Joseph Smith as a prophet, priest, and king also reflected the temple ceremonies that he had introduced among his closest followers beginning in May 1842" (p. xxxviii).

I share this not to shock the reader with anything lurid but rather to demonstrate just how serious the editors are at not flinching away from anything that might make their readers uncomfortable. Any accusation that the editors must have toned down or covered up shocking content in the minutes is simply not credible. They have gone to great lengths to be candid and transparent about the historical reality that is revealed in the minutes while avoiding any of the sensationalism to which lesser and more polemical authors might easily succumb.

Looking at the contents of the volume more broadly, readers will quickly discover the major topics that were of the most importance for the Council of Fifty: Joseph Smith's presidential campaign, the definition of the Kingdom of God and the nature of Christ's anticipated theocratic government, dealings with Native Americans and the United States government, exploring places of refuge for the Latter-day Saints, and the eventual evacuation of Nauvoo and westward migration of the Church. As any student of Mormon history will know, these topics were by no means unknown or mysterious before the Council of Fifty minutes were published. Indeed, the minutes themselves will not reveal anything especially surprising or heretofore completely unknown to seasoned historians of early Mormonism. Rather, they fill in some important gaps in our understanding of these topics and flesh out and further inform basically what we already knew.

That being said, there are a number of things in the minutes that may appear rather extraordinary to the average Latter-day Saint. One prominent example is the council's discussion on the nature of the Kingdom of God. Especially in the early meetings of the council under Joseph Smith, there was considerable theological discussion on the scriptural prophecies of God's kingdom being established in the last

days. The *locus classicus* for these discussions was Daniel 2 in the Old Testament.

> Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet *that were* of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. (Daniel 2:34–35; cf. 44–45)

Several entries in the minutes make it clear that, at least at the end of his life and prophetic career, Joseph Smith (and his associates in the Council of Fifty) understood the "stone cut without hands" that filled the earth to be the ascent of the theocratic Kingdom of God he was then establishing to anticipate Christ's return. The minutes for the meeting held on March 19, 1844, wherein many Church leaders affirmed the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy as being in the establishment of Joseph's proposed theocratic government, make this especially clear (pp. 50–54; cf. pp. 121–129, 278, 285). "There is a distinction between the Church of God and the kingdom of God," Joseph Smith taught the council on April 18, 1844. "The laws of the kingdom are not designed to effect [sic] our salvation hereafter. It is an entire, distinct and separate government. The church is a spiritual matter and a spiritual kingdom; but the kingdom which Daniel saw was not a spiritual kingdom. … The literal kingdom of God, and the church of God are two distinct things" (p. 128).

This would appear remarkable to many (if not most) Latter-day Saints today given that modern theological discourse in the Church has shifted away from theocratic aspirations and instead has focused on equating the Church with the Kingdom of God. At the Church's October 2016 General Conference, for instance, Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles affirmed that Daniel's prophecy pertained to the growth of the Church of Jesus Christ: "The number of members of the Church in the latter days would be relatively few, as Nephi prophesied, but they would be upon all the face of the earth, and the power and ordinances of the priesthood would be available to all who desired them, filling the earth as Daniel foretold."[8] Those interested in the development

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8   Neil L. Andersen, "A Witness of God," *Ensign*, November 2016, online at https://www.lds.org/ensign/2016/11/saturday-morning-session/a-witness-of-god?lang=eng.

of Mormon theological thought would therefore find great benefit in the Council of Fifty minutes, as they pertain not only to historical issues but theological matters as well.

This review has quickly mentioned only a few things in the minutes that are worthy of our attention. There are many other things raised in the minutes that time and space do not permit me to delve into now. Other reviewers have highlighted these additional features of the minutes and have offered some insightful comments on their significance in shaping our understanding of early Mormon history.[9] What I can say for now is that the Council of Fifty minutes are absolutely essential for anyone interested in Mormon history and especially for those interested in the history of Nauvoo and the end of Joseph Smith's life. The editors of the latest volume of the Joseph Smith Papers should be commended for their outstanding work. Their labor to present the Council of Fifty minutes to the world deserves all the praise it may and should receive. If I may indulge in a familiar Mormon motif, it is truly a blessing finally to see the Council of Fity minutes come forth out of darkness and into light.

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9   See for instance Brian Whitney, "Council of Fifty minutes: anti-American sentiment, theocratic aspirations, and institutional transparency," Worlds Without End, online at http://www.withoutend.org/council-fifty-minutes-anti-american-sentiment-theocratic-aspirations-institutional-transparency/; Benjamin E. Park, "The Mormon Council of Fifty: What Joseph Smith's Secret Records Reveal," Religion and Politics, online at http://religionandpolitics.org/2016/09/09/the-mormon-council-of-fifty-what-joseph-smiths-secret-records-reveal/.

Improvisation and Extemporaneous Change in the Book of Mormon

Part 2: Structural Evidences of Earlier Ancient versus Later Modern Constructions

Gerald E. Smith

Abstract: *Joseph Smith made various refining changes to the Book of Mormon text, most of them minor grammatical in nature. However, one type of textual change has been virtually unstudied in Book of Mormon scholarship:* extemporaneous change *that was present the moment Smith dictated the original text to his scribes. This type of change appears to have been improvisational, a fix or repair made in the middle of a thought or expression. I study these improvisations in depth — when they appeared historically, their purpose, and their authorship. The evidence of Article One points to ancient authors and editor-engravers whose extemporaneous changes appeared during the early layers of the Book of Mormon's construction. But how were these improvisations affected by later contributors? In this paper, Part 2, we study the improvisational work of Moroni as compiler, finishing-editor, and conservator, and of Joseph Smith as modern translator. The findings tell us much about the Book of Mormon as scripture, and about the construction and compilation of scripture by ancient editors and authors.*

This article is the second in a series on extemporaneous change and improvisation in the Book of Mormon, studying change that was present the moment Smith dictated the original text to his scribes. This change appears to have been improvisational, a fix or repair made in the middle of a thought or expression. We explore extemporaneous change as it appears in successive layers or strata of the Book of Mormon's

compilation and construction (see Figure 1). Article One studied the first three levels of Figure 1. Beginning at the bottom of the figure, some of the oldest and earliest cases of improvisation in the Book of Mormon appear in the *quoted ancient texts* of the seminal prophets of ancient religion (Layer 1 of Figure 1), such as Moses and Isaiah.

Figure 1
Where Extemporaneous Change Appears
by Level of Book of Mormon Contributor

Modern Day

Level 5

| Translator, Scribes, Typesetters | Early 19th |
| Joseph Smith, his Assistants | Century AD |

Level 4

| Compiler, Finishing-Editor, Conservator | 4th – 5th |
| Moroni | Century AD |

Level 3

| Editor-Engravers | 6th Century BC – |
| Mormon, Nephi, Moroni | 5th Century AD |

Level 2

| Authors, Embedded Authors | 6th Century BC – |
| Alma, Benjamin, Limhi, Abinadi, etc. | 5th Century AD |

Level 1

Quoted Ancient Texts	8th Century BC,
Moses, Isaiah, Jared, etc.	2nd – 3rd
	Millennium BC

Early History

We then studied the improvisations found in the writings of *authors* and *embedded authors* who were prophets, judges, kings, military leaders, and teachers — such as Alma, Benjamin, Abinadi, Limhi, and other authors (Level 2 of Figure 1).[1] And we studied the improvisations of the *editor-engravers* themselves, including Mormon, Nephi, and Moroni

(Level 3 of Figure 1), the managing editors of the entire Book of Mormon corpus serving complementary and contrasting roles in its construction and development.

Now in this article we study improvisation at the final two levels of the Book of Mormon's construction and delivery — Moroni's final compilation and conservancy of the Book of Mormon codex, and Joseph Smith's translation resulting in the original manuscript of 1829 and subsequent revisions found in the 1830, 1837, and 1840 editions. These improvisations are important because they enable us to explore the composition, design, and construction of the Book of Mormon at a deep and elemental level using the corrective tools that all authors use. Were these improvisations the work of many authors, a few authors, or one single author, and was their origin ancient or modern?

I use the terms *improvisation* and *extemporaneous change* interchangeably and measure improvisation using corrective conjunction phrases (CCPs) that are marked by a phrase or sentence that the author or speaker corrects or modifies "on the fly," as it were, using a conjunction or hybrid conjunction (e.g., "or," "or rather," "or in fine") followed by a correction, amplification, or explanation. It is helpful to recall the three types of improvisation:

- **Type 1:** Correcting an apparent error or mistake.
- **Type 2:** Amplifying, clarifying, or augmenting the meaning of the text.
- **Type 3:** Explanatory, providing a helpful literal translation of an unknown word or concept.

Article One confirmed statistically that the improvisational patterns we see in the Book of Mormon are broadly driven by its editor-engravers and its embedded authors (Levels 2 and 3, Figure 1); extemporaneous change is the product of not one, but multiple actors. However, these early actors were not the last to handle the engravings. Therefore, we turn to the next higher level of construction and delivery, Level 4, to Moroni as the compiler, finishing-editor and conservator of the final Book of Mormon scriptural canon to be delivered and translated in the modern day.

Moroni's Use of Extemporaneous Change

In Article One we found that Moroni's work as an author never contains improvisation. However, we do find improvisation in Moroni's work

as an editor-engraver, appearing in the embedded texts of two earlier authors: Mormon's two epistles to his son Moroni containing two CCPs, and the Jaredite book of Ether containing four CCPs. Moroni defined the canon of Book of Mormon scripture by ultimately finalizing the composition, organization, and presentation of its independent source texts as a complete codex, including, for example, the abridgment of Mormon (including the lost book of Lehi), the liturgical teachings of Christ at Bountiful (Moroni 1–6), the Jaredite plates of Ether, the records of Nephi, and the letters of Mormon. We therefore must ask whether or not Moroni may have been responsible for some, many, or most of the improvisations we see while reading the text because of his role as final finishing editor of the Book of Mormon corpus.

According to Grant Hardy, Moroni shows an inclination toward editorial license with the texts of Ether, which leads us to wonder whether he might show a similar propensity to fix, modify, or even author some of the 170 extemporaneous changes we see in the modern text. This description by Hardy illustrates Moroni's editorial propensity: "The challenge for Moroni, then, was to Christianize Ether's book, making it appear more theologically consistent with his father's history than it actually was. He does this by working an additional eighteen references to Christ's name into his comments on the [much older] Jaredite record."[2] Regarding Moroni's paraphrasing, Hardy notes, "It is telling, however, that Ether's message is always conveyed indirectly, and we may wonder how close the paraphrase was, or if there was any embellishment in Moroni's summary."[3] John Welch said, "The fact that Moroni felt free to insert his own material into his abridgment of the book of Ether indicates that, in general, he was not attempting to produce a technically rigorous version of Jaredite history."[4]

Did Moroni apply some of these embellishment tendencies to fix or modify the six improvisations found in the embedded author texts of his editorial narratives — in Mosiah's translation of the book of Ether, and in Mormon's letters to his son Moroni? As shown in the three examples below, these improvisations in fact do not appear to exhibit embellishment; they appear to be minimal changes, missing the creative impulse that Hardy notes of Moroni:[5]

> And they did also carry with them <u>deseret</u>,
> **which by interpretation is** *a honey bee.*
> Earliest Text, 675; Ether 2:3 (Type 3 Explanatory)

and that the Lord God would <u>send</u> **or** *bring forth*
another people to possess the land,
by his power,
Earliest Text, 703; Ether 11:21 (Type 2 Amplifying)

And it came to pass that he came to the waters of <u>Ripliancum</u>,
which by interpretation is *large* **or** *to exceed all;*
Earliest Text, 714; Ether 15:8 (Type 3 Explanatory, Type 2
Amplifying)

These improvisations from the Jaredite record of Ether are consistent with what we might expect from a translator's hand (Mosiah's) of a newly discovered record of an unknown people — half are Type 3 Explanatory, an otherwise infrequently used form of extemporaneous change. What about the two improvisations from Mormon's epistles to Moroni, embedded in Moroni's engravings? These also are simple and fit the same improvisational pattern of Mormon's other extemporaneous changes (57 percent Type 1 Correcting, 41 percent Type 2 Amplifying, 3 percent Type 3 Explanatory), studied in Article One:

Wherefore <u>he that is not condemned</u>
—**or** *he that is under no condemnation* — cannot repent,
Earliest Text, 728; Moroni 8:22 (Type 1 Correcting)

Behold, the pride of <u>this nation</u> — **or** *the people of the Nephites* —
hath proved their destruction except they should repent.
Earliest Text, 729; Moroni 8:26 (Type 2 Amplifying)

This handful of examples, admittedly a small sample, give no evidence of embellishment or intervention, suggesting that Moroni as an editor-engraver likely seems to retain intact the improvisations encountered from the authors whose texts lay before him, from Mormon and the book of Ether. We can see why Moroni might have retained, rather than modified, the improvisations he found when considering the challenge of working with an ancient translated record like the Jaredite texts of Ether. Hardy said:

Moroni's Christianizing of the Jaredite experience is subtle and consistent, but his sixteen-year writer's block becomes more understandable when we imagine him reading Mosiah's translation of the record of a non-Israelite, non-Christian society that had missed out on the covenant at Sinai, and then comparing that with the very last words written by his father … What could the two records possibly have to do with each other? Mormon had not been

able to see his way forward to a solution, yet he was counting on Moroni to fulfill his editorial promise to incorporate the Jaredites into his comprehensive history of the Nephites.[6]

The Evident Identity and Early Origin of Extemporaneous Changes

But what about Moroni's involvement with the full sample of 170 extemporaneous changes? To answer this question, let us extend our exploration by drilling down into the evident authorship of the remaining extemporaneous changes and see if there is evidence that they appeared later in the Book of Mormon's chain of authoring, editing and construction (Figure 1), or earlier in history. Could a late-stage finishing editor like Moroni have been responsible for the remaining 164 improvisations, those appearing in the larger corpus of Mormon's and Nephi's editorial engravings, and the personal engravings of Jacob's priestly lineage appearing on the Small Plates of Nephi?

It is impossible to pinpoint when a given extemporaneous change might have been engraved, but it should be possible to ascertain approximately where it occurred in the chain of authoring, editing, and construction (see Figure 1). There is additional evidence in the textual context, and sometimes in the extemporaneous change itself, that enables us to infer whether the improvisation likely originated earlier in the chain of authoring, editing, and construction with ancient authors, or later with late-stage finishing contributors like Moroni or Joseph Smith. Therefore, let us look at the extemporaneous changes themselves, how they are constructed, and what they tell us about the evident identity of their possible originators.

First, the Book of Mormon appears unmistakably as a collection of personal writings; similar to many biblical books it is usually straightforward to identify authorship as given in the text. Narrators write either in the first person voice or narrate in the third person, but the narrator's identity is rarely lost in the narrative. This applies as well to extemporaneous changes. For example, in this paraphrased improvisation Nephi clearly identifies Lehi as the original voice, but the speaker at this point in the chain of authoring, editing, and construction appears to be Nephi (I treat paraphrases such as this as originating with the speaker paraphrasing):[7]

And it came to pass that while my father tarried in the wilderness, he spake unto us, saying:

Behold, <u>I have dreamed a dream</u>,
or in other words, *I have seen a vision.*
Earliest Text, 21, 1 Nephi 8:2

Another extemporaneous change found in the book of Jarom appears in the author's first person voice:

Wherefore we withstood the Lamanites
and swept them away out of our lands
and began to fortify <u>our cities</u> **or** *whatsoever place of our inheritance.*
Earliest Text, 184; Jarom 1:7

In Article One we studied improvisational patterns statistically by examining *editorial voice.* Consider some additional findings regarding the five types of editorial voice evident in the improvisations found in the edited works of the three editor-engravers. In Table 1 we can see that 19 percent of the improvisations found in Nephi's edited works are in the editor's third person voice, which can then be identified by the context of the textual passage; the remaining four types, totaling 81 percent, are identified directly in the first person or paraphrased voice of the original author. For Mormon's edited works, 47 percent of improvisations are in the editor's third person voice, and the remaining types, totaling 53 percent, are in the first person or paraphrased voice of the original author. And for Moroni's edited works, 50 percent of improvisations are in the editor's third person voice, and the remaining two types, comprising 50 percent, are identified in the first person or paraphrased voice of the original author.

In other words, the vast majority of the extemporaneous changes in the Book of Mormon are traceable to the voice of the author identified in the text. Of course we are witnessing the words of these authors after many centuries of recording, redacting, editing, and translating, raising questions of accuracy and identity. Yet we encounter the same issues with biblical texts and accept their authenticity with faith and advances in scholarship. For example, Jeremiah speaks in the first person voice, but his words were preserved through the efforts of his disciple Baruch ben Neriah working as scribe and editor (Jeremiah 36). Ezekiel's words appear in his first person narratives, yet the book's authorship and authenticity were questioned in the early twentieth century, only to be critically affirmed in recent decades as having been transmitted orally by the prophet and then preserved as a written and interpreted text by his school of followers.[8]

Table 1
Editorial Voice by Editor-Engraver
Percent of CCPs

	Editorial Narrative Editor's Voice	First Person Own Voice	Quote of Another's First Person Voice	Quote of a Quote of Another's First Person Voice	Editor Paraphrase Another's Words
Nephi	19%	26%	22%	11%	22%
Mormon	47%	2%	50%	1%	0%
Moroni	50%	0%	33%	0%	17%

←——— **First Person and Paraphrase Types** ———→

Corrective Signals as Identifiers of Extemporaneous Change

Another anecdotal marker of authorship is the type of *corrective signal* used to indicate that a change is being made in the narrative. Different authors use different corrective conjunction configurations as signals — some are complicated and clearly appear to be unique to that author, and others are simply routine and used by all authors. I discovered twelve different corrective conjunction forms that are used as corrective signals in the Book of Mormon. I have arrayed these twelve into an ascending hierarchy based on individuality, meaning used by few authors, versus commonality, used by many or most authors (see Figure 2).

The following example from Mormon's writings shows a complicated and awkward corrective signal (bolded), appearing in the first person voice:

And behold, <u>the city had been rebuilt,</u>
and Moroni had stationed an army by the borders of the city.
And they had cast up dirt round about
to shield them from the arrows and the stones of the Lamanites.
For behold, they fought with stones and with arrows.
Behold, I said that the city of Ammonihah had been rebuilt.
I say unto you, yea, that it was in part rebuilt.
And because the Lamanites had destroyed it once,

Figure 2
Corrective Signals, Frequency of Use by Author

	Nephi	Mormon	Mosiah	Alma	Limhi	Giddianhi	Moroni	Ammon	Others	Totals
Individual, used by one										
Behold I said that the city of Ammonihah had been rebuilt. I say unto you, yea, that it was in part rebuilt		1								1
I say, trample under their feet but I would speak in other words	1									1
or I would say in other words				1						1
or rather in other words				1						1
or I would say				1						1
which is being interpreted				1						1
or, in fine	1			1						2
which being interpreted is	1	1								2
which by interpretation is			2	1						3
or in other words	2	3		2	1	1				9
or, rather		7		2			1	1		11
or	12	56	2	17	5		2	1	42	137
Common, used by many										
Total	17	68	4	27	6	1	3	2	42	170

because of the iniquity of the people,
they supposed that it would again become an easy prey for them.
Earliest Text, 451; Alma 49:3–4

Mormon dramatically interrupts the narrative to signal a change; and he is the only author to use this inimitable corrective signal. Note the diversity — and individuality — of corrective change signals in Figure 2. Nephi is the only author to use the corrective signal "I say, trample under their feet but I would speak in other words." Alma is the only author to use the corrective signal "or I would say in other words." He is also the only author to use the signal "or rather in other words" and "or I would say." Four authors use the corrective signal "which being interpreted is" or "which by interpretation is;" five use "or in other words;" but then only Alma uses "or I would say;" and only Alma and Nephi use "or, in fine." The corrective signal "or" is very common to all authors except Giddianhi.

Figure 2 also shows that some authors utilize a colorful diversity of corrective signals, appearing adept at improvisation and making extemporaneous changes. If the 170 extemporaneous changes were the work of one late-stage editor-engraver like Moroni, or one translator like Smith, then we might expect this one person to repeatedly fall back on the same, or similar, recurring corrective signal. But that is not the case. Alma uses nine different corrective signals, ranging from "or I would say in other words" to simply "or," with broad variation in between. As an editor-engraver Nephi uses five different corrective signals, and Mormon uses five.

Especially striking is how palpably personal some of these mistakes and repairs are, and how uniquely each portrays the apparent traits and personality of the author, almost like a portrait. This example from the words of Alma illustrates the colorful candidness of a personality evident in the extemporaneous change — note how the word "murdered" triggered attention in mid discourse, prompting an immediate CCP:

Yea, I saw that I had rebelled against my God
and that I had not kept his holy commandments.
Yea, and I had <u>murdered many of his children</u>
—**or rather** *led them away unto destruction*—
yea, and in fine, so great had been my iniquities
Earliest Text, 407; Alma 36:13-14, emphasis mine

An example from the words of Nephi shows a personal determination to make an argument forcefully and precisely, appearing fastidious about clarity and meaning:

> yea, even <u>the very God of Israel do men trample under their feet.</u>
> **I say trample under their feet,**
> **but I would speak in other words:**
> *they do set him at naught and hearken not to the voice of his*
> *counsels.*
> Earliest Text, 60-61; 1 Nephi 19:7

These anecdotal examples show authorial personality, adding context and individuality to the evident authorship of the voices emerging from the text. The notion that a single late-stage editor like Moroni could have added these complexities seems daunting for the entire Book of Mormon corpus.

The Shape of Extemporaneous Change

There is a shape to how CCPs are constructed, which reveals innate differences in how the authors and engravers approach extemporaneous change. Usually CCPs have a three-part structure consisting of (1) a *target phrase* to change (before the corrective signal); (2) the *corrective signal,* usually a conjunction "or," or hybrid conjunction such as "or rather;" and (3) the *modification or fix* (after the corrective signal). In the following example, found in the words of Benjamin, the target phrase before the change consists of six words (underscored), the corrective signal of one word (bolded), and the modification or fix of twenty words (italicized):

> and serve the devil, <u>which is the master of sin</u>,
> **or** *which is the evil spirit, which hath been spoken of by our fathers,*
> *he being an enemy to all righteousness.*
> Earliest Text, 205, Mosiah 4:14

By contrast, another example shows a much simpler fix, found in the writings of Mormon; the target phrase consists of two words (underscored), the corrective signal two words (bolded), and the modification or fix two words (italicized):

> And thus he cleared <u>the ground</u>,
> **or rather** *the bank* which was on the west of the river Sidon,
> Earliest Text, 285, Alma 2:34

Table 2 shows the average words for each of these three structural dimensions, by author. There is considerable variation in how extemporaneous changes get constructed among the writings of the various Book of Mormon authors.

For example, on average the extemporaneous changes found in Limhi's texts (fourth from the top) are quite wordy — 13.50 words per modification or fix (after the corrective signal), and 10.33 words per target phrase (before the corrective signal). By contrast, the extemporaneous changes found in Mosiah's texts (in the book of Ether, second from the bottom) are quite simple — 2.75 words per modification or fix (after), and 1 word per target phrase (before).

An improvisation found in Giddianhi's epistle to Lachoneous (top of Table 2) shows a very elaborate extemporaneous change — 39-word modification or fix (after, italicized), and 30-word target phrase (before, underscored):

> Therefore I write unto you,
> desiring that ye would <u>yield up unto this my people</u>
> <u>your cities, your lands, and your possessions,</u>
> <u>rather than that they should visit you with the sword</u>
> <u>and that destruction should come upon you.</u>
> **Or in other words,** *yield yourselves up unto us and unite with us*
> *and become acquainted with our secret works and become our*
> *brethren,*
> *that ye may be like unto us, not our slaves,*
> *but our brethren and partners of all our substance.*
> Earliest Text, 569; 3 Nephi 3:6-7

The Complexity of Extemporaneous Change

A more broadly encompassing measure of extemporaneous change is the complexity of the change; some improvisations are complicated and intricate, and others very simple. I assess the *complexity* of an extemporaneous change based on six indicators that generally pivot around the corrective signal:

1. <u>Multiple Thought Phrases:</u> Improvisations with just one thought phrase are simple, and those with multiple thought phrases are more complex.

Table 2
The Shape of Extemporaneous Change, by Author
Average Words -- Before, Corrective Signal, and After*

Authors	Phrase Words (Before)	Corrective Signal Words	Modification or Fix Words (After)	CCPs
Giddianhi	30.00	4.00	35.00	1
Moses	3.00	1.00	20.00	2
Anti-Nephi-Lehi	4.00	1.00	15.00	1
Limhi	10.33	1.50	13.50	6
Lehi	8.00	1.00	14.50	2
Angel	13.00	1.00	13.00	1
Isaiah	12.50	1.00	12.00	4
Abinadi	9.80	1.00	11.00	5
Benjamin	7.00	1.00	10.57	7
Samuel	4.00	1.00	8.50	2
Alma	6.31	1.96	8.19	26
Alma1	8.00	1.00	8.00	1
Moroni1	7.67	1.33	7.33	3
Helaman	5.00	1.00	7.25	4
Zeniff	4.00	1.00	7.00	1
Mormon	4.56	1.49	6.68	69
Jesus	3.33	1.00	6.67	3
Ammon	6.00	1.50	6.50	2
Jarom	6.50	1.00	6.00	2
Nephi	5.06	2.06	7.61	18
Gideon	2.00	1.00	5.00	1
Jacob	3.50	1.00	4.00	2
Amulek	4.00	1.00	4.00	2
Mosiah	1.00	2.00	2.75	4
Pahoran	2.00	1.00	2.00	1
AVERAGES/TOTAL	6.82	1.31	9.68	170

*Ranked by Modification or Fix Words (After)

2. <u>Compound Sentence Structure:</u> Some complex improvisations use compound sentences with multiple independent clauses — multiple subjects and verbs — joined by conjunctions.

3. <u>Restate the Target Phrase:</u> More complex improvisations often restate the entire target phrase as part of the modification or fix, while simple improvisations do not.

4. <u>Complex Corrective Signals:</u> Complex improvisations often contain an obvious or elaborate corrective signal that appears as an emphatic indicator that a deliberate change is coming.

5. <u>Asymmetry:</u> Asymmetric improvisations contain an unequal number of words in the modification or fix after the corrective signal compared to the target phrase before. Asymmetric improvisations are usually more complex.

6. <u>Sentence, Phrase, or Word:</u> The simplest improvisations change only a word, moderately complex improvisations change a phrase, and complex improvisations change entire sentences.

I subjectively sort the 170 extemporaneous changes into four categories of complexity: Category 1, *High Complexity; Category 2, Moderate Complexity; Category 3, Moderate Simplicity; Category 4, High Simplicity.* This is based roughly on the rule that High Complexity (Category 1) improvisations will qualify on approximately three or more of the above six indicators, Moderate Complexity (Category 2) on two or occasionally three of the six, Moderate Simplicity (Category 3) on one or occasionally two of the six, and High Simplicity (Category 4) on none of the six and they change only a word rather than a phrase or sentence.

This excerpt from the texts of author Limhi talking about slain prophet Abinadi shows a High Complexity (Category 1) extemporaneous change:

And because <u>he saith unto them that Christ was the God the Father of all things</u>
<u>and saith that he should take upon him the image of man</u>
<u>and it should be the image after which man was created in the beginning</u>
—**or in other words,** *he said that man was created after the image of God*
and that God should come down among the children of men
and take upon him flesh and blood
and go forth upon the face of the earth—
and now because he said this, they did put him to death.
Earliest Text, 214; Mosiah 7:27-28

Here, the improvisation is asymmetric, with multiple thought phrases or ideas, a compound sentence, and a moderately complex corrective signal, and the change encompasses multiple clauses — qualifying on five of six indicators of high complexity above; on only one indicator did it not qualify: The passage did not restate the complete target phrase.

The following improvisation from the texts of Mormon as author shows a High Simplicity (Category 4) extemporaneous change, fixing only one word of the target phrase:

> And Teancum by the orders of Moroni caused
> that they should commence in laboring,
> in digging a ditch round about the <u>land</u>, **or** the *city* Bountiful.
> Earliest Text, 469; Alma 53:3

Table 3 summarizes the proportional distribution of extemporaneous change for the texts of each author contributing to the Book of Mormon text, by complexity. The top six authors in the table, those authors we have focused on with five or more CCPs, are highlighted. Note that Alma's texts exhibit a higher share of Category 1 High Complexity improvisations than Mormon's, 19 percent versus 7 percent, and about the same as Nephi's, 18 percent. Improvisations in the texts of Abinadi exhibit either High Complexity (Category 1), 60 percent, or Moderate Complexity (Category 2), 40 percent. Similarly, most of the improvisations found in Benjamin's texts are either High Complexity, 29 percent, or Moderate Complexity, 57 percent. Looking further down Table 3, the texts from embedded authors Isaiah, Lehi, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, the angel of Nephi's vision (1 Nephi 14), Giddianhi, Alma[1] and Lamoni all exhibit mostly Moderate or High Complexity improvisations.

Summarizing the findings of the last several sections, the anecdotal evidence of narrative voice, the inimitable corrective signal used, the personality evident in some improvisations, and the differences in shape and in complexity, all suggest that authorship of these extemporaneous changes occurred at points earlier in the historical chain of authoring, editing, and construction of Figure 1, rather than one person such as Moroni making detailed extemporaneous changes at a later stage in the fourth or fifth century AD. If Moroni as editor retained intact the six improvisations he encountered from earlier authors in the Jaredite record and his father's epistles, the additional evidence we have seen suggests that the remaining 164 improvisations may have been retained by Moroni as well when preparing and compiling the final codex for delivery at a future day.

Table 3
The Complexity of Extemporaneous Change, by Author
High Complexity (Category 1) to High Simplicity (Category 4)*

	Increasing Complexity ◀············· CCPs Percent of Author				Increasing Complexity ◀············· CCPs by Author				
	Cat 1	Cat 2	Cat 3	Cat 4	Cat 1	Cat 2	Cat 3	Cat 4	Total CCPs
Mormon	7%	28%	51%	14%	5	19	35	10	69
Alma2	19%	23%	50%	8%	5	6	13	2	26
Nephi	17%	11%	61%	11%	3	2	11	2	18
Benjamin	29%	57%	14%	0%	2	4	1	0	7
Limhi	50%	0%	50%	0%	3	0	3	0	6
Abinadi	60%	40%	0%	0%	3	2	0	0	5
Isaiah	50%	50%	0%	0%	2	2	0	0	4
Helaman	0%	0%	75%	25%	0	0	3	1	4
Mosiah (Ether)	0%	0%	50%	50%	0	0	2	2	4
Lehi	50%	50%	0%	0%	1	1	0	0	2
Moroni1	0%	33%	67%	0%	0	1	2	0	3
Jesus	0%	33%	67%	0%	0	1	2	0	3
Jacob	0%	50%	0%	50%	0	1	0	1	2
Moses	0%	100%	0%	0%	0	2	0	0	2
Samuel	0%	50%	50%	0%	0	1	1	0	2
Ammon	0%	0%	100%	0%	0	0	2	0	2
Amulek	0%	0%	100%	0%	0	0	2	0	2
Jarom	0%	0%	100%	0%	0	0	2	0	2
Angel	100%	0%	0%	0%	1	0	0	0	1
Giddianhi	100%	0%	0%	0%	1	0	0	0	1
Alma1	0%	100%	0%	0%	0	1	0	0	1
Lamoni	0%	100%	0%	0%	0	1	0	0	1
Zeniff	0%	0%	100%	0%	0	0	1	0	1
Gideon	0%	0%	100%	0%	0	0	1	0	1
Pahoran	0%	0%	0%	100%	0	0	0	1	1
TOTALS	15%	26%	48%	11%	26	44	81	19	170

*Category 1=High Complexity; Category 2=Moderate Complexity
Category 3=Moderate Simplicity; Category 4=High Simplicity

Joseph Smith's Use of Extemporaneous Change as a Translator

We next turn to the highest level of Figure 1, Joseph Smith's use of extemporaneous change during the Book of Mormon translation. He and his assistants (scribes, and typesetter John Gilbert)[9] are the final contributors in the chain of authoring, editing and construction, resulting in the original manuscript and printer's manuscript of 1829, and then subsequent manuscripts — the 1830 Palmyra edition, the 1837 Kirtland edition, and the 1840 Nauvoo edition, represented in Level 5 of Figure 1. We should expect that extemporaneous change might be an indispensable tool for translating from an ancient text to a modern language. Yet Smith was never definitive about the translation process. At a conference in 1831 he "said that it was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the book of Mormon, [and] also said that it was not expedient for him to relate these things."[10] In an 1842 publication, he described the translation process in ambiguous terms: "Immediately after my arrival there I commenced copying the characters of all the plates. I copied a considerable number of them and by means of the Urim and Thummin I translated some of them which I did between the time I arrived at the house of my wife's father in the month of December, and the February following."[11] In other contexts, he described the process simply as by the "gift and power of God."[12]

Nonetheless, as we noted at the beginning of Article One, after Smith had completed the Book of Mormon translation in 1829 he continued to refine the text by making many changes, most of them grammatical, in subsequent editions. Amongst all of this translating and editorial activity we must therefore look for evidence of Joseph Smith's use of extemporaneous change during the translation period of 1829, and the ensuing eleven-year period involving subsquent editions.

Smith's Documented Extemporaneous Change, Its Significance

First, there is only one documented instance of Smith's actual use of a CCP; this occurred while he made changes to the Book of Mormon for the third edition (the Nauvoo Edition published in 1840). The 1829 Earliest Text edition quotes Old Testament prophet Isaiah (48:1) in First Nephi (Earliest Text, 63; 1 Nephi 20:1) *without using a CCP. However, the 1840 edition adds* a CCP that alters the meaning of the passage considerably, seen in the following:

> Hearken and hear this, O house of Jacob,
> who are called by the name of Israel,

and are come forth <u>out of the waters of Judah</u>,
(**or** *out of the waters of baptism*,)
who swear by the name of the Lord,
and make mention of the God of Israel
1840 Nauvoo Edition, 53, emphasis mine

The addition of the amplified CCP (signaled by "**or**") is surprising in appearance, enclosed within parentheses by Smith himself — almost a tentative change, but surprising too because the added phrase changed the meaning of the text to say that, even in Old Testament texts such as Isaiah, ritual baptism had been part of the worship of ancient Israel.[13] Significantly, on August 15, 1840, while speaking at the funeral of Seymour Brunson in Nauvoo, Smith introduced for the first time the doctrine of proxy baptisms for one's deceased ancestors, so the idea of ancient baptism was very much on his mind.[14]

This insertion to the 1840 edition suggests that Smith was familiar with CCPs as a useful device for making extemporaneous textual changes. But did he know and use them during the translation period of 1828–29, or even later as he reviewed the text in preparation for the 1837 or 1840 editions? At the least, we should expect to see changes in subsequent editions to fix, improve, or remove CCPs involving apparent errors or mistakes.

Remarkably, I find virtually no changes in CCPs across editions in my sample. From the reconstructed 1829 Earliest Text, to the 1830 edition, to the 1837 edition, to the 1840 edition, the CCPs I studied appeared to remain surprisingly constant over time in 166 of the 170 improvisations. There are only three minor *one-word* changes, and one *one-character* change, in the 170 CCPs that appear across manuscripts and editions from 1829 to 1840, shown here in underscored text:

- 1 Nephi 10:5, "concerning this Messiah, of <u>which</u> he had spoken, **or** this Redeemer of the world" in the 1830 edition, changed to "of <u>whom</u> he had spoken" in the 1837 edition and retained in the 1840 edition.

- 2 Nephi 5:12, "and also the ball **or** <u>the</u> compass which was prepared for my father by the hand of the Lord" in the Earliest Text 1829 manuscript, changed to "and also the ball, **or** compass, which was prepared for my father, by the hand of the Lord" in the 1830 edition.

- Jarom 1:14, "according to the writings of the kings, **or** those which they <u>caused</u> to be written" in the 1830 edition, changed to "those which they <u>cause</u> to be written" in the 1840 edition.

- Alma 9:1, "preach again unto this people, **or** the people which <u>was</u> in the city of Ammonihah" in the 1830 edition, changed to "which <u>were</u> in the city of Ammonihah" in the 1837 edition and retained in the 1840 edition.

Clearly Smith noticed these improvisational passages because he made small changes in them, one in the 1830 edition, two in the 1837 edition, and one in the 1840 edition. Yet the changes he made were purely grammatical and minor *within the improvisation itself* — but the integrity of the original CCPs remained otherwise completely intact. All of the remaining 166 CCPs of my sample were untouched. This was the case even for Type 1 Correcting CCPs, those apparently designed to fix an apparent error or mistake. In other words, over time and across editions, it is clear that the prophet retained the original awkward translations of CCPs, with their seemingly obvious errors and mistakes. Let's consider just three examples that could have been easily imroved.

Example 1: Kept intact across all manuscript editions was this improvisation found in the words of Jesus spoken at the temple in Bountiful:

Therefore if ye <u>shall come unto me</u> **or** *shall desire to come unto me*
Earliest Text, 599; 3 Nephi 12:23

This improvisation could have been easily changed to read simply as: "Therefore, if ye *shall desire to come* unto me."

Example 2: Kept intact was another improvisation found in a letter from Moroni[1], captain of the Nephite armies:

Behold, Ammoron, I have wrote unto you somewhat
concerning this war <u>which ye have waged against my people</u>,
or rather *which thy brother hath waged against them,*
Earliest Text, 472; Alma 54:5

This improvisation could have been easily changed to read simply as: "Ammoron, I have written unto you somewhat concerning this war *which thy brother hath waged against my people.*"

Example 3: Kept intact was this improvisation found in Mormon's account of the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi:

> And thus we see that <u>they buried the weapons of peace</u> —
> **or** *they buried the weapons of war for peace.*
> Earliest Text, 368; Alma 24:19

This improvisation could have been easily changed to read simply as: "And thus we see that *they buried the weapons of war for peace.*"

So what are we to make of these three examples? Consider a simple test: If you were a translator, like Smith, and had encountered these several awkward improvisations during later proofreading, would you not have made these simple changes (italicized above) to enhance the readability of the text for your audience? The answer is you probably would have (they seem intuitively obvious to a modern reader), *if the improvisations had been yours to begin with* — if they had originated with you. But if not, then you might have left them alone. This hypothesis seems most plausible to me: That Smith himself deemed that the improvisations found in these passages belonged to someone before him — to the editor who engraved them, or to the original author whose texts were embedded by the editor, or to the final finishing-editor and conservator (Moroni), or perhaps to unknown scribes or redactors working with the texts at some point during the chain of authoring, editing and construction (Figure 1).

Old Testament theologian Rudolph Smend noted how the presentation of the Ten Commandments of the Pentateuch has been left intact over time, despite two deficient "points of overlap" that should have been reordered or revised: "that between the prohibitions of adultery [seventh commandment] and of coveting one's neighbour's wife [tenth], and that between the prohibitions of theft [eighth] and the coveting of one's neighbour's possessions [tenth]." He continued: "A decent commission [of editors or redactors] would hardly have allowed the existing doublets to stand. It would have either established a consistent order and defined the forbidden acts more precisely or confined itself to a single prohibition in each case, thereby gaining space for other topics; for it was space, not topics, that was lacking."[15] Why was the Decalogue retained intact over time? One answer, he says: because of its "incomparable author [God]," "the direct expression of a single, sovereign will, without the intervention of anyone else."[16] The Decalogue's words or grammar may change with translation, but its structure, and its presentation, remains unaffected through the ages out of deference to its ancient authorship.

In a similar way, did Joseph Smith not only defer to these inimitable improvisations because they belonged to others before him, but also *revere* or respect them as being personally expressive of the prophets

and ancient figures whose names appeared with them in the scriptural narrative — as if he were witnessing the distinctive persona of prophet-historian Mormon in his writings, or the personality of King Benjamin in speech, or of Moroni[1] at the command of his armies? Smith broadly reported spiritual experiences with various personalities in scripture (Christ, Moroni, John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Elijah, Elias, Moses), and appeared to relate to them in personal terms. In August 1830 he dictated prophecy of his presence at a future sacramental meal, saying, "Wherefore marvel not for the hour cometh that I [Christ] will drink of the fruit of the Vine with you [Joseph] on the Earth," and then expanded this text in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants by adding:

> and with Moroni, whom I have sent unto you to reveal the book of Mormon … and also with Elias, to whom I have committed the keys of bringing to pass the restoration of all things … and also John the son of Zacharias … which John I have sent unto you, my servants, Joseph Smith, Jr. and Oliver Cowdery, to ordain you unto this first priesthood which you have received … and also Elijah, unto whom I have committed the keys of the power of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers … and also, with Joseph, and Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham your fathers; by whom the promises remain; and also with Michael, or Adam, the father of all, the prince of all, the ancient of days: And also with Peter, and James, and John, whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles and especial witnesses of my name.

"Moroni was more than a visionary encounter in the Prophet's memory; he was a mentor who had a lasting influence," I wrote in *Schooling the Prophet: How the Book of Mormon Influenced Joseph Smith and the Early Restoration.* "In his 1838 history Smith devotes nearly half the narrative of his life before 1827 to detailed descriptions of Moroni's visitations that began September 21, 1823."[17] On June 26, 1844, the evening before the prophet's martyrdom, "brothers Joseph and Hyrum Smith spent their final hours while imprisoned in Carthage Jail reading and listening to Book of Mormon historical narratives of persons experiencing divine rescue." This included, according to eyewitness Dan Jones, "copious extracts from the Book of Mormon, the imprisonments and deliverance of the servants of God for the Gospels sake."[18] Smith and his associates appear to have felt a personal intimacy with the ancient personalities of scripture.

It is possible of course that Smith may have tacitly judged these improvisations as inconsequential and not worthy of correction, although some of the more noticeably awkward improvisations make this seem implausible. Consider for example these ungraceful improvisations from the Earliest Text edition that one would expect to have been changed over time and across editions, but were left untouched:

> even so if ye shall keep <u>the commandments of my son,</u>
> **or** *the commandments of God which shall be delivered unto you by him,*
> ye shall prosper in the land,
> Earliest Text, 198; Mosiah 2:31

> they were again brought before the king
> and their bands were loosed;
> and they stood before the king
> and <u>was permitted</u> — **or rather** *commanded* —
> that they should answer the questions which he should ask them.
> Earliest Text, 211; Mosiah 7:8

> For behold, upon them the record of our wars are engraven
> <u>according to the writings of the kings,</u>
> **or** *that which they caused to be written.*
> Earliest Text, 185; Jarom 1:14

The last example especially underscores the paradox of Smith's treatment of extemporaneous change: the awkward improvisation itself was retained completely intact, except for one letter — "caused" (1829 Earliest Text) changed to "cause" (1830 edition).

In summary, explaining why Smith persistently looked past or tacitly refused to tamper with these CCPs is a paradox of Smith's relationship with the Book of Mormon and should draw us into deeper exploration of how he interacted with it. He acts unusually detached from these awkward improvisations compared to the many refinements he made elsewhere in the text, signaling implicitly a deference to, or perhaps even reverence for, those voices who speak from the text, the ancient prophets, historians, priests, military leaders, editors, and writers — including the mistakes and imperfections endemic to their writings and sayings.

These extemporaneous changes capture not only the imperfections, but the idiosyncrasies of each writer, each orator, and each editor, containing as it were in the words before him and us, their indigenous imprints — traits, personalities, peculiarities, and dispositions at a

granular level. Moreover, the paradox of untouched but defective CCPs versus the countless grammatical changes across successive editions is so striking, revealing a tacit dichotomy in Smith's actions — never articulated but clearly observable in his quiet choices to act, or to not act. Some content clearly was deemed changeable and transitory, such as grammar, syntax, and style. But other content was deemed unchangeable and untouchable, including the vast majority of these extemporaneous changes that were retained word-for-word as embedded in the original translation narratives.

Joseph Smith and the Adaptive Learning Hypothesis

In an early version of this research I hypothesized that Joseph Smith might have personally authored the improvisations of the Book of Mormon during the translation process to ensure he achieved an acceptable translation. I tested this hypothesis by examining the sequential moments in time in which the improvisations appear during the translation period of 1829. I called it the *adaptive learning hypothesis;* it is useful to share it here because of the insights it leads to. Hardy describes the Book of Mormon's modern translation as a product of one-time-through dictation: it "is the transcript of a single, extended oral performance."[19] If the final Book of Mormon manuscript were the product of one translator who applied traditional human-translation skills, then we should expect to see an adaptive learning effect as the translator learned how to translate better — with fewer mistakes, improvisational corrections, and fixes. That is, we should see more extemporaneous change earlier in the translating process, but then progressively less as the translator got better at translating over time.

I organized the entire Book of Mormon into 56 sequential text segments of equal size in the order in which Smith translated them, beginning in early April 1829 with the book of Mosiah, and concluding in late June 1829 with the small books of Jacob, Enos, Jarom, and Omni.[20] I then measured the number of CCPs for each sequential text segment. After first translating and then losing the book of Lehi in 1828, Smith began translating again about April 7, 1829, with Oliver Cowdery as scribe. Rather than return to the beginning of First Nephi, he instead continued translating at where the 116-page lost Lehi text had left off, starting "with the speech of Benjamin (Mosiah 1–6), [then] translated to the end of the book of Moroni in May, then translated the Title Page, and finally translated the small plates of Nephi (1 Nephi–Omni) and the

Words of Mormon before the end of June."[21] The results of my sequential text analysis are shown in Figure 3a.

Figure 3a shows that extemporaneous change is frequently greater during the initial 22 sequential text segments, aligning with the earlier periods of the translation, and then diminishes until a spike appears again at text segment 44, aligning with First Nephi. I have superimposed a computer-drawn trend line reflecting the slope of the pattern. The trending pattern appears to lend support to the adaptive learning hypothesis that Smith as translator indeed got better at translating over time.

Although another explanation, of course, is that what we may see here is not the improvisational patterns of one late-stage translator (Smith or, as Roger Terry suggested, Moroni),[22] but of earlier editor-engravers — Mormon, Nephi, and Moroni — who themselves got better at editing, engraving, and working with the ancient texts before them. In fact, when we look at sequential text segments separately for Mormon, and then for Nephi, we can see separate learning patterns with progressively declining CCPs for each, shown in Figure 3b, consistent with adaptive learning for these two ancient editor-engravers.[23]

A Discovery — Contrasting Editorial Designs

However, a third explanation is actually more plausible and leads to a surprising discovery by looking not just at the incidence of CCPs across sequential text segments, but also the *source* of where the improvisations came from. In Article One we noted that many of the embedded author texts found in Mormon's editorial narratives often exhibit higher levels of improvisation than Mormon's personally authored texts (see Table 2 of Article One). So where are these high improvisation embedded texts placed in Mormon's editorial narratives?

The answer: in Mormon's editorial work the texts of high-improvisation authors are embedded *earlier in his work,* resulting in the pattern shown in Figure 3b (left side). For example, Benjamin (11.61 CCPs per 7,000 words), Limhi (16.90), Abinadi (12.47), Gideon (17.28), and Alma[1] (6.12) all appear in the book of Mosiah, the earliest of Mormon's editorial engravings (not including the lost Book of Lehi). Next appears a mix of embedded texts from high and low improvisation authors in the subsequent book of Alma, such as Amulek (4.40 CCPs per 7,000 words), Ammon (5.13), Anti-Nephi-Lehi (12.92), Alma (9.00), Moroni[1] (6.83), and Pahoran (8.57).

Figure 3a
CCPs in Sequential Text Segments, Organized by Order Translated April-June 1829

Figure 3b
CCPs in Sequential Text Segments, by Order Translated April–June 1829 -- Mormon, Nephi as Editor-Engravers
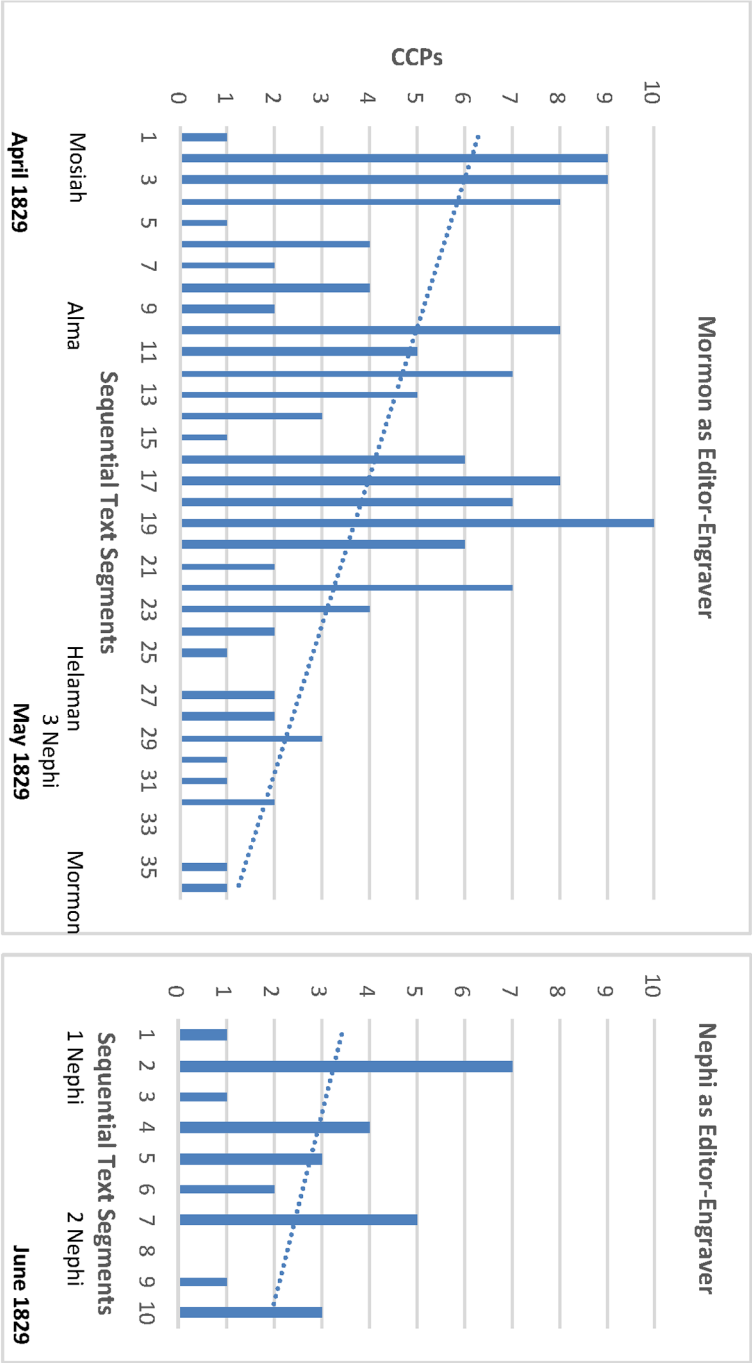
In the last three of Mormon's edited books (Helaman, Third Nephi, and Fourth Nephi) appearing before the personally authored book of Mormon, we find low improvisation authors, such as Helaman (5.00 CCPs per 7,000 words), Samuel (4.55), and Jesus (2.06) — and Giddianhi (14.08, an outlier with one CCP in a small text).

The effect of these embedded author improvisations can be seen in Figure 3c, where I remove the improvisations of embedded authors, leaving only the improvisations of Mormon as author (left side). The resulting computer-generated trend line of the incidence of CCPs is much flatter. Gone are the elevated early improvisations we saw in Figure 3b in the books of Mosiah and early Alma. The trend line appears to decline slightly, but this is driven by higher improvisation located in the middle of Mormon's work – in sequential text segments 10, 12, 19, and 20. Clearly, the editorial design evident in Mormon's work reveals the placement of high-improvisation authors *earlier in his work,* and low-improvisation authors later.

For Nephi, the editorial design is nearly the opposite in subtle ways, as shown in Figure 3c (right), compared to Figure 3b (right). Removing the embedded author improvisations from Nephi's chart panel has little impact on the trend line of the incidence of CCPs; that is, the improvisational trending for Nephi as author (Figure 3c) *is about the same* as for Nephi as editor-engraver (Figure 3b). Why does the trending look the same? Because the early elevated improvisations of Nephi's texts *belong to Nephi as author.* Nephi as editor-engraver embeds the texts of low improvisation authors: for example, Lehi (2.99 CCPs per 7,000 words), Isaiah (3.52), the angel from one of Nephi's visions (3.11), and his brother, chief priest Jacob (1.65) — and they get placed mostly *later in his work.* I summarize these contrasts in Figure 3d, which compares for both Nephi and Mormon their personal-author improvisations (solid bars) with their embedded-author improvisations (striped bars). Here we can see clearly the editorial designs of both authors, placing high improvisation texts early in their respective works, but exhibiting very different ways to go about it — Nephi relying on his own improvisational texts, and Mormon importing the improvisational texts of other embedded authors.

Figure 3c
CCPs in Sequential Text Segments, Removing Embedded Author Improvisations from Mormon's, Nephi's Works
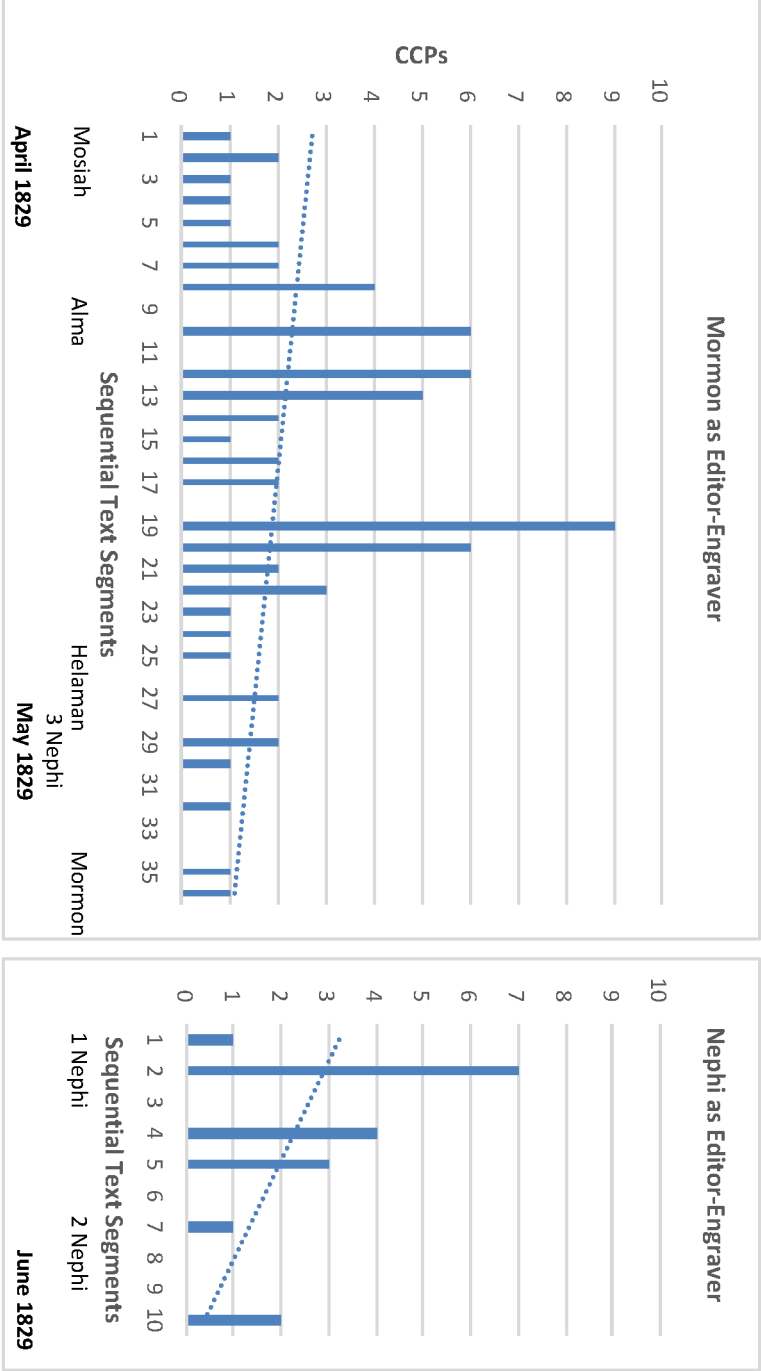
In summary, the adaptive learning hypothesis — that the Book of Mormon's translator got better at translating over time using increasingly less extemporaneous change — is not supported, and is actually reversed when we dig deeper. But it leads to an important finding: The most plausible explanation for the progressively declining trend in extemporaneous change across the translation period of 1829 points not to the translator Joseph Smith (Level 5, Figure 1), nor to the compiler and finishing-editor Moroni (Level 4), but to the improvisational texts of the embedded authors (Level 2) of the Book of Mormon and their placement within the respective works of the editor-engravers (Level 3).

Conclusions

In Article One we saw statistical evidence confirming that the distinctive improvisational patterns found within the Book of Mormon corpus are the product of not one, or a few, but various different ancient authors, embedded authors, and editor-engravers (Levels 2 and 3, Figure 1) — each with a distinctive improvisation pattern signature.

Now studying adaptive learning leads to another discovery of contrasting editorial designs by the editor-engravers (Level 3, Figure 1), with the placement of high improvisation writings early in their respective editorial narratives — as if to ensure that the narratives delivered to future readers were not only accurate with respect to authorial intent, but also compelling so as to motivate continued reading and immersion in the narrative. The often vivid and inimitable improvisations — whether corrective, amplifying, or explanatory — are a tacit signal to the reader that something important is being said here because the author interrupts the narrative to make sure it is right.

These findings correlate with existing research on Israelite scribal practice. As we saw, in Nephi's work the high improvisation texts that get placed early in his narrative *are his own* (including those found in his paraphrases of his father Lehi's texts), which seems consistent with what we might expect from one "trained for a different profession," as Gardner noted — a trained scribe in Israel.[24] Karel van der Toorn said, "The scholars of Israel … were scribes who had specialized in the classic texts [such as Moses and Isaiah], which in their case made them scholars of the Torah."[25]

Figure 3d
CCPs in Sequential Text Segments for Mormon, Nephi -- Comparing With/Without Embedded Authors
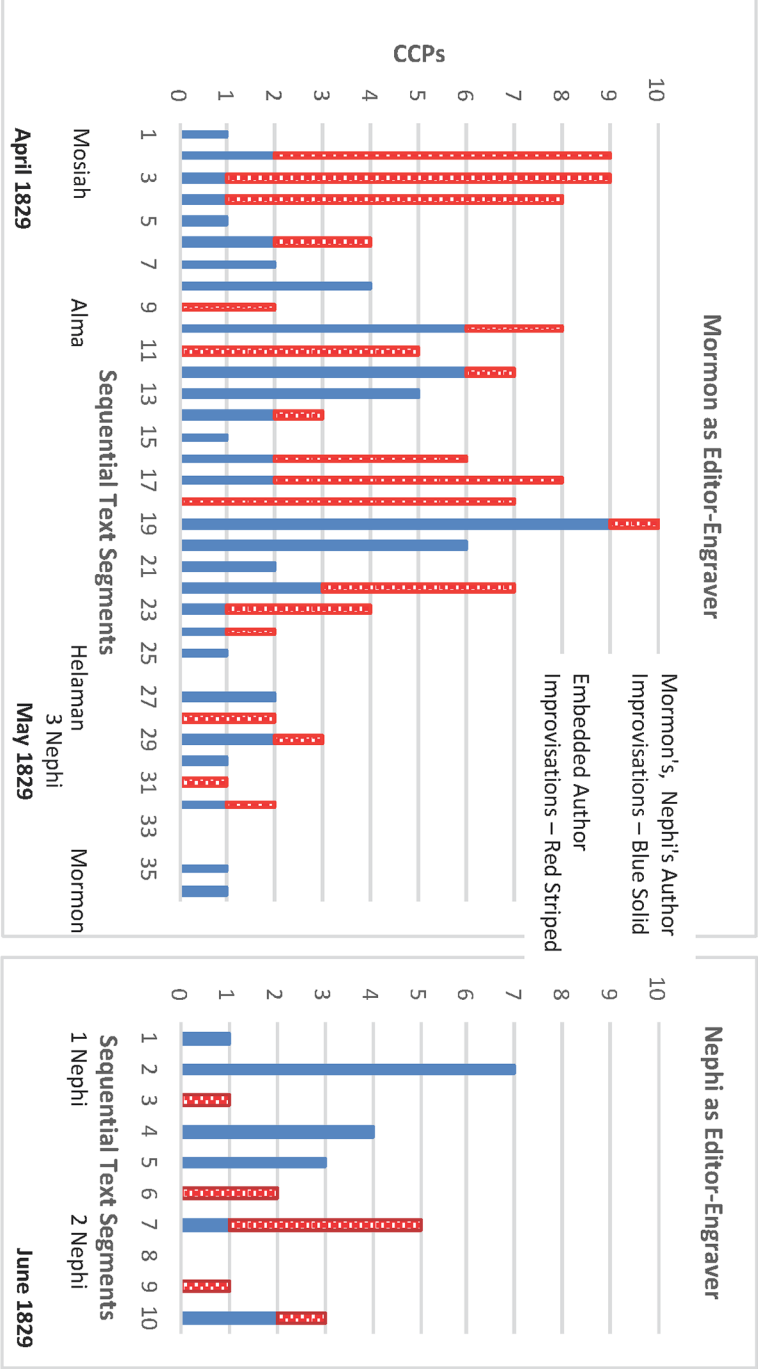
These trained Israelite scribes elaborated or improvised on the scriptural texts before them, a pattern Robert Eisenman noted in his analysis of the Dead Sea Scrolls called *pesher:* "citing a biblical passage or quotation out of context or even sometimes slightly altered … then proceed[ing] to give an idiosyncratic interpretation having to do with the history or ideology of the group."[26] Indeed, we see a vivid example of this in Nephi's paraphrase of one of his father Lehi's prophecies, marked by three rapid Type 2 Amplifying improvisations that together comprise one of the more complex extemporaneous change passages of our study:

> Yea, even my father
> spake much concerning the Gentiles
> and also concerning the house of Israel …
> And <u>after that the house of Israel should be scattered</u>,
> <u>they should be gathered together again</u>,
> **or in fine,** *that after the Gentiles had received the fullness of the gospel,*
> <u>the natural branches of the olive tree</u> ***or*** *the remnants of the house of Israel*
> *should* <u>be grafted in</u> ***or*** *come to the knowledge of the true Messiah, their Lord and their Redeemer.*
> And after this manner of language did my father prophesy
> Earliest Text, 26; 1 Nephi 10:12, 14-15

The passage shows Nephi not quoting, but more freely paraphrasing his father's prophecy, which then provides the flexibility to elaborate and expand, in *pesher* form, with repeated improvisations to make his own prophetic point for future readers.

As we come to a close, consider two broader conclusions to be drawn from our study of extemporaneous change and improvisation in the Book of Mormon, one regarding the nature of scripture, and the other regarding the nature of the Book of Mormon itself.

About Scripture

First, consider the significance of Smith choosing to retain CCPs intact across successive editions of the Book of Mormon — mistakes and all — for the world to see. He presented a work that was at once in the realm of the divine, with miraculous visions and revelations from God; yet the text itself clearly was imperfect, not only in grammar (which he tried to perfect over time), but even in the awkward improvisations of its writers (which he evidently did not) — a truly telling paradox. We see evidence

of the hand of God, but also the struggles of inexpert writers, editors, and translators trying to effect or implement this work of God.

A common assumption, said James Kugel, is that "there is no mistake in the Bible, and anything that might look like a mistake … must therefore be an illusion to be clarified by proper interpretation."[27] Like many devout Christians believing the Bible to be the infallible and inerrant word of God, many Mormon believers also assume that the Book of Mormon was given by God with inerrancy — divinely and perfectly, without human fault, especially because of its revelatory origins. However, the improvisations we have studied in depth here suggest that the Book of Mormon is a commissioned work of God brought about by ancient authors, orators, and editors with imperfect skills, qualifications, and predispositions.

What does this say about scripture, about what it is, and how it gets written? Roger Terry, who studied the inconsistent usage of archaic pronouns and verbs in the Book of Mormon, said:

> What can we learn from the idea that God didn't prepare a perfect translation himself and miraculously present it to Joseph? This fact seems to support the homely metaphor a friend of mine once coined: "God doesn't send cookies baked in heaven." … [We] must assume that [God] left the [construction and] translation largely in the hands of his still imperfect children, mortal or immortal. For a volume as important as the Book of Mormon to come forth with such labor pains and such imperfections suggests perhaps a more hands-off God than some of us prefer to imagine. Subtlety and restraint appear to be two of his most prized attributes.[28]

Our research here suggests similarly that the mistakes and improvisational fixes we see in scripture are evidence of ordinary actors, acting in the long-ago production of a sacred text, writing inspired words of seminal moments in time, and of visions, revelations, and impressions from God — but all moderated by the limited, or extraordinary, literary resourcefulness of the prophets, priests, teachers, and commissioned servants who wrote them.

About What the Book of Mormon Is

Upon its arrival in nineteenth-century North America, both believers and nonbelievers instantly framed the Book of Mormon as another "Bible." Richard Bushman wrote, "Martin Harris [early Book of Mormon scribe] referred to the [printer's] manuscript as the 'Mormon Bible' when

he was negotiating with the printer. Newspapers derisively called it the 'Gold Bible.' Eber D. Howe, the Painesville, Ohio, editor who took an interest in Mormonism, described the recovery of the *Book of Mormon* as a 'pretended discovery of a new Bible, in the bowels of the earth.'"[29] This early biblical framing of the Book of Mormon set a tall standard for acceptance and marked the beginning of an epoch struggle over what the book was and what it should become in the religious milieu of modern Christianity.

On the surface, the findings presented here seem to undermine the very premise of this new scripture's claim to divine authenticity. If the Book of Mormon was a new Bible, the very word of God, an oracle from the heavens, then the fixes and patches, the improvisations discovered here, would seemingly undermine its legitimacy. By contrast, the King James Bible is a much more polished product, a "Bible designed to be read aloud, a Bible which came from preachers,"[30] said Lord Melvyn Bragg. The Old Testament certainly contains its own improvisations from its early authors, as we saw with Abinadi's recitation of the Ten Commandments in which God clarifies in detail the meaning of "graven image" (discussed in depth in Article One). Indeed, the Bible itself is a jagged collection of sacred texts constructed over time. William Dever said, "These [Bible] stories were set down over a period of a thousand years, the whole finally woven into a composite, highly complex literary fabric sometime in the Hellenistic era (ca. 2nd century BC) … [containing] diverse and indeed contradictory literary forms."[31]

In a similar way, woven into the fabric of the Book of Mormon narrative is its own jagged claim to historical scripture, not just by the sacred stories it records, but by the means the early authors and editors use to construct them through layers of authoring, editing, and constructing over a thousand years of history — including, as we've seen in this paper, the use and placement of extemporaneous change and improvisation. Thus, in the introduction of First Nephi we see Nephi deliberately use an extemporaneous change to palpably underscore the personal authorship of his own historic writings:

> This is according to the account of Nephi,
> **or in other words,** *I Nephi wrote this record.*
> Earliest Text, 5; 1 Nephi 1: Introduction

Terryl Givens said, "Why such emphatic insistence on the literal origins of the record, with Nephi's own hand? Clearly, unlike the impersonal voice with which Genesis opens the biblical account of creation, focusing as it does on cosmic history, epic events, and God's

primal acts of creation, the Book of Mormon's first named author urgently presses upon his audience the very human, very local, and very historical nature of his narrative. It is as far removed from mythic beginnings and anonymous narratives as he can possibly make it."[32] Nephi's words of personal authorship are strong and compelling, but they are made even more so by the insertion at that early point in the text of a small, but significant improvisation: "**or in other words,** *I Nephi wrote this record."*

The extemporaneous changes of the Book of Mormon deepen this historical sensibility by showing the vivid improvisations of its engravers and authors. We see empirically and anecdotally their improvisational signatures as they engrave, write and speak, each signature different from the next — Nephi versus Mormon, Alma versus Abinadi, or Benjamin versus Limhi. Moreover, we see these improvisational impulses not merely in a simple linear story narrative, but in historic layers as if we were digging through literary strata — later translators who deferentially maintain the improvisations of earlier editor-engravers, who strategically embed the improvisational documents and discourses of original prophets, priests, kings, generals, and teachers, who themselves quote the improvisational ancient texts of earlier seminal prophets, like Moses and Isaiah.

The presence of these extemporaneous changes, preserved intact through time and edition, suggests that we are not merely reading history, but witnessing the very authors who constructed it in an earlier time. The improvisations we see in the CCPs are sometimes awkward and clumsy; clearly Smith as translator in the modern day, or Moroni as compiler, finishing-editor and conservator in the fifth century AD, or even Mormon as primary editor-engraver whose work would bear his name, should have cleared these up over time — but they plainly did not. Like the Decalogue, subject to minor changes in translation, word, or grammar but otherwise fixed in time, these improvisations help us understand the Book of Mormon in a different way as authentic sacred scripture. In so doing they help us understand what scripture is, and how it gets constructed to achieve the inspired editorial designs of those who compiled it long ago working under their own respective commissions from God.

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Endnotes

1 I refer to Alma, Nephite high priest and chief judge, as Alma. His father, founder of the first Nephite Church of God, will be referred to as Alma[1]. I refer to Nephi, son of Lehi, as Nephi. I refer to Moroni, son of Mormon, author of the last book in the Book of Mormon, as Moroni. I refer to an earlier Moroni, Nephite military leader recorded in the book of Alma, as Moroni[1].

2 Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Readers Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 236.

3 Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon,* 238.

4 John W. Welch, *Preliminary Comments on the Sources behind the Book of Ether* (Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, 1996), 7.

5 For corrective conjunction phrases throughout this paper I use three forms of emphasis for presentation: the phrase to be corrected is underscored; the corrective conjunction is **bolded**; and the modification or fix is *italicized.*

6 Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon,* 240.

7 I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for this insight: "This [improvisation] comes in the context of Lehi. However, it also doesn't make sense in Lehi's voice. Lehi didn't need to clarify his meaning for himself, and it would have been quite unusual for his children as well, since they readily called him a visionary man and dreams were a common mode of vision. This is a change that does not make sense in the original context and requires an audience that doesn't know the relationship of dreams and visions. I would think that this is Nephi's interjection because he knows [that] his audience [is different]."

8 See Marvin A. Sweeney, "The Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel)," in *The Hebrew Bible Today: An Introduction to Critical Issues,* Steven L. McKenzie and M. Patrick Graham, eds. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998).

9   According to Skousen, "For the most part, Gilbert did not edit out the grammatical 'errors.' The vast majority of them were copied over straight from the manuscripts into the 1830 edition. In some cases some accidental correction seems to have occurred. And in a handful of cases we have specific evidence that either John Gilbert or Oliver Cowdery consciously corrected what was perceived to be pronominal redundancies. … [C]onscious editing is infrequent in the text. The vast majority of 'ungrammatical' expressions were left unchanged." Royal Skousen, "Worthy of Another Look: John Gilbert's 1892 Account of the 1830 Printing of the Book of Mormon," *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 21/2 (2012), 63.

10 Remarks delivered on October 25, 1831 Sirenes Burnet home, Orange, Cuyahoga County, Ohio. Source: Oliver Cowdery record copied into the Far West Record, Book of Abraham Project, accessed 29 December 2013, http://www.boap.org/LDS/Parallel/1830-33/25Oct31.html.

11 History, 1838–1856, volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed 29 December 2013, http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834?dm=image-and-textzm=zoom-innertm=expandedp=11s=undefinedsm=none.

12 See Stephen D. Ricks, "Joseph Smith's Translation of the Book of Mormon," Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, accessed 18 April 2016, =http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=934&index=1=.

13 Curiously, the 1840 corrective conjunction phrase "(or out of the waters of baptism)" was not included in the 1841 Liverpool edition of the Book of Mormon, called the "First European Edition, from the Second American Edition" [the 1837 Kirtland edition], nor in any subsequent Book of Mormon edition until the 1920 Salt Lake City edition, where it appeared without parentheses. The phrase has continued to the latest 2013 edition. The RLDS Book of Mormon editions never incorporated the 1840 corrective conjunction phrase.

14 See Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, comps. and eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo*

Discourses of the Prophet Joseph (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 49.

15 'Die Zehn Gebote', *Forschung: Mitteilungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft* 3-4 (Weinheim, Germany: Wiley-VCH, 1992), I-VIII (Bonn: *Festvortrag bei der Jahresversammlung der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft, 1992).* Reprinted in *'The Unconquered Land' and Other Old Testament Essays: Selected Studies by Rudolf Smend,* Edward Ball and Margaret Barker, eds., translated by Margaret Kohl (Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 30.

16 Ibid., 29.

17 Gerald E. Smith, *Schooling the Prophet: How the Book of Mormon Influenced Joseph Smith and the Early Restoration* (Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, 2015), 136.

18 Smith, *Schooling the Prophet*, 217.

19 Grant Hardy, "Introduction," in Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009),* xx–xxi.

20 The size of the 56 sequential text segments was 5,000 words each.

21 Tim Rathbone and John W. Welch, "Book of Mormon Translation by Joseph Smith," in *The Encyclopedia on Mormonism, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 212. See also John W. Welch, "The Miraculous Translation of the Book of Mormon," in Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations* 1820–1844, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2005).

22 See Roger Terry, "Archaic Pronouns and Verbs in the Book of Mormon: What Inconsistent Usage Tells Us about Translation Theories," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 47/3 (Fall 2014).

23 For presentation I exclude from Figure 3b sequential text segments for Moroni – one CCP each in segments 37 and 39, and two CCPs each in segments 40 and 41 (seen in Figure 3a), which clearly do not show a progressively declining learning trend for Moroni.

24 Brant A. Gardner, "Nephi as Scribe," *Mormon Studies Review* 23/1 (2011), 46.

25 Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 81.

26 Robert Eisenman, *James the Brother of Jesus: The Key to Unlocking the Secrets of Early Christianity and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 80–81.

27 James L. Kugel, *The Bible As It Was* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1997), 20.

28 Terry, Archaic Pronouns and Verbs, 63.

29 Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 85.

30 Melvyn Bragg, *The Book of Books: The Radical Impact of the King James Bible 1611-2011* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2011), 131.

31 William G. Dever, *What Did The Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It? What Archaeology Can Tell Us about the Reality of Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 2.

32 Terryl L. Givens, "Joseph Smith's American Bible: Radicalizing the Familiar," *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 18/2 (2009), 4, 6.

Opportunity Lost

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Brian C. Hales

A Review of Carol Lynn Pearson, *The Ghost of Eternal Polygamy: Haunting the Hearts and Heaven of Women and Men*. Pivot Point Books, 2016, 226 pages with endnotes. $19.95.

Abstract: The Ghost of Eternal Polygamy *boldly declares "that plural marriage never was — is not now — and never will be ordained of God" (21) and that the Mormon religion is guilty of "extraordinary spiritual abuse" (22) due to the practice. Seven distinct problems associated with plural marriage are identified, four of which have merit: polygamy history is often messy; earthly polygamy is unfair to women; widows and widowers are treated differently regarding future sealings; and the cancellation of sealings has not always paralleled the desires of the participants. Three additional issues form the bulk of the discussion and are based upon assumptions about eternity: polygamy is required in the celestial kingdom; child-to-parent sealings may be unfair in eternity; and eternal polygamy will be everlastingly unfair to women. This review addresses these observations, noting that the idea that all exalted beings are polygamists is false, revelation has not defined the exact nature of earthly parent–child relationships in the afterlife, and the dynamics of eternal plural marriage have not been revealed. The Ghost of Eternal Polygamy seeks to reinforce fears of the unknown while ignoring the abundant messages that God promises eternal joy and happiness to those who live worthily.*

Looking at the history of plural marriage in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it seems that it was inevitable that someone like Carol Lynn Pearson would write a book similar to *The Ghost of Eternal Polygamy: Haunting the Hearts and Heaven of Women and Men* (hereafter GEP). Joseph Smith introduced plural marriage in Nauvoo in

1841 and taught it as a commandment. After his 1844 death, Brigham Young continued the practice, announcing it to the world in 1852. For the next 38 years it was generally taught as an expected practice for worthy members.

In 1890, a manifesto was issued ending the commandment, although some plural unions continued to be solemnized until 1904 when Joseph F. Smith stopped prospectively authorizing new polygamous marriages. Believing plural marriage should be continued, dissenters from the Church coalesced into an organized movement in the late 1920s and actively promoted their teachings among the Latter-day Saints. LDS authorities denounced them as apostates and sought to distance the Church from the practice from that point forward.

The graph below shows how often Church authorities referred to polygamy or plural marriage in General Conferences:
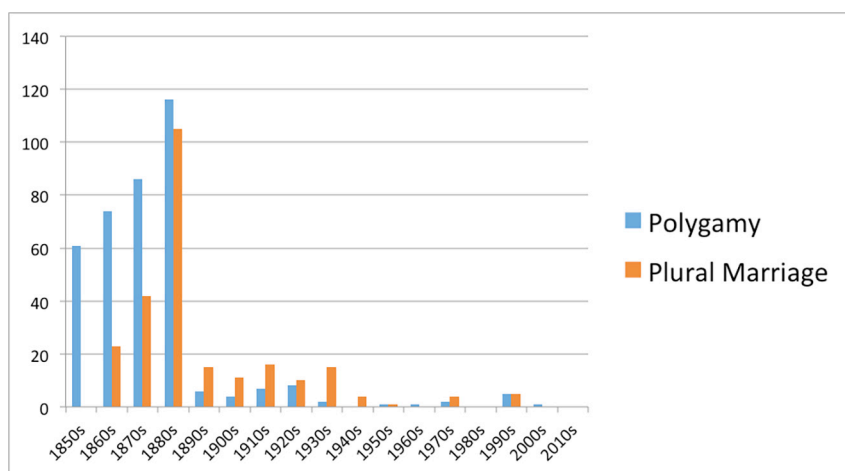
As shown, the subject was common prior to the 1890s, but dropped dramatically in the next several decades. After the 1950s, references to the practice were rare.

It appears that the absence of discussions of plural marriage during the past half-century has created a vacuum of orthodox teachings concerning the subject among Latter-day Saints in the twenty-first century. Two significant consequences have resulted. First, a wide variety of notions have been promulgated, many of which are inaccurate. Second, alternate voices have offered information to fill the void created by the lack of official Church statements on the topic. The author of GEP

acknowledges she is not an official representative of the Church, and as such, she qualifies as an *alternate voice* with an emotional message for Latter-day Saints and other audiences. In this review I will discuss LDS doctrines and teachings, also as an alternate voice, and am solely responsible for the views expressed herein.

The Ghost of Eternal Polygamy

The Ghost of Eternal Polygamy comprises twelve chapters and nine "other voices" sections, that each contain nine to fourteen moving testimonials and narrations of personal pain and suffering.

Early in the text, GEP informs its readers how the data supporting the arguments in the book was obtained. The author explains: "In March of 2014, I reached out to Mormons and former Mormons via social media, asking them to take a survey about their opinions and feelings regarding the LDS concept of eternal polygamy" (8). The online database of names who received invitations to take the survey is undisclosed, but over 8000 responses were eventually gathered.

GEP identifies the level of Church activity of the respondents: 91% classified themselves as "current members," with 51% of them "very active," and 93% of them holding a temple recommend (8–9). Multiplying those numbers reveals that roughly 43% of those answering the questions identified as Latter-day Saints who were actively attempting to keep sacred covenants.

Apparently, the survey also included a section where respondents could share written accounts of their feelings, suffering, and concerns. Regarding these, "85 percent of the stories expressed sadness, confusion, [and] pain" (10) concerning the policies and practices of plural marriage. An impressive 126 of these individual narratives are interspersed throughout the book to add emphasis to specific points, sometimes interjecting an emotional component to the topic being discussed.

Besides repeatedly quoting the opinions of these respondents, other sources are tapped to explain the primary facets of the book's message. GEP contains imaginary conversations and descriptions composed by the author (36–39, 79, 116, 149) along with eloquent fictional accounts (119, 122). There are multi-paragraph quotes from *Pride and Prejudice* (155), a blog post (141), the author's poetry (135), her personal diary (172, 173), and even a quote from the 1882 *Anti-Polygamy Standard* (113). The final chapter is primarily comprised of a "fantasy" composed by the author (204).

The bibliography identifies additional sources, listing 109 references, eleven of which are General Authorities speaking about plural marriage. Statements from other early polygamists are also included, but over half of the references are either from non-Mormon sources or do not discuss polygamy.

Doctrine and Covenants section 132, the revelation on celestial and plural marriage, is mentioned several times in GEP (xvi, 83, 85, 189, 192-94, and 224). Parts of specific verses are quoted verbatim including vv. 52 and 58 (82), v. 61 (68, 190), and vv. 61–62 (169). No verses are quoted in their entirety and none earlier than verse 52 are referenced. These disregarded verses deal with the ordinance of eternal marriage and the blessings promised to worthy individuals who keep their covenants.

GEP is a skillfully crafted vehicle to convey a particular message by weaving specific stories, arguments, and observations together to convince its audience. Judging from online responses and other opinions I have heard, it may be achieving its apparent goal.

The Message

GEP unapologetically describes polygamy as "Joseph's extravagant reinvention of marriage" (44). "I am," the author explains, "personally persuaded that The Ghost of Eternal Polygamy exists today from error, that plural marriage never was — is not now — and never will be ordained of God" (21; see also 70). She also accuses the Mormon religion of "extraordinary spiritual abuse" (22) due to its teachings and past practice of plural marriage.

To support and justify this reaction, seven objections are repeatedly mentioned and explored throughout the text.[1] Of these, two state obvious problems with the earthly practice of plural marriage between the 1840s and 1890 and two more are associated with policies that persist:

1. The history of the establishment of polygamy by Joseph Smith is messy.

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1 The following is a listing of the approximate number of specific references to these seven topics: the history of the establishment of polygamy by Joseph Smith is messy (10); earthly polygamy is unfair to women (30); widows who have been sealed to their deceased husbands are treated differently than widowers who were sealed to their deceased wives (18); cancellations of sealings have not always paralleled individual desires or legal marital decrees (19); polygamy is required in the celestial kingdom (14); child-to-parent sealings may be unfair in eternity (21); and eternal polygamy is unfair to women (72).

2. Earthly polygamy is unfair to women.
3. Widows who have been sealed to their deceased husbands are treated differently than widowers who were sealed to their deceased wives.
4. Cancellations of sealings have not always paralleled individual desires or legal marital decrees.

If these were the only complaints found in GEP, it is likely that most readers could have agreed with the overall message. However, three additional concerns seem to dominate the discussion:

1. Polygamy is required in the celestial kingdom.
2. Child-to-parent sealings may be unfair in eternity.
3. Eternal polygamy is unfair to women.

The common theme intrinsic to these last three complaints is *eternity*, which is referred to in the catchy title, *The Ghost of* Eternal *Polygamy*. When dealing with eternity, our beliefs must be based upon revelation or they will merely be speculation. In seeking truth, the opinions and conjectures of well-meaning individuals are generally less useful than clear statements from inspired women and men who are seers and revelators.

This review will examine these seven topics and provide historical and doctrinal context for the practice of plural marriage in the Church. I will also examine and critique the methodology employed by GEP.

The History of the Establishment of Polygamy by Joseph Smith is Messy

There is no getting around the fact that the introduction of plural marriage in the early days of the Church was messy. Joseph Smith faced multiple challenges, including opposition from his wife, leaders, followers, and the legal community after reporting an angelic command to establish the practice.

Hence Joseph sought secrecy, which has greatly hampered attempts to understand the details of those early relationships. Common concerns involve the young ages of a few of Joseph Smith's wives (151), the number of his wives (81), and his not immediately informing Emma (55). GEP also mentions, "Eleven of his [Joseph Smith's] plural wives were women who were already married to other men" and correctly observes, "It is likely these marriages were not consummated" (55).

While observers today may detect the messiness of that period and conclude Joseph was in error (as GEP does), a weakness of the GEP text is that there is little attempt to see the practice as the Nauvoo polygamists viewed it. Presentism, the act of viewing historical events with present-day biases, is rife throughout GEP.

A second problem is found in the historical inaccuracies that reflect casual research (see especially 44, 55, 61, 81, 83, and 93). GEP declares: "Numerous young women (and some older women) were approached by Joseph and promised the highest exaltation in heaven — along with their entire family — if they accepted him as their husband and were 'sealed' to him for eternity" (55). This is simply false.[2] Also GEP describes the Relief Society as "a service organization that Emma [Smith], as president, soon began to use in her fight against polygamy" in 1842 (81). There is no credible evidence to support that Emma or even a small percentage of the Relief Society members in Nauvoo in 1842 were aware of Joseph Smith's eternal plural marriage teachings.[3]

It is useful to note that none of Joseph Smith's plural wives recorded any complaints against him including the seven who left the Church. Neither did the other eighty men and women who had entered plural unions prior to the martyrdom. When modern writers who know Joseph the least claim to understand things about him that those who knew him best apparently could not see, there is a serious problem.

Nauvoo polygamy was messy, but it is not clear whether the messiness arose from error or simply because life is often messy. I believe the pressures facing the Prophet as he introduced plural marriage guaranteed that the process would be messy.

Earthly Polygamy is Unfair to Women

Earthly polygamy is unfair to women and GEP repeatedly drives home that point. Plural marriage on earth expands a man's emotional and sexual opportunities as a husband as it simultaneously fragments a woman's emotional and sexual opportunities as a wife. Simply put, it is sexist and unfair.[4] I am sometimes asked to speak on plural marriage,

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2   See Brian C. Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy: History and Theology*, 3 vols., Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2013, 3:194–203.

3   See Brian C. Hales, "He Had No Other Wife but Me": Emma Hale Smith and Mormon Polygamy," *Journal of the John Whitmer Historical Association*, Spring, 2017, forthcoming.

4   In the case of a new plural wife who would have remained unmarried if monogamy was exclusively practices, her "emotional and sexual opportunities as

and while I'm comfortable defending Joseph Smith as a worthy prophet, I never try to defend the earthly practice of polygamy.

It is easy to find emotional stories of suffering and even despair among plural wives sharing a husband. Whether in Nauvoo or later in Utah, hundreds of narratives demonstrate the challenges associated with plural marriage. It appears that virtually none of the women in Nauvoo wanted to participate, but they went along with the practice due to their faith in God and a belief that He had commanded the practice at that time and place.

The usefulness of focusing upon these trials is not apparent. LDS scripture teaches that we are here to be "proven" (Exodus 16:4, D&C 121:12, Abraham 3:25). "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Polygamy was a challenge for the Saints of the 1840s to 1890 period and may have been a tribulation intended to lead them toward exaltation.

GEP rejects this interpretation: "God gave it [polygamy] as a test of faith. I do not believe a God of love works this way" (64). The idea that a loving God would not command difficult things contradicts multiple scriptural accounts of how deity deals with mortals on earth.[5]

To quote Laura Harris Hales: "Early Latter-day Saints believed plural marriage was commanded by God and struggled to practice it. Today, Latter-day Saints do not practice it, but some struggle to believe it was actually from God." GEP makes a judgment that practitioners did not voice.

Widows Who Have Been Sealed To Their Deceased Husbands Are Treated Differently Than Widowers Who Were Sealed To Their Deceased Wives

Church policy beginning with Joseph Smith is that a living man can be sealed to multiple women, but a living woman can only be sealed to one man. Even when polygamy is not practiced, this policy affects widows who may be shunned by men who are looking to be sealed to their desired wife.

GEP repeatedly highlights this disparity by quoting accounts of suffering and apparent injustice. It includes an anecdotal story about

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a wife" are increased from zero to some fraction depending on how many other wives the man has. However, the other wives' opportunities are diminished as a result of the new plural matrimony.

5   See Alma 1:25, Mosiah 24:15, Alma 14:26, Abraham 1:7, Genesis 6:13–14, 1 Nephi 17:8, Acts 7:59, and 2 Corinthians 11:25.

counsel, reportedly from a Church leader, given to a man to not marry a sealed widow because he would be single forever and would compromise his own exaltation (102). Another narrative describes a woman who was worried that cancelling her previous sealing would "strip her deceased husband of his eternal exaltation" (99). The author adds: "According to current policy, if that wife [a widow] is sealed to someone else, the man faces an eternity without wife and without children (even those born with his own DNA), unqualified for the highest blessings of the celestial kingdom" (96).

These accounts are unfortunate because they contain inaccuracies. Under certain circumstances, the Church may allow a woman to cancel a previous sealing to a deceased husband. But to assume that he is eternally compromised demonstrates faulty reasoning. All worthy men and women will receive all their needed ordinances, either in person or by proxy, prior to the final judgment. Worthiness is the key.

While not voicing official Church doctrine, Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith explained: "The Lord has said through his servants that during the millennium those who have passed beyond and have attained the resurrection will reveal in person to those who are still in mortality all the information which is required to complete the work of these who have passed from this life. Then the dead will have the privilege of making known the things they desire and are entitled to receive. In this way no soul will be neglected and the work of the Lord will be perfected."[6]

GEP explains that the Church will allow a deceased woman to be sealed vicariously to all the men she lived with as a wife during mortality (after the men have also died). For any of those proxy sealings to be valid, the deceased woman must qualify and accept it in the spirit world. Accordingly, she would be positioned to accept the sealing she desired and the other vicarious ordinances would be unrecognized. This policy may not bring complete comfort to men seeking an eternal mate, but it does allow for a woman to be eternally with the man of her choice, even if he is not the first man she was sealed to on earth.

Some alternate voices today seek to equalize Church practices by demanding that a living woman be allowed to be sealed to as many men as she would like, paralleling the policy for men. The revelation, now section 132, does not allow this (see verses 41, 61–63). New revelation could always be received, but unless that occurs, opinion and consensus of even a large number of members or onlookers will be insufficient to effectuate authorized changes.

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6   Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:65.

Cancellations of Sealings Have not Always Paralleled Individual Desires or Legal Marital Decrees

Several stories of men and women who have procured legal divorces but have been unable to secure a cancellation of a sealing are recounted in GEP (see especially 26, 29, 75, 87, 99, and 159). Many Church leaders have taught that the temple wedding ceremony brings additional blessings to each worthy participant independent of the union solemnized. It may be that Church leaders in the past have been reluctant to cancel those additional blessings until the individuals were positioned to remake the covenants that would bring them back into their lives. Recent policy changes allow women to more easily cancel sealings after a legal divorce, so hopefully this concern has been eliminated.

The remaining three concerns deal with eternity and are based upon assumptions about requirements of exaltation, the nature of mortal families in the afterlife, and the dynamics of plural marriage in that realm. Brigham Young cautioned: "Unless a man is full of the visions of eternity he has no business to meddle with matters that pertain to eternity. I wish you to pay particular attention to this, and practice the principle throughout your lives."[7] This counsel should apply to anyone purporting to write about eternity.

Polygamy is Required in the Celestial Kingdom

GEP reflects the idea that polygamy is required for exaltation or to live in the celestial kingdom: "Polygamy … [is] waiting on the other side to greet us in heaven and causing large injury here on earth" (7). "Many women suffer excruciating pain under the long-taught assumption that if they and their husband are sufficiently righteous they will be expected to live polygamy in the celestial kingdom" (8).

The problem is that no presiding Church leader has ever declared that plural marriage is required for exaltation for all people irrespective of when and where they lived on earth. The belief that every man will be required to practice polygamy in the future or that every woman will have to share her husband in eternity is not only doctrinally unsupported but also mathematically perplexing. It is not — and never has been — a doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

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7   Brigham Young, discourse given February 19, 1854, in Richard S. Van Wagoner, ed., *The Complete Discourses of Brigham Young*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Smith–Pettit Foundation, 2009), 2:763.

Apostle Joseph F. Smith explained in 1878 that plural marriage was "a law of the Gospel pertaining to the celestial kingdom, applicable to all gospel dispensations, *when commanded* and not otherwise, and neither acceptable to God or binding on man unless given by commandment."[8] God told the Nephites that unless He would "command" his people, they should have "one wife" (Jacob 2:30, 27). The righteous Book of Mormon peoples were monogamous.

The practice of plural marriage was commanded between the 1840s and 1890 and obedience was then expected, but not apparently because polygamy has any inherent exalting ability or because it is the only form of marriage in the celestial kingdom. It was commanded during those decades of the nineteenth century because it was God's will. At no other time in the earth's past millennia has such a directive been given to God's followers. Modern prophets have never given a reason for the polygamy mandate.

In LDS theology, requiring all exalted men to be polygamists would necessitate at least twice as many women as men in the celestial kingdom. GEP rejects the idea that women have a greater propensity to embrace spiritual things contending that it is "pretty insulting to men" (58). Yet, Brigham Young taught: "The fact is, let the pure principles of the kingdom of God be taught to men and women, and far more of the latter than the former will receive and obey them."[9] But will the ratio be at least two women to each man? Believing that all exalted men are practicing polygamists generates logistical problems that are not easily resolved.

The idea that plural marriage is required for exaltation is popular today with modern polygamists like the FLDS and the Allreds (AUB). The primary problem is that God reveals and revokes His commandments through His living prophets who hold the keys to seal eternal marriages, monogamous and polygamous. God will not acknowledge marriage ceremonies that are not performed by that authority (D&C 132: 8, 10, 18). The commandment was removed in 1890 through Wilford Woodruff, who then held the sealing authority. Despite creative claims by dozens of men over the past century, sealing authority does not exist outside

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8   *Journal of Discourses*, 20:26; emphasis added.

9   *Journal of Discourses*, 18:249. Janet Bennion observed: "Past studies of gender dynamics in religion have consistently shown that females tend to be more religious than males." Janet Bennion, *Desert Patriarchy: Mormon and Mennonite Communites in the Chihuahua Valley* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), 174.

of the Church and personal revelation alone cannot produce sealing authority or authorize a sealing ceremony that is acceptable to God.[10] Today, worthy men and women can only be sealed monogamously and attempts to live plurality will bring eternal condemnation.

Child-to-Parent Sealings may be Unfair in Eternity

GEP repeatedly expresses concern involving child-to-parent sealings and how those could result in eternal injustice: "Children who are born into a marriage between a sealed widow and a new husband, though these children are raised by their biological father, are understood to be destined to live eternally in the spiritual kingdom of a man they have never known" (96; see also 8). This declaration speaks of doctrines that "are understood"; however, the source of this apparent authoritative understanding is not provided. Neither are we told what the "spiritual kingdom" represents or exactly how the described arrangement is an eternal problem.

The author of GEP is not the only person to manifest confusion regarding the dynamics of eternal families. It is true that we sing: "Families can be together forever, in Heavenly Father's plan" (*Hymns*, 300). What is less known is that the "togetherness" of the husband and wife in eternity is different from the "togetherness" of children and their mortal parents in that realm.

A husband and wife who are sealed by proper authority and live worthily become an eternal couple who can be like our Heavenly Parents, together in eternity. As a resurrected exalted couple, they are promised a "continuation of the seeds" (D&C 132:19), or spirit offspring in the eternities. Those spirit offspring can progress to become exalted couples who can thereafter have spirit offspring. The process creates endless generations of exalted parents and children who can "be together forever" as part of "Heavenly Father's plan."

Today, Primary children may sing "Families can be together forever" with full expectation that if the children experience a nuclear family arrangement in their homes, it could somehow exist in heaven with mortal parents ruling over their offspring. The eternal reality, however, is that the children are more aptly singing about premortal family

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10   See Brian C. Hales, *Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism: The Generations after the Manifesto*, Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2006, 6–10, 465–74.

associations that they have forgotten — each living there as "a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents."[11]

Questions exist regarding the relationships of mortal parents and their sealed children in the next life. The confusion apparently traces back to the early days of the Church. Joseph Smith encouraged parents and children to be sealed to one another but did not provide many details concerning the eternal ramifications of those sealings.[12] Brigham Young further explained, "The ordinance of sealing must be performed here … woman to man, and children to parents, etc., until the chain of generation is made perfect in the sealing ordinances back to father Adam."[13] Without question, being part of the chain back to Adam is important. Paul explained: "They without us should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:40; see also D&C 128:15).

What has been less clear is what happens to specific sealed child-to-parent relationships in the chain after we die. Some early members and leaders evidently believed that earthly familial relationships in the chain would govern our relationships in heaven. Two ideas soon popped up that cannot be traced to Joseph Smith. A few early Saints assumed that the more offspring they had, either biologically or through adoption ordinances, the greater would be their eternal glory. Another problem involved thinking that being sealed to Joseph Smith or another leader would give them an eternal advantage over being sealed to their biological parents.

In 1846, Apostle George A. Smith seems to have clarified the issue by saying it does not "matter so much where we are sealed provided we form a part of link [of] the Priesthood" chain.[14] Ten years later, Jedediah M. Grant, counselor to Brigham Young in the First Presidency, preached: "What does it matter where you are, if you do your duty? Being in one man's family or the other man's family is not going to save you, but doing your duty before your God is what will save you."[15]

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11   The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint, "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," https://www.lds.org/topics/family-proclamation.

12   Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 331 (Wilford Woodruff Diary, 10 March 1844).

13   Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 12:165 (February 16, 1868); see also Brigham Young, "Discourse," *Millennial Star* 31, no. 13 (March 27, 1869): 203.

14   Charles Kelly, ed., *The Journals of John D. Lee 1846–47 and 1859* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984), 94.

15   Jedediah M. Grant, *Journal of Discourses*, 4:128 (October 26, 1856).

After the resurrection where physical age differences do not seem to exist, we'll rejoin our heavenly family and Heavenly Parents. Brigham Young explained:

> When the resurrection takes place and we are glorified and perfected we shall find we are all brothers and sisters of one parentage. Why we now govern our children is because we are fallen, and the Lord Almighty put that affection on us so that they might cling to the earth and we to our children... Every man and woman will find they are brothers and sisters, connected as much as father and son is."[16]

As resurrected beings, memories of the ages and eons of premortality will be joined by the remembrances of the decades we spent on earth. Mortal experiences will never be forgotten and gratitude will always be felt to those spirits who served us in mortality. Precisely how the relationships in the chain will continue to affect us in eternity, if they affect us at all, has not been revealed.

To summarize, we know our positions as children in God's heavenly family are eternal and we know we must be sealed as part of the genealogical chain back to Adam. It also appears that our precise position in that chain is less important, and perhaps unimportant, in the eternities where exalted beings resume their position as sons and daughters of Heavenly Parents and progress to fulfill their "divine nature and destiny."

The worries expressed in GEP about children born in the covenant to a father they did not know simply create fears that are unjustified. It is true that if a divorced woman who was sealed to her former husband remarries, the children of her later marriage are born in the covenant of the first marriage. Being born in the covenant entitles children to an eternal parentage, depending on their faithfulness. The idea that specific child-to-parent sealings on earth combine to create eternal "spiritual kingdoms" in heaven is not a doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

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16   Brigham Young, discourse given September 24, 1850, in Van Wagoner, ed., *Complete Discourses*, 1:404.

Eternal Polygamy is Unfair to Women

It is clear that early polygamists believed that polygamy in some form would exist in the celestial kingdom. Joseph's revelations declare that sealings performed by proper authority, whether monogamous or polygamous, would persist after death (D&C 132:19).

In reaction to these teachings, it seems that the foundational message of GEP is that eternal polygamy is unfair to women. "Polygamy in the next life seems like a punishment, not eternal glory" (9). GEP also protests about "a God who has prepared an eternity that will break the hearts of women and render them forever subordinate" (202).

GEP assures its readers "that in heaven there will be many happy surprises" (201). Apparently a "surprise" that we will never confront is that wives in eternal plurality might feel the same as wives in eternal monogamy. We admit that on earth, polygamy is unfair and unjust. GEP repeatedly proclaims that to be true: polygamy is unfair and will always be unfair, worlds without end.

What We Think We Know

If we embrace the standard works as authoritative, what do we know about the next life and the eternal state of exalted beings? Paul described that realm: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9; see also Isaiah. 64:4, D&C 133:45). It seems that without divine revelation, mortals who claim to understand specific dynamics of the next life may be in error.

The exalted are promised to "receive all that the Father hath" (D&C 84:38) even to be "equal in power, and in might, and in dominion" with Him (D&C 76:95), to "have a crown of immortality, and eternal life in the mansions which I have prepared in the house of my Father" (D&C 81:6), "to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelations. 3:21), and to "inherit all things" (Revelations. 21:7).

Besides inheriting all things, the passage of time as we now know it will be no longer (Revelations. 10:6; D&C 84:100); "Time only is measured unto men" (Alma 40:8). On earth, polygamy fragments the husband's time and resources. Plural wives may have felt diminished, in part, due to the comparatively limited resources available to her. In eternity, endless time and resources could greatly alter these deficits.

Our Heavenly Father is aware of all His creations, even a sparrow "shall not fall on the ground without your Father" knowing it (Matthew 10:29).

God told Enoch: "Wherefore, I can stretch forth mine hands and hold all the creations which I have made; and mine eye can pierce them also" (Moses 7:36). So if a friend accepts Christ, is baptized, and creates a new covenant relationship with deity, one that did not exist previously, that relationship does not take away from my own relationship with God. We may not fully understand how this happens, but godhood apparently brings the capacity to share intimate relationships with an infinite number of beings.

In addition, the resurrection could greatly alter physical relations between a husband and wife. Paul and Joseph Smith taught that resurrected bodies do not contain blood (1 Corinthians. 15:50).[17] On earth, sexual relations, gestation, and birth are highly dependent upon blood. With the elimination of blood from resurrected tabernacles, the process of procreation could be very different from what we have on earth.

Similarly, erotic feelings in mortal bodies are closely tied to a hormone, testosterone, and males have greater concentrations than females — creating a disparity in the feelings of attractions felt by men and women, both type and quantity. We simply do not know if hormones exist or function in a resurrected body. The forces that keep exalted couples attracted to each other could be greatly different from the forces mortal spouses experience.

These observations do not help us understand how eternal polygamy might feel to participants, but they do show that comparing polygamy in the afterlife to earthly polygamy may not be a valid comparison.

Xenophobia and Victimhood

The truth is that we do not know the dynamics of eternal marriage, and we know even less about the dynamics of eternal plural marriage. Any fears associated with eternal polygamy are based upon assumptions that we cannot test for validity. To fear eternal polygamy is fearing future circumstances that we cannot accurately describe or even know to exist.

So the fears (and ghosts) of eternal polygamy are fears of the *unknown*, or xenophobia. In some ways these fears are manifestations of doubt that God is "no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34).

GEP also advances another idea — that women will be forever victimized by eternal polygamy. The correlation is almost automatic. If we accept that eternal polygamy is unfair, then we can usually accept

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17   Ehat and Cook, *Words*, 255 (Joseph Smith Diary, 9 October 1843).

that the unfairness is misogynistic and therefore victimizes females. Overall, the logic involves circular reasoning because it is not based upon verifiable truths but rather assumptions that build upon each other. Also, this line of reasoning undermines the GEP thesis. If God never does or never did condone polygamy, then polygamy will be a non-issue in the eternities.

Opportunity Lost

Instead of fear and victimization, what alternate message might have been the focus of GEP? GEP's discussion of eternal polygamy could have reached higher, stretched wider, and delved deeper as it sought to depict and understand everlasting ramifications. The discussion would not have ignored the frustrations earthly polygamy has wrought. Neither is there a reason to don rose-colored glasses when reviewing the behavior of polygamous Church leaders in the past.

In the economy of heaven, earthly struggles and suffering are sometimes a price to be paid rather than a victim's justification to demand change. Religious history teaches that the presence of trials and suffering does not mean God is ignoring His children nor that the associated teachings of His representatives are in error.

Instead of focusing upon what we don't know and speculating on offenses that may or may not be real, GEP might have pointed out that God's plan is a "great plan of happiness" (Alma 42:8, 16) and not a plan of eternal coercion or endless submission and suffering. Specific fears about relationships in the next life could be contextualized within promises that exalted beings "shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35:10).

Brigham Young emphasized the importance of agency in choosing our eternal mates: "If a woman is sealed to me and she wants to be divorced, she has a right to and I am under no obligation. Is not that agency all round? We have the privilege of being sealed or released."[18] According to modern revelation, we can presume that during the millennium communication between the spirit world and temples on earth will be

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18   Brigham Young, discourse given March 12, 1848, in Van Wagoner, ed., *Complete Discourses*, 1:276. President Joseph F. Smith agreed in 1915: "If a man and woman should be joined together who are incompatible to each other it would be a mercy to them to be separated that they might have a chance to find other spirits that will be congenial to them. We may bind on earth and it will be bound in Heaven, and loose on earth and it will be loosed in Heaven." (James R. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 4:330–31.)

greatly facilitated, allowing both releasings and proxy sealings so every worthy being is happy with their eternal marital situation (including, I believe, participating or not participating in plural marriage).

GEP could have explained the rewards of exaltation, even eternal glory: "which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever. Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them" (D&C 132:19–20). It will include: "salvation, and honor, and immortality, and eternal life; kingdoms, principalities, and powers!" (D&C 128:23).

Is it possible that a wife, even a plural wife, could feel abused if she attains this celestial glory? The thought makes reason stare. President Henry B. Eyring explained:

> A prophet of God once offered me counsel that gives me peace. I was worried that the choices of others might make it impossible for our family to be together forever. He said, "You are worrying about the wrong problem. You just live worthy of the celestial kingdom, and the family arrangements will be more wonderful than you can imagine."
>
> To all of those whose personal experience or whose marriage and children — or absence thereof — cast a shadow over their hopes, I offer my witness: Heavenly Father knows and loves you as His spirit child. While you were with Him and His Beloved Son before this life, They placed in your heart the hope you have of eternal life. With the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ working and with the Holy Spirit guiding, you can feel now and will feel in the world to come the family love your Father and His Beloved Son want so much for you to receive.[19]

A More Troubling Message

Besides the fearmongering found in GEP, there is an additional, more troubling message. GEP explains: "I know there are visionaries. I know there are seers. I believe that Joseph Smith was one of them … Joseph was not unique" (32). He is then classified as just another visionary and

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19   Henry B. Eyring, "The Hope of Eternal Family Love," *Ensign*, August 2016, https://www.lds.org/ensign/2016/08/the-hope-of-eternal-family-love?

then compared to Ellen White, William Blake, Emanuel Swedenborg, and Dame Julian (32).

This evaluation of the Prophet contrasts with John Taylor's description: "Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it" (D&C 135:3). Joseph restored priesthood authority to baptize (D&C 13:1), which is required for exaltation (D&C 76:51). Baptisms performed without this authority are "dead works" (D&C 22:2). The revelation on celestial marriage describes sealing power and quotes God saying: "I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred" (D&C 132:7).

Similarly, the final chapter of GEP portrays the Church established by Joseph Smith as just another religious tradition with some goodness, similar to other churches. In a self-composed fantasy, the author of GEP describes "a parade of religions, all come together to celebrate, to show their very best stuff … As we come in alphabetically, we're led by the Amish, and the rear is brought up by the Zoroastrians. We Latter-day Saints are right between the Jews and the Mennonites" (204–05).

In contrast, Joseph taught in 1831 that the Church he organized was "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased" (D&C 1:30). It was to come forth "out of the wilderness — clear as the moon, and fair as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners" (D&C 5:14), "to be a light to the world, and to be a standard for my people, and for the Gentiles to seek to it" (D&C 45:9). Its gospel was "to roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth" (D&C 65:2).

The incongruities create a paradox. If Joseph was just another visionary, and the Church he formed just another church, then his authority would be just another authority, incapable of creating a genuine *eternal* marriage of any kind. But if Joseph could truly produce eternal polygamy, with all its ghosts, then he must have been more than just another visionary and his authority more than just another authority.

A remarkable disconnect between the teachings of Joseph Smith and the teachings found in the GEP is easily detected, one that goes much deeper than a disagreement about polygamy. The read-between-the-lines message throughout the text seems to say Joseph and the Church are good but no better than other religions and their leaders and that

the requirements for salvation could be equally filled by any upright religious tradition. GEP is very squishy concerning the possibility that exaltation and eternal marriage might arise from ordinances and covenant-keeping authorized by the Church's priesthood. But the author is firm that eternal polygamy is definitely bad and, as a practice in any realm, intolerable.

Conclusion

The Ghost of Eternal Polygamy: Haunting the Hearts and Heaven of Women and Men is an unfortunate publication because of its many weaknesses outlined above. Concern for an author, who is willing to make such claims, is also probably warranted.

If there is anything spiritually useful here, it might be that GEP could help to open the door to a discussion about things that have likely haunted some LDS women since the 1840s, when plural marriage was first introduced. Through that discussion, comforting clarity where clarity is possible might be shared. Where details remain unknown, we can seek faith to simply trust God and His promises to us.[20]

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20   See D&C 109:75–76.

THE SONG I CANNOT SING

Sharon Eubank

Scene One

The story of her birth is a raucous family tale that begins with her arrival into the world on December 19. Her parents named her Joy. She was the youngest in a line of eight children, and every one of them could tell a story, so a person couldn't breathe for laughing. One or another of them would string this story up over the family dinner table each year — rushing to tell it, piling on top of each other's words. And then they would sit back in their chairs as the room pealed with laughter like big, singing bells.

Their father went to fetch their mother and the new baby from the hospital on Christmas Eve. For an unaccountable reason, he left the family station wagon in the driveway and loaded the other seven kids up in the back of an old, secondhand Provo City truck. The words *Provo City Sanitation* still faintly showed through the new green paint. In those days before seatbelts, nobody noticed a bunch of kids tumbling around in the bed of a pickup truck.

They pulled up to the curb at the hospital, and a nurse wheeled their mother out, holding the tiny baby wrapped like a stocking. Both the mother and the nurse looked aghast at the mode of transportation he had chosen. The truck? All the kids in the truck? Hike up her skirt and climb into the cab after just giving birth? He sheepishly smiled. She climbed in. The nurse handed her the baby, and they all drove home like the Joads.

I've always believed Christmas is for coming home. For a noisy, but complete family. For forgiving his ridiculous choice. For not falling out of the truck. For tucking everyone in bed — warm and safe. For gifts to be spread out on the stairs while we were sleeping. For knowing Joy is in the house.

Scene Two

I arrived in Finland in the middle of December 1984. The city of Tampere was in a deep freeze. Bitterly, bitingly cold that winter, the temperature hovered between -32 and -36 for almost three weeks. I remember the dim winter rooms lit by a single bulb or possibly a candle where I first taught "Christ is Our Cornerstone" to papery widows who still had the war on their faces. The arctic ice hung heavy in our clothing, and while we sat for awhile on a couch or a stale chair, it thawed around us in puddles. Hyacinths poked up from pots on the coffee tables, letting out their heavy scent into the dark rooms. I wished so many times to know the secrets of thawing or letting out perfume.

The Lindgren family invited us for Christmas Eve. Their big table was heavy with the ham and prunes, the beet salad, the rye pies, and the fruit soup. I couldn't understand the conversation rushing and flowing around me. I smiled until my face was creased and aching. Their mother played the piano, and I mumbled through unfamiliar carols as the night grew late. Then we pressed into their car so they could drive us back to our small apartment. I was nodding and drowsy when they pulled into the cemetery, and we all jumbled out into the car park.

The cold air smacked my cheeks. My eyelashes frosted over in ice. I walked arm in arm with Sister Lindgren, who chatted earnestly to me, trying to explain something that was lost in mystery to me. We trudged up a steep path salted with pea gravel under our boots. An organ played hymns from the Lutheran chapel at the top of the hill. She and I slipped and slid until we crested the hill, and then I sucked in a breath, which made me cough.

Spread below us as far as the eye could see were small flickering candles set on the gravestones. Acres and acres of twinkling lights. Snowballs piled around the candles made a kind of ice lantern. It was breathtaking in its contrasts: warm and cold, bright and dark, alive and dead. The Lindgren daughter saw my wondering expression and explained in English: "For Christmas. To wish our dead families Merry Christmas. To show we do not forget them. Because of Jesus, their bodies will rise up. We will have each other again. Alive in Christ."

Christmas is for the dead. It is for the hope that cold markers in the snow are not the ultimate end of us. It is for dead relationships, dead hopes, dead dreams, dead children that are promised to be restored.

Scene Three

This December, Joy is the mother coming home from the hospital. Her sister or sometimes her husband drives her back from the infusion center and walks her gingerly into the house. She gets online late at night and orders Christmas gifts, trying to stay on top of the pain from the tumors breaking her back and stiffening her lungs. She and her husband will spread out a Los Angeles Christmas on the stairs for their two little girls. There may be many more or there may be no more Christmases together. Nobody knows that answer. Why does a non-smoking, 38-year-old mother of little girls have lung cancer? I don't know. Nothing about it can be right. I rabidly stare down anyone who starts talking to me about meaning in the trial. There isn't one.

The grief of her leaving rips and unravels things. It cries out and soughs through the nights. It creates a white space and a white noise. The pain is a blizzard, making unrecognizable humps out of my life. It turns me cynical and sneering when other people are stringing up lights over their tables and telling stories. I try to pretend it hasn't happened. I close my eyes and shut my ears so I can hear the siblings in their red elf hats singing "Joy to the World" to their new baby sister, giggling and nudging each other knowingly at the pun. Joy to the world, the Lord is come. But my pretending does nothing to stop the white noise from raging on.

Into this endless, white wasteland, one day a man did come wading through the hip-deep snow. I could see him from a long way off and, God help me, I wished he wouldn't. I didn't have the emotional energy to deal with him. Undeterred by what I wanted, he patiently climbed over my frozen fences and beat a new track through the arctic yard. I barely greeted him though our eyes met. We knew each other well. I was angry and he knew it. Well — since he had insisted on coming – what would he do now? Fix things. That's what he did, right? Melt the whole damned world to spring.

Ignoring my outburst, he simply sat down. We didn't talk. He didn't probe for an emotional baring of my soul. We spent a silent night. And in the days afterward, wherever I went, he simply followed and sat down next to me. After quite a bit of this, I noticed he was taking the windy side, keeping me between the storm and the wall.

Christmas is for grief. The grief of why and how and when. The grief of things that cannot be changed, no matter how much wanting or faith. I know that now.

It's much easier to love Jesus as a little baby in the hay. But that just gets us to climb up into the truck. First and foremost, Jesus Christ

is a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. Rather than remain the sweet baby asleep on the hay, he accepted to be the man bearing all the messiness of our mortality. Jesus of the garden, the cross, and the tomb is harder to worship, but he also gives more in return. He rebukes the white noise that is stealing little bits of my soul. He sits on the storm side and puts me by the wall. He holds back the greedy, sighing night and gives me space to catch a breath. The chastisement of my peace is upon Him, and with His stripes I am healed.

I absolutely cannot sing "Joy to the World." Not this year and maybe not any year. But I also in all honesty cannot forget the December when the Man acquainted with grief had me prove the wonders of His love. This Christmas turned out to be for the song I cannot sing.

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"Their Anger Did Increase Against Me": Nephi's Autobiographical Permutation of a Biblical Wordplay on the Name Joseph

Matthew L. Bowen

Abstract: *Nephi's record on the small plates includes seven distinct scenes in which Nephi depicts the anger of his brethren against him. Each of these scenes includes language that recalls Genesis 37:5–10, 20, the biblical scene in which Joseph's brothers "hate him yet the more [wayyôsipû ʿôd] for his dreams and for his words" because they fear that he intends to "reign" and to "have dominion" or rule over them (Genesis 37:8). Later, they plot to kill him (Genesis 37:20). Two of these "anger" scenes culminate in Nephi's brothers' bowing down before him in the same way that Joseph's brothers bowed down in obeisance before him. Nephi permutes the expression wayyôsipû ʿôd in terms of his brothers' "continuing" and "increasing" anger, which eventually ripens into a hatred that permanently divides the family. Nephi uses language that represents other yāsap/yôsîp + verbal-complement constructions in these "anger" scenes, usage that recalls the name Joseph in such a way as to link Nephi with his ancestor. The most surprising iteration of Nephi's permuted "Joseph" wordplay occurs in his own psalm (2 Nephi 4:16–35).*

In two previous studies[1] I have demonstrated that Nephi uses wordplay on the biblical name *Joseph* in his use of Isaiah's words in 2 Nephi 5:17, 21; 29:1, as well as 1 Nephi 22:8–12 (a wordplay apparently adapted by

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1   Matthew L. Bowen, "'He Shall Add': Wordplay on the Name Joseph and an Early Instance of Gezera Shawa in the Book of Mormon," *Insights* 30/2 (2010): 2–4; idem, "Onomastic Wordplay on Joseph and Benjamin and Gezera Shawa in the Book of Mormon," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 18 (2016): 255–73.

Mormon in 3 Nephi 5:23). Nephi's wordplay on the name Joseph occurs in prophecies pertaining to the future gathering of Israel and a future "Joseph" that would fulfill divine promises made to the patriarch Joseph.[2]

It appears, however, that Nephi also adapted wordplay on the name Joseph to accomplish additional literary and rhetorical purposes. In this article, I will endeavor to show that Nephi adapts the subtle onomastic wordplay on the name Joseph from Genesis 37:5-8 to highlight similarities in his biography to those of his ancestor Joseph, whose name constitutes a causative (Hiphil) jussive form of the Semitic/Hebrew verb *yāsap* (to "add," "increase") — *yôsēp*, "May he [God] add,"[3] "May he increase," "May he continue," etc.

Moreover, it emerges that this "Joseph" wordplay revolves around the manifestation of Nephi's brothers' anger against him as described in seven distinct scenes: 1 Nephi 3:28–4:4; 7:6-21; 16:18-32, 16:34–17:4; 17:17–18:1, 18:4-22; 2 Nephi 4:12–5:28.[4] Nephi's adaptation and permutation of the biographical wordplay on the name "Joseph" tells us much about how Nephi viewed his relationship with his brothers and his being "a ruler and a teacher" over them.

"They Hated Him the More" (Genesis 37:5, 8; 2 Nephi 5:1): Calibrating Nephi's "Joseph" Wordplay

It is not difficult to see parallels between Nephi's autobiography and the biography of Joseph, his ancestor. Both Joseph[5] and Nephi enjoyed special relationships with their father that gave rise to extreme fraternal resentment (e.g., "our brother is like unto him [Lehi],"1 Nephi 17:22). Nephi himself could scarcely have avoided noticing these parallels, having read the detailed account of Joseph's life on the plates of

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2   See especially 2 Nephi 25:17-18, 21 in view of 2 Nephi 3:11-17, 22-24.

3   Martin Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der Gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (BWANT 3/10; Stuttgart: W. Kolhammer, 1928), 212. See also Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 403; hereafter cited as HALOT.

4   The seven "anger" scenes overlap to a great degree with Corbin Volluz's "seven rebellions in the wilderness" ("A Study in Seven: Hebrew Numerology in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 53/2 [2014]: 65) but differs slightly in view of the "anger" theme that I describe throughout this paper. 1 Nephi 2 can be included with the scene that arises in 1 Nephi 3–4. I am arguing for an additional scene in 2 Nephi 4–5, which includes Nephi's psalm.

5   Genesis 37:4.

brass.[6] Accordingly, when writing his autobiography, Nephi fashions his description of Laman and Lemuel's jealousy, which later becomes anger and hatred, to resemble and recall the biblical description of Joseph's older brothers' hatred toward him. This is evident in a cursory comparison of Genesis 37:3‒8, 20 with 2 Nephi 5:1‒3:

Genesis 37:3-8, 20	2 Nephi 5:1-3
Now Israel loved *Joseph* [*yôsēp*] more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. And *Joseph* [*yôsēp*] dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and *they hated him yet the <u>more</u>* [*wayyôsipû ʿôd*]. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, *Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him <u>yet the more</u>* [*wayyôsipû ʿôd*] *for his dreams, and for his words.* (Genesis 37:5‒8) Come now therefore, and *let us slay him*, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams. (Genesis 37:20)	Behold, it came to pass that *I, Nephi, did cry much unto the Lord my God, because of the anger of my brethren*. But behold, *their anger did <u>increase</u>* [Hebrew *yāsap*] *against me*, insomuch that they did seek to take away my life. Yea, they did murmur against me, saying: *Our younger brother thinks to rule over us*; and we have had much trial because of him; wherefore, *now let us slay him, <u>that we may not</u> be afflicted <u>more</u>* because of his words. For behold, *we will not that he shall[7] be our ruler; for it belongs unto us, who are the elder brethren, to rule over this people.* Now I do not write upon these plates all the words which they murmured against me. But it sufficeth me to say, that *they did seek to take away my life.*

Nephi emphasizes the similarities between his biography and his ancestor Joseph's biography, an account written in the aftermath of his father's passing and the division of the Lehite-Ishmaelite clan. Nephi's use

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6   See especially 2 Nephi 4:2, 15 (cf. 5:12). See further 1 Nephi 19:21‒22; 22:1, 30.

7   Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part One: 1 Nephi 1–2 Nephi 10* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2014), 550. Joseph Smith had made the stylistic decision to replace the syntactically awkward "that he shall" with the "have him to."

of the phrase "their anger did *increase* against me" evokes the language of Genesis 37:3–8 ("they hated him yet the more"), including, evidently, the use of wordplay on the name "Joseph" — *wayyôsipû*. The most basic meaning of the verb *yāsap* in Hebrew is to "add" or "increase,"[8] and it is in terms of this verb that the text explains the giving of Joseph's name (*yôsēp*) in Genesis 30:24 ("The Lord *shall add* [*yōsēp*] to me another son" or "May the Lord *increase* [*yōsēp*] to me another son"). Moshe Garsiel notes the narrative emphasis on Joseph's brothers' hatred using auxiliary *yôsîp* in Genesis 37:5, 8: "the attitude of his brothers towards Joseph is twice defined in these terms."[9] Nephi will similarly and repeatedly define his brothers' attitude towards him, his father, and the Lord by using the similar "Joseph" terminology.

Moreover, Garsiel continues: "It should be noted that this hatred takes its rise from Jacob's preferential love for Joseph."[10] Joseph's and Nephi's brothers "added" to hate[11] them not only out of jealousy for their relationships with their fathers, but their anger and resentment towards them "increased" because of the spiritual gifts that they themselves did not possess, or had failed to cultivate (see especially 1 Nephi 15:1–11).

Scene #1: "They Were Yet Wroth, and Did Still Continue to Murmur"

Nephi's use of Genesis 37 begins early in his small-plates record, the first "anger" scene occurring in 1 Nephi 3:28–4:4. Nephi establishes the basis for his brothers' resentment even as he describes the point at which the trajectory of his life diverges from that of his brothers.[12] Genesis 37 records that Joseph reported the "dream" or revelation that his brothers and parents would "bow down" to him (*hištaḥăwâ* [3 x], which in many

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8   HALOT, 418.

9   Moshe Garsiel, *Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns*, trans. Phyllis Hackett (Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991), 173.

10   Ibid.

11   Nephi specifically cites his brother's "hate" in 2 Nephi 5:14: "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; for I knew their *hatred* towards me and my children and those who were called my people." Jacob refers to the same "hate" at the conclusion of his personal writings in Jacob 7:26: "we being a lonesome and a solemn people, wanderers, cast out from Jerusalem, born in tribulation, in a wilderness, and *hated of our brethren*, which caused wars and contentions; wherefore, we did mourn out our days."

12   See especially 1 Nephi 2:15–16.

contexts denotes "worship").[13] This is interpreted by his brothers as a claim of kingship and rule over them by their younger brother: "And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion [Hebrew *timšōl*, rule, be a ruler] over us?" (Genesis 37:8).[14] Nephi similarly records a revelation that contained a divine promise that he, the younger brother, would "rule" over his older brothers: "thou shalt be made a ruler [*môšēl*][15] and a teacher over thy brethren" (1 Nephi 2:22).

Not coincidentally, the very next episode he reports is the very one in which Nephi demonstrates his faithfulness and leadership vis-à-vis Laman and Lemuel. It is also no coincidence that his brothers' anger began to surface in the episode after Nephi began to exert his leadership, which he begins to do in 1 Nephi 3:15–23. When Nephi's solution to obtaining the brass plates fails (see 1 Nephi 3:24–27), Nephi's brothers' jealous anger flares up against him for the first time: "And it came to pass that *Laman was angry with me, and also with my father*" (1 Nephi 3:28). Laman and Lemuel later physically assault and abuse their brothers Sam and Nephi (see 1 Nephi 3:28). The beating ceases only after a divine messenger intervenes (1 Nephi 3:29).

Notably, it is at this very moment that "the angel turn[s] the tables"[16] on Laman and Lemuel, who have been using a rod or stick to assert their authority[17] as older brothers over their younger brothers as inferiors. The angel reveals to Nephi's brothers the divine promise of "rule" that Nephi had received earlier, as recorded 1 Nephi 2:22 (see 1 Nephi 2:19–24):

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13   On the importance of *hištaḥăwâ* as a gesture of approach in ancient Israel and among the peoples of the Book of Mormon, see Matthew L. Bowen, "'They Came and Held Him by the Feet and Worshipped Him': Proskynesis before Jesus in Its Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Context," *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 5 (2013): 63–89; idem, "'They Came Forth and Fell Down and Partook of the Fruit of the Tree': Proskynesis in 3 Nephi 11:12–19 and 17:9–10 and Its Significance," in *Third Nephi: An Incomparable Scripture*, ed. Andrew C. Skinner and Gaye Strathearn (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute and Deseret Book, 2011), 107–29; idem, "And Behold, They Had Fallen to the Earth: An Examination of Proskynesis in the Book of Mormon," *Studia Antiqua* 4/1 (2005): 91–110.

14   The most basic meaning of Hebrew *māšāl* (II) is to "rule." See HALOT, 647–48.

15   The participial form of *māšāl* is *môšēl*, which denotes "ruler."

16   Hugh Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch, 3rd ed. (Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, 6; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, UT: FARMS, 1988), 249.

17   Ibid.

> And it came to pass as they smote us with a rod, behold, an
> angel of the Lord came and stood before them, and he spake
> unto them, saying: Why do ye smite your younger brother
> with a rod? Know ye not that the Lord hath chosen him to be
> a ruler over you, and this because of your iniquities? Behold
> ~~ye shall~~ thou shalt[18] go up to Jerusalem _again_, and the Lord
> will deliver Laban into your hands. And after the angel had
> ~~spoken~~ spake[19] unto us, he departed. (1 Nephi 3:29-30)

The angel's words, of course, echo Joseph's brothers' words in
Genesis 37:8: "Shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or shalt thou indeed
have dominion [shalt thou indeed rule] over us?" The implicit answer
to Joseph's brothers' question in terms of Nephi's relationship to Laman
and Lemuel is "yes."

The lexical affinities between this scene and Genesis 37 are
strengthened by the angel's statement "thou shalt go up … again." If
spoken in Hebrew, which was presumably the case, the angel's words
probably used the _yāsap_-idiom, to "do something again." The brothers
already had "[gone] up _again_ unto the house of Laban" at Nephi's
instigation (1 Nephi 3:23). The literary/rhetorical effect of this language
in both instances is to recall the name Joseph, which (as noted above)
derives from _yāsap_, and thus to associate Nephi with Joseph and Nephi's
brothers' with Joseph's brothers.

The same observations can be applied to what follows in 1 Nephi 3:31
after the angel had departed: "Laman and Lemuel _again began to murmur_,
saying: How is it possible that the Lord will deliver Laban into our hands?
Behold, he is a mighty man, and he can command fifty, yea, even he can
slay fifty; then why not us?" The celestial glow of the angel had hardly
dimmed, so to speak, when Laman and Lemuel "add" or "increase"
their angry murmuring. The _yāsap/yôsîp_ + verbal component idiom is
reflected in the phrase "again began to murmur," and it constitutes an
echo of Genesis 37:5, 8 ("they hated him yet the more [_wayyôsipû ʿôd_]").

Unfortunately, the chapter division between 1 Nephi 3:31 and 1 Nephi
4:1 tends to obscure or obfuscate the pattern of iterative (_yāsap_-) action
that Nephi emphasizes. In response to his brothers' added or increased
murmuring, Nephi then exhorts his brothers, reiterating the angel's
previous commandment: "I spake unto my brethren, saying: _Let us go up_
again unto Jerusalem" (1 Nephi 4:1). Nephi resumes his leadership (his

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18   Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants*, 1:98.
19   Ibid., 98-99.

"ruling"), and his language recalls the name Joseph, whose revelations regarding his fraternal and family leadership the Lord eventually vindicated. Nephi understands that the Lord will vindicate the promises the Lord made to him regarding his own fraternal and family leadership role.

At this point, Nephi makes an even clearer allusion to Genesis 37 and the anger/hatred of Joseph's brothers: "*Now when I had spoken these words*, they were[20] *yet* [cf. ʿôd] *wroth*, and *did still continue* to murmur" (1 Nephi 4:4). Nephi's statement not so subtly echoes Genesis 37:5, 8: "and *they hated him* yet *the more*" and "And his brethren said to him, *Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him* yet *the more* [wayyôsipû ʿôd] *for his dreams, and for his words*." It should be noted here that one of the idiomatic senses of *yāsap* is to "continue to do [something], carry on doing,"[21] i.e., continuing an activity. Nephi appears to split the *yāsap/yôsip* + ʿôd idiom from Genesis 37:5, 8 in connecting his brothers' increased (and increasing) anger against him, to that of Joseph's brothers.

Thus in 1 Nephi 2–4 we see the beginning of Nephi's efforts throughout his personal record to adapt and permute the language of Genesis 37 in order to identify himself and his struggles with Joseph and his struggles, and to identify Laman and Lemuel with Joseph's brothers. Nephi will return to the same language, including wordplay on the name *Joseph*, to further emphasize these connections. Nephi will not only demonstrate the reiteration of Laman and Lemuel's anger that is progressing to hatred, but make additional allusions to Joseph's story which show that Joseph's revelations regarding his relationship with his brothers were fulfilled again or actualized in Nephi's relationship with his inimical brothers Laman and Lemuel.

Scene #2: "They Were Angry with Me Again"

The second "anger" scene occurs in 1 Nephi 7:6‑21 on the return journey from Jerusalem to the valley of Lemuel. Laman and Lemuel notably appeared to have offered little resistance in the way of their trademark murmuring and complaining when Lehi commanded them to return to Jerusalem the second time on a mission to persuade Ishmael's family to join them in the wilderness — a mission that, if successful, would result in their having suitable marriage partners. Their "sales pitch" is successful, and Ishmael's family joins Lehi's family in the wilderness. At

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20   Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants*, 1:101‑05.
21   HALOT, 418.

this point, fraternal resentment against Nephi resurfaces in a scene that evokes Joseph's brothers' treatment of him in Genesis 37:

> And it came to pass that when I, Nephi, had spoken these words unto my brethren, *they were angry with me*. And it came to pass that they did lay their hands upon me, for behold, *they were exceedingly wroth*, and they did bind me with cords, for they sought to take away my life, that they might leave me in the wilderness to be devoured by wild beasts [cf. especially Genesis 37:20]. But it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord, saying: O Lord, according to my faith which is in me,[22] wilt thou deliver me from the hands of my brethren; yea, even give me strength that I may burst these bands with which I am bound. And it came to pass that when I had said these words, behold, the bands were loosed from off my hands and feet, and I stood before my brethren, and *I spake unto them <u>again</u>*. And it came to pass that *they were angry with me <u>again</u>*, and sought to lay hands upon me; but behold, one of the daughters of Ishmael, yea, and also her mother, and one of the sons of Ishmael, did plead with my brethren, insomuch that they did soften their hearts; and they did *cease striving to take away my life*. And it came to pass that they were sorrowful, because of their wickedness, *insomuch that they did bow down before me*, and did plead with me that I would forgive them of the thing that they had done against me. (1 Nephi 7:16–20)

Here again, Nephi includes several words and phrases that recall Genesis 37:5–10, 20. Alluding to Joseph's brothers' "hate," Nephi refers to his brothers' anger three times: "they were angry with me," "they were exceedingly wroth," and "they were angry with me *again*." Nephi intends the latter phrase to recall the twofold statement "they hated him *yet the more* [*wayyôsipû ʿôd*]" with its wordplay on Joseph's name. It will be remembered that the same verb used, *yāsap*, is the same Hebrew word frequently used to express iterative action — i.e., to "do something *again*." Thus when Nephi says his brothers "were angry with me *again*" (1 Nephi 7:19), he intends his audience to recall how Joseph's brothers "hated him *yet the more*" (Genesis 37:5, 8).

Similar narrative verbal art is evident in Nephi's statement "*and I spake unto them *again*" (cf. Isaiah 8:5 [2 Nephi 18:5]: "The Lord spake

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22   Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants*, 1:149–51.

also unto me *again* [*wayyôsep* … *ʿôd*]").[23] Ordinarily this kind of statement would not draw much attention. However, in the context of Nephi's attempt to draw connections between Joseph's biography and his own, the apparent use of the *yāsap*-idiom reminds us that Nephi is speaking to his brothers as Joseph did and gendering a very similar response: attempted fratricide.

Another important narrative detail that Nephi must have included because it recalled Joseph's biography is his brothers' "bow[ing] down before [him]." This, of course, was the very essence of Joseph's dreams and revelations — that he would "have dominion" or "rule" over his brothers:

> And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and *Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves* [*wayyištaḥăwû*] *before him with their faces to the earth.* (Genesis 42:6)

> And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and *bowed themselves to him* [*wayyištaḥăwû lô*] to the earth. And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well …? Is he yet alive? And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, *and made obeisance* [Qere: *wayyištaḥăwû*]. (Genesis 43:26–28)

The two scenes in Genesis 42:6 and 43:26–28 in which Joseph's brothers bow down[24] are matched by the two scenes in 1 Nephi 7 and 17 (on the latter, see below) in which Nephi's brothers bow down to (or attempt to bow down and worship) him. Just as Joseph's dream was fulfilled, Nephi wants us to see that the Lord's promise that he would be "a ruler and a teacher" was already well on its way to being fulfilled.

The pericope concludes with another idiomatic *yāsap/yôsîp* + verbal complement[25] statement: "And after they had done praying unto the

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23   See also Genesis 18:29; Judges 9:37; Isaiah 7:10 [2 Nephi 17:10]; Esther 8:3; etc.

24   Jacob's "bowing down," which was also prophesied in Genesis 37:5–10, is told in a much subtler fashion. Jacob obtains an oath from Joseph that following his death, he will not bury him in Egypt: "But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying place. And he said, I will do as thou hast said. And he said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself [*wayyištaḥû*] upon the bed's head" (Genesis 47:30–31).

25   On the *yāsap/yôsîp* + verbal complement construction performing adverbial functions, see Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical*

Lord we did *again* travel on our journey towards the tent of our father" (1 Nephi 7:21). Nephi's "Joseph" leadership and Joseph-like faith is responsible for the progress of the family in their journey.

Scene #3: "They Had Hardened Their Hearts Again"

The third "anger" scene occurs in 1 Nephi 16:18–32 during the journey south-southeast through Arabia from the valley of Lemuel, which brought new perils to the family. Despite Lehi's finding of the Liahona, "which led [the family] in the more fertile parts of the wilderness" (1 Nephi 16:16), broken and disabled bows eventually brought a hunger crisis upon the family. Nephi here reports the resurfacing of his brothers' anger: "And it came to pass that as I, Nephi, went forth to slay food, behold, I did break my bow, which was made of fine steel; and after I did break my bow, behold, *my brethren were angry with me because of the loss of my bow*, for we did obtain no food" (1 Nephi 16:18). Nephi then adds, "And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did speak much unto my brethren, because *they had hardened their hearts again, even unto complaining* against the Lord their God" (1 Nephi 16:22). Nephi's brothers' anger had become hardness of heart. In stating that "they had hardened their hearts again," Nephi uses an expression that represents (or is) the *yāsap* + verbal complement construction, thus again subtly recalling the name *Joseph* and Joseph's brothers' increasing hate — their "hat[ing] him yet the more."

Uncharacteristically, Nephi's words "humbled" his brothers for the moment. Nephi's faithfulness, ingenuity, and spiritual gifts enabled him to replace his lost bow and follow the directions on the Liahona to obtain food (1 Nephi 16:24–32). Like Joseph's actions during his captivity and sojourn in Egypt, Nephi's efforts enable his family to survive and continue in their journey: "And it came to pass that we *did again take* our journey, … and after we had traveled for the space of many days *we did pitch our tents again*, that we might tarry for the space of a time (16:33). The verbal constructions here too probably represent the *yāsap/yôsîp* + verbal complement construction at some level, yet again recalling (if only subtly) the name *Joseph*.

Hebrew Syntax (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 602 (36.2.1d), 656–57 (39.3.1b-e).

Scene #4: "The Lord Did Bless Us Again"

The fourth "anger" scene occurs at "the place which was called Nahom,"[26] as recorded in 1 Nephi 16:34–17:4. Unfortunately, here the anger and resentment of Nephi's brothers surface and grow to the point that they plot both fratricide and patricide:

> And thus they did murmur against my father, and also against me; and *they were desirous to return <u>again</u> to Jerusalem*. And Laman said unto Lemuel and also unto the sons of Ishmael: Behold, *let us slay our father, and also our brother Nephi, who has taken it upon him to be our ruler and our teacher, who are his elder brethren*. Now, he says that the Lord has talked with him, and also that angels have ministered unto him. But behold, we know that he lies unto us; and he tells us these things, and he worketh many things by his cunning arts, that he may deceive our eyes, thinking, perhaps, that he may lead us away into some strange wilderness; and after he has led us away, *he has thought to make himself a king and a ruler over us*, that he may do with us according to his will and pleasure. And *after this manner did my brother Laman stir up their hearts to anger*. And it came to pass that the Lord was with us, yea, even the voice of the Lord came and did speak many words unto them, and did chasten them exceedingly; and *after they were chastened by the voice of the Lord they did turn away their anger*, and did repent of their sins, insomuch that *the Lord did bless us <u>again</u> with food*, that we did not perish. And it came to pass that *we did <u>again</u>* take our journey in the wilderness; and we did travel nearly eastward from that time forth. (1 Nephi 16:36–1 Nephi 17:1)

Laman's cohortative language, "Behold, <u>let us slay</u> our father, and also *our brother Nephi*," is reported in a manner that echoes Joseph's brothers' proposed fratricide: "Come now therefore, and *let us slay*

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26   Warren P. Aston and Michaela Knoth Aston. *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi's Journey across Arabia to Bountiful* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 3–25; Warren P. Aston, Michaela J. Aston, Stephen D. Ricks, and John W. Welch, "Lehi's Trail and Nahom Revisited," in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon: A Decade of New Research* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1992), 47–52; S. Kent Brown, "New Light from Arabia on Lehi's Trail," in *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon*, edited by Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and John W. Welch (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002), 81–83; James Gee, "The Nahom Maps," *JBMORS* 17/1–2 (2008): 40–57.

him" (Genesis 37:20). Laman accuses Nephi of unrighteous dominion, asserting: "[he] has taken upon him to be our ruler and our teacher, who are his elder brethren" and "he has thought to make himself a king and a ruler over us." These accusations replicate Joseph's brothers' charge: "Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" in Genesis 37:8. Ironically, Laman uses his anger to stir up Lemuel and others to anger in order to get his own way, a true attempt at unrighteous dominion.

Resentment at Nephi's relationship with their father has, by this point, become not only a potential basis for fratricide but patricide. This marks a terrible progression in Laman's anger. Jealousy of Nephi's spiritual gifts — "the Lord has talked with him," "angels have ministered unto him," "cunning arts" — has clearly redoubled that anger. The situation becomes so serious this time that the Lord intervenes directly (1 Nephi 16:39). Only words of divine chastisement avert disaster for the entire clan. Finally, only in consequence of the chastisement, "they did turn away their anger" (1 Nephi 16:39). All of this yet again reminds us of Genesis 37:5, 8 and the repeated statement "and they hated him *yet the more* [*wayyôsipû ʿôd*]."

Nephi's statement that the brothers were "desirous to return *again*" may or may not represent another instance of the *yāsap/yôsîp* + verbal complement construction.[27] However, his concluding statements in the pericope, "the Lord did bless us *again* with food" and "we did *again* take our journey," very likely represent the *yāsap/yôsîp* + verbal complement construction, thus recalling the name Joseph and recalling the Lord's preservation of life of Jacob's entire family through Joseph (specifically in giving the family food). Nephi, like his ancestor Joseph, serves as the Lord's instrument in the temporal salvation of the entire family, in spite of their being the objects of their brothers' anger and hatred, and even perhaps because they are objects of such contempt.

Scene #5: "Stretch Forth Thine Hand Again"

The fifth recorded manifestation of Laman and Lemuel's anger at Nephi occurs in the land Bountiful, after the Lord commands Nephi to build a ship and his brothers mock him and his endeavor, while refusing to

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27 The Hebrew equivalent of "return again" can be accomplished in Hebrew with or without *yāsap* as an auxiliary verb. Genesis 8:2 and Deuteronomy 17:16 use *yāsap*, whereas, e.g., Genesis 42:24; Proverbs 2:19; Jeremiah 3:1b; and Ecclesiastes 1:7 use no auxiliary verb. Additional passages, e.g., Jeremiah 3:1a; 22:10; Job 6:29; 7:10; and 2 Samuel 13:23 include the term *ʿôd*.

help Nephi (1 Nephi 17:17–18:1). Nephi then gives them a prolonged exhortation replete with lessons from ancient Israelite history (1 Nephi 17:23–43) and from the family's own more recent history (1 Nephi 17:44–47). Just as Joseph's "words" engendered hatred in his brothers, Nephi's words yet again have the effect of angering his brothers: "And now it came to pass that when I had spoken these words *they were angry with me*, and were desirous to throw me into the depths of the sea" (1 Nephi 17:48). When Nephi's brothers "came forth to lay their hands upon [him]," Nephi drew upon divine power "even unto the consuming of [his] flesh" and commanded his brothers to cease and desist, lest they "wither even as a dried reed" and "God … smite [them]" (1 Nephi 17:48). Nephi further admonished them in words that echo the name Joseph: "And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto them that they should *murmur no more* [cf. (wě)-lō' yōsipû … 'ôd][28] against their father; neither should they withhold their labor from me, for God had commanded me that I should build a ship." Nephi's express wish that "they should murmur no more" (1 Nephi 17:49) constitutes yet another permutation of the phrase "they hated him yet the more" in Genesis 37:5, 8. Nephi wanted and needed his brothers to cease acting as Joseph's brothers had acted towards Joseph, which they did for a little while. Nephi informs us that his brothers "were confounded and could not contend against me; neither durst they lay their hands upon me nor touch me with their fingers, even for the space of many days. Now they durst not do this lest they should wither before me" (1 Nephi 17:52).

It is probably significant that the Lord, at this point, commands Nephi to demonstrate the divine power within him in words that also echo the name Joseph. The response that this divine power effects further echoes Joseph's biography:

> And it came to pass that the Lord said unto me: *Stretch forth thine hand again* unto thy brethren, and they shall not wither before thee, but I will shock [shake][29] them, saith the Lord, and this will I do, that they may know that I am the Lord their God. And it came to pass that I stretched forth my hand unto my brethren, and they did not wither before me; but the Lord did shake them, even according to the word which he had spoken. And now, they said: We know of a surety that the

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28   Cf., e.g., Deuteronomy 19:20 "*and [they] shall henceforth* commit *no more* [wělō' yōsipû … 'ôd] any such evil among you"; cf. also Deuteronomy 17:16: "Ye shall henceforth return *no more* [lō' tōsipûn] that way."

29   See Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants*, 1:378–79.

> Lord is with thee, for we know that it is the power of the Lord that has shaken us. *And they fell down before me, and were about to worship me*, but I would not suffer them, saying: I am thy brother, yea, even thy younger brother; wherefore, worship the Lord thy God, and honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God shall give thee. (1 Nephi 17:53–55)

The command "stretch forth thine hand again" — if a representation or manifestation of the *yāsap* + verbal complement construction, as seems likely — echoes the name *Joseph* and the idea that "the Lord was with Joseph," as in Genesis 39:2, 21[30] (see especially Nephi's brothers' statement, "we know that the Lord is with thee"). This command also echoes a commandment given twice to Moses in Exodus 8:5 and 9:22, when Moses is given divine power to accomplish the plagues in Egypt. The Lord was with Nephi (1 Nephi 17:55) just as he was with Moses (Exodus 3:12).[31]

Moreover, for a second time, Laman and Lemuel fall down before Nephi and are about to "worship" him — i.e., observe *hištaḥăwâ* or proskynesis. This scene not only recalls the incident in the wilderness in 1 Nephi 7, but also recalls Genesis 37 and Joseph's prophecy that his brothers would "bow down" or "do obeisance"/"worship" before him and its fulfillment in Genesis 42:6 and 43:26–28. Nephi's brothers likewise have bowed down to him twice. Nephi had become "ruler" over his brothers, just as Joseph had become "ruler" over his.

Nephi's description of the completed ship that would carry the family to the New World contains an echo of both his name and the name Joseph: "And it came to pass that after I had finished the ship, according to the word of the Lord, my brethren beheld that *it was <u>good</u>*, and that the workmanship thereof was exceedingly *fine*; wherefore, *they did humble themselves <u>again</u> before the Lord*" (1 Nephi 18:4). Nephi here makes a possible wordplay on his own name — Nephi (Egyptian *nfr* = "good")[32] — the ship being "good" because of its divinely directed

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30   Genesis 39:2: "And *the Lord was with Joseph*, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian"; Genesis 39:21: "But *the Lord was with Joseph*, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison."

31   See also Joshua 1:17; 3:7.

32   Cf. Matthew L. Bowen, "Internal Textual Evidence for the Egyptian Origin of Nephi's Name," *Insights* 22/11 (2002): 2; idem, 'O Ye Fair Ones': An Additional Note on the Meaning of the Name Nephi," *Insights* 23/6 (2003): 2; idem, "'He Is

builder. Moreover, Nephi brings together the image of the brothers "bowing down," here alluded to less concretely in the phrase "they did humble themselves," together with the *yāsap/yôsîp* + verb complement construction of iterative action ("to do something again"), recalling the name Joseph. The point here too is that Nephi had become their "ruler" and their "teacher." The completed ship was such stark proof of that fact, and at this point not even Nephi's brothers could deny it.

Scene #6: "We Sailed Again Towards the Promised Land"

The sixth recorded "anger" scene (1 Nephi 18:4–22) occurs on the ship built under Nephi's inspired leadership, as the Lehite-Ishmaelite clan travel to the Promised Land over the "great deep." Predictably, Nephi's brothers' being "humble before the Lord" has a short shelf life. On the journey across the "great waters," Nephi's brothers' anger resurfaces in its most brutal manifestation thus far. The brothers' pretext again is alleged unrighteous dominion — Nephi's being a "ruler" over them:

> And after we had been driven forth before the wind for the space of many days, behold, my brethren and the sons of Ishmael and also their wives began to make themselves merry, insomuch that they began to dance, and to sing, and to speak with much rudeness, yea, even that they did forget by what power they had been brought thither; yea, they were lifted up unto exceeding rudeness. And I, Nephi, began to fear exceedingly lest the Lord should be angry with us, and smite us because of our iniquity, that we should be swallowed up in the depths of the sea; wherefore, *I, Nephi, began to speak to them with much soberness; but behold they were angry with me*, saying: *We will not that our younger brother shall be a ruler over us.* And it came to pass that Laman and Lemuel did take me and bind me with cords, and they did treat me with much harshness; nevertheless, the Lord did suffer it that he might show forth his power, unto the fulfilling of his word which he had spoken concerning the wicked. (1 Nephi 18:9–11)

The brothers' declamation "we will not that our younger brother shall be a ruler over us," again recalling Joseph's brothers' words in Genesis 37 ("Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have

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a Good Man': The Fulfillment of Helaman 5:6–7 in Helaman 8:7 and 11:18–19," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 17 (2016): 165–70; idem, "Nephi's Good Inclusio," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 17 (2016): 181–95.

dominion [*timšōl*, rule] over us?"), is highly ironic, given everything that has transpired during the Lehite/Ishmaelite clan's journey through the wilderness, and the preservation of life that Nephi's leadership has accomplished. It is perhaps even more ironic that they reacted against Nephi's leadership (as "ruler")[33] by exercising unrighteous dominion or "rule" of the worst kind over the rest of the family.

That Nephi still had the Lord's approval is evident in the violence of the storm that arose when Laman and Lemuel, et al., confined him and abused him (1 Nephi 18:10–20), and the "great calm" that prevailed when they released him (1 Nephi 18:21). Nephi offers another echo of the name "Joseph" when he reports, "And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did guide the ship, that *we sailed _again_* towards the promised land" (1 Nephi 18:22). As it was with Joseph, so it was with Nephi: "the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand" (Genesis 39:3) and "that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper" (Genesis 39:23).

Scene #7: "Do Not Anger Again Because of Mine Enemies"

The seventh, final, and most complex "anger" scene occurs in 2 Nephi 4–5, although it is anticipated already in Lehi's speech in 2 Nephi 1. Given that the number seven in Hebrew denotes completion, fullness, perfection and the like,[34] I suggest that this represents a deliberate authorial and narratalogical decision on Nephi's part. The fruit of Laman and Lemuel's "increasing" anger finally ripened.

Lehi's paranetic speech to his sons in the New World, as reported by Nephi, commanded them: "*Rebel _no more_* [cf. ʾal tōsipû] *against your brother*, whose views have been glorious, and who hath kept the commandments from the time that[35] we left Jerusalem; and who hath been an instrument in the hands of God, in bringing us forth into the land of promise; for were it not for him, we must have perished with hunger in the wilderness; nevertheless, ye sought to take away his life" (2 Nephi 1:24). Nephi, like Joseph, had been the Lord's instrument in preserving life of his entire *bêt-ʾāb* ("father's house"). Lehi's use of a negative imperative + "no more" probably represents ʾal tōsipû in spoken Hebrew, constituting in the context of all the foregoing yet another allusion to and wordplay on the name Joseph.

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33 Cf. Mosiah 10:12–17.

34 See the other examples of the "seven" phenomenon in Volluz, "A Study in Seven," 57–83.

35 Following Skousen (*Analysis of Textual Variants*, 1:488).

Lehi then addresses Nephi's suffering and addresses the brothers' accusation of unrighteous dominion:

> Yea, and he hath suffered much sorrow because of you. And I exceedingly fear and tremble because of you, lest *he shall suffer again*; for behold, *ye have accused him that he sought power and authority over you*; but I know that *he hath not sought for power nor authority over you*, but he hath sought the glory of God, and your own eternal welfare. (2 Nephi 1:24–25)

Lehi's statement "I exceedingly fear … lest [Nephi] suffer *again*" is to be understood in connection with his earlier command "Rebel *no more* against thy brother." The former, like the latter, appears to represent the *yāsap/yôsîp* + verbal complement construction. If so, Lehi (and Nephi) are making a very pointed connection between Nephi and his ancestor Joseph and clearly evoking the latter's name.

Nephi's specific, repeated mention of the "anger" of his brethren before 2 Nephi 5, rather than their hatred, which he finally mentions in 2 Nephi 5 — although that they hated Nephi was unquestionably true — may point to Jacob's mention of Simeon and Levi's disqualifying themselves from possible birthright blessings because of their "anger" (see Genesis 49:6–7 referring to the story told in Genesis 35:25–29, just as Reuben and Judah would also disqualify themselves on moral grounds). A major point of Nephi's record is to show how Laman and Lemuel and the sons of Ishmael had disinherited themselves and their posterity (for a time) from specific spiritual blessings (see 2 Nephi 1) and from the right to rule.[36]

Nephi states that as soon as Lehi was dead, their anger resurfaced: "And it came to pass that not many days after his death, Laman and Lemuel and the sons of Ishmael were angry with me because of the admonitions of the Lord" (2 Nephi 4:13). We anticipate a scene that will unfold like the previous six (1 Nephi 3:28–4:4; 7:6–21; 16:18–32, 16:34–17:4; 17:17–18:1, 18:4–22).

We recall that Lehi defends Nephi against the apparent countercharge of his brothers that Nephi had been "angry" and used "anger" as a means of compulsion — another reiteration of the accusation that he was guilty of unrighteous dominion:

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36   See Noel B. Reynolds, "The Political Dimension in Nephi's Small Plates," *BYU Studies* 27/4 (1987): 15–37.

> And ye have murmured because he hath been plain unto you.
> Ye say that he hath used sharpness; *ye say that he hath been
> angry with you*; but behold, his sharpness was the sharpness
> of the power of the word of God, which was in him; and *that
> which ye call anger was the truth*, according to that which is
> in God, which he could not ~~restrain~~ constrain,[37] manifesting
> boldly concerning your iniquities. (2 Nephi 1:26)

But we learn in Nephi's "Psalm" (2 Nephi 4:16–35) that Nephi *had*
been "angry" and that he had been grappling with "anger." And Nephi is
quite upset about it.

Nephi lamented the anger he had felt and still felt at the time of
the writing of his psalm — anger that arose in response to the repeated
anger directed at him by his brothers and the repeated physical, mental,
and emotional abuse heaped upon him by the very older brothers who
should have loved and nurtured him:

> And why should I yield to sin, because of my flesh? Yea, why
> should I give way to temptations, that the evil one have place
> in my heart to destroy my peace and afflict my soul? *Why
> am I angry because of mine enemy* [the one who hates me]?
> Awake, my soul! *No longer* droop in sin. Rejoice, O my heart,
> and *give place no more* for the enemy of my soul [the one who
> hates my soul]. Do *not anger again* [do not add to be angry]
> because of mine enemies [those who hate me]. Do not slacken
> my strength because of mine afflictions. (2 Nephi 4:27–29)

Whatever anger Nephi felt and to whatever degree he felt it, that
anger did not lead him to plot fratricide or patricide, as did his brothers'
anger. Nephi had, rather, ever "sought the glory of God, and [their]
eternal welfare" (2 Nephi 1:25). Nevertheless, Nephi's anger had brought
him too close to the anger of Joseph's brothers and his own brothers for
comfort. It is Nephi's admission of this fact that makes the wordplay on
"Joseph" in 2 Nephi 4–5 — not least the phrases "do not anger again"
and "their anger increased against me" — the most interesting and
significant permutation of the "Joseph" wordplay in Nephi's writings.

Nephi recognized that his brothers' anger would determine
their eternal destiny (see Lehi's "fear[ing] exceedingly" for them in
1 Nephi 8:4–36; and Nephi's own fear in 1 Nephi 17:47: "I fear lest ye shall
be cast off forever"). Nephi wanted no part of that. It will be remembered
that in his words to his sons, Lehi deployed the "awake" language of

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37   Following Skousen (*Analysis of Textual Variants*, 1:490–91).

Isaiah 51:9, 17; 52:1 (2 Nephi 1:13-14, 23). Nephi likens this "awake" language to himself and his soul. Nephi's use of terms translated "no longer," "no more," "do not … again" are probably drawn ultimately from the "no more" of Isaiah 51:22 ("*thou shalt no more* drink it again [*lōʾ tôsîpî … ʿôd*]") and 52:1 "there *shall no more* [*lōʾ yôsîp … ʿôd*] come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." These statements are also meant to recall Lehi's statements "rebel no more" (2 Nephi 1:24) and "he shall suffer again" (2 Nephi 1:25). All these texts echo the name of Joseph, with whom Nephi so thoroughly identifies himself.

Following his psalm, Nephi resumes the story of his brothers' anger and its consequences:

> Behold, it came to pass that *I, Nephi, did cry much unto the Lord my God, because of the anger of my brethren.* But behold, *their anger did increase* [Hebrew *yāsap*] *against me,* insomuch that they did seek to take away my life. Yea, they did murmur against me, saying: *Our younger brother thinks to rule over us*; and we have had much trial because of him; wherefore, *now let us slay him, that we may not be afflicted more* because of his words. For behold, we will not ~~have him to~~ that he shall be[38] our ruler; *for it belongs unto us, who are the elder brethren, to rule over this people.* Now I do not write upon these plates all the words which they murmured against me. But it sufficeth me to say, that *they did seek to take away my life.* (2 Nephi 5:1-4)

The wordplay on "Joseph" in this passage is twofold: "their anger did *increase*" represents and alludes to the use of the Hebrew verb *yāsap* in Genesis 37:5, 8 (as noted previously). In other words, the "increase" of fraternal anger that represents Nephi's brothers' attitude towards him matches the increase in hatred ("they hated him yet the more") that represents Joseph's brothers towards him.

Concomitant with the "increase" of their anger is another play on the name "Joseph" (as presented in the text) and one of the saddest statements that occur in Nephi's writings, if not in the entire Book of Mormon: "Now let us slay him, that we may not be afflicted more because of his words." Nephi's brothers, like Joseph's brothers, wanted to kill him "because of his words." Laman and Lemuel, et al., would never *again* have Nephi's words in mortality — and for many years, neither would their posterity. The "rule" that Nephi's spiritual leadership offered

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38   Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants*, 1:550.

would have helped Laman and Lemuel's posterity avoid the pitfalls that Laman's "rule" caused the descendants of those family members who followed him. Nephi here concludes "that the words of the Lord had been fulfilled unto my brethren, which he spake concerning them [in 1 Nephi 2:22, reiterated by the angel in 1 Nephi 3:29], that I should be their ruler and their teacher. Wherefore I had been their ruler and their teacher, according to the commandments of the Lord, until the time they sought to take away my life" (2 Nephi 5:19).

For his part, Laman's "rule" among his siblings and their families (to this point) constituted abuse and unrighteous dominion. Nephi and those who followed him were compelled to flee that situation. The remainder of the family were "cut off from the presence of the Lord" (2 Nephi 5:20), as the Lord first foretold to Nephi and separately to his father Lehi (Alma 50:20; 1 Nephi 2:21; 2 Nephi 1:20; 4:4).[39]

"Ye Shall See My Face No More" (Genesis 44:23): Implications of the Final Familial Breach in 2 Nephi 5

Nephi's brothers' stated wish was to "*not* be afflicted *more* because of his words" (2 Nephi 5:3). This language recalls, in a rather ironic way, a later scene in Genesis 44 between Joseph and his brothers. Joseph as ruler in Egypt, as yet unknown to the very brothers who had sold him as a slave into Egypt, said to them as recalled by Judah: "And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, *ye shall see my face no more* [*lōʾ tōsipûn*]" (Genesis 44:23).

The ending of the story for Joseph and his brothers is ultimately a happy one. As for Nephi and his brothers, they never "added" to see Joseph's face — they would "see [his] face no more." Moreover, they were cut off from the Lord's "face" or "presence." The divinely mandated departure of Nephi and those who would follow him marked a permanent breach in the family: "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; for I knew their hatred towards me and my children and those who were called my people" (2 Nephi 5:14). Nephi's brothers' anger had now "increased" to full-blown hate — a full-blown generational hatred with long-lasting consequences.[40]

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39   See also, e.g., Alma 9:13–14; 36:30; 37:13; 38:1; 50:20.

40   Jacob alludes to continuing Lamanite hatred of the Nephites between the second through fourth generations as a (partial) pretext for Nephite counter-hatred and racism against the Lamanites in Jacob 3:5–7. Jacob later calls it an "eternal

That this breach pained Nephi for the rest of his life is evident in one of the last statements he makes at the end of his record, evidently near the end of his life: "And it [Nephi's record/words] speaketh harshly against sin, according to the plainness of the truth; wherefore, *no man will be angry at the words which I have written save he shall be of the spirit of the devil*" (2 Nephi 33:5). Nephi knew by hard, painful personal experience about what kind of person would "anger" at his words and why, just as his ancestor Joseph had learned (see Genesis 37:8). Nephi had faced the "enemy of [his] soul" who made himself manifest in his brothers' anger time and time again, yet Nephi still had "great faith in Christ that [he would] meet many souls spotless at his judgment-seat" (2 Nephi 33:7), including the souls of his brothers' descendants.

Conclusion

Nephi's autobiographical adaptation of the wordplay in Genesis 37:5–8 constitutes a sophisticated use of scripture in texts that themselves have become scripture. This shrewd adaptation of biblical wordplay is not likely to be the work of a 19th century agrarian youth of limited literary attainments, but of an ancient Israelite familiar with an ancient version of Joseph's biography and the wordplay on Joseph's name in Genesis 37:5, 8 and elsewhere.

Nephi's inclusion of seven scenes — a number that denotes fullness or completion — describing his brother's increasing anger. In every case these scenes include a permutation of the phrase "they hated him *yet the more* [*wayyôsipû ʿôd*]" or otherwise include language that represents

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hatred" (Jacob 7:24–26). Enos, like his father Jacob, amid continuing failed attempts to reclaim the Lamanites to the covenant, refers to Lamanite "hatred" as "fixed" (Enos 1:20). Benjamin alludes to the continuing, generational Lamanite hatred in Mosiah 1:14. Zeniff, citing Jacob, mentions the Lamanites' "eternal hatred" in Mosiah 10:17. Mormon refers to this "hatred" in during Noah's corrupt kingship (Mosiah 11:17). It was in no small part to "cure [the Lamanites] of their hatred towards the Nephites" (Mosiah 28:2) that Ammon and his brothers undertook their great mission to the Lamanites. In Alma 26, the traditional Lamanite "hatred against [the Nephites]" (Alma 26:9) becomes "hatred to sin" (Alma 26:34) among Ammon's converts. Amalickiah manipulates traditional Lamanite "hatred" in Alma 43:7 to achieve his monarchic designs. (Captain) Moroni asserted that Lamanite "hatred" had been "redoubled" by Nephite dissenters. Righteous Lamanites during the time of Nephi the son of Helaman and Samuel the Lamanite continued to "lay down their weapons of war, and also their hatred and the tradition of their fathers," like Ammon's converts (Helaman 5:51; 15:4). Moroni the son of Mormon, for his part stated that the Lamanites of his time continued to "put to death every Nephite that [would] not deny the Christ" (Moroni 1:2; cf. especially 4 Nephi 1:39).

the *yāsap/yôsîp* + verbal component idiom, recalling the name and life of Joseph." This "Joseph" wordplay revolves around the anger of Nephi's brothers and their attitude towards him, thus recalling Joseph's brothers' hatred of Joseph and its consequences. Although the ending of the story of Joseph and his brothers was a happy one, and the story of Nephi and his brothers was not, Nephi, Jacob, Enos and others continued to pray for the reconciliation the Nephites and the Lamanites. The stories of Joseph and his brothers and the story of Jacob and Esau gave them that hope that there could be such a reconciliation.[41]

*[**Editor's note:** The author would like to thank Allen Wyatt, Parker Jackson, and Tim Guymon.]*

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41   See John A. Tvedtnes and Matthew Roper, "Jacob and Enos: Wrestling before God," *Insights* 21/5 (2001): 2–3; Matthew L. Bowen "'And There Wrestled a Man with Him' (Genesis 32:24): Enos's Adaptations of the Onomastic Wordplay of Genesis,'" *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture 10* (2014): 151–60.

Scary Ghost Stories in the Light of Day

Allen L. Wyatt

Review of Carol Lynn Pearson, *The Ghost of Eternal Polygamy: Haunting the Hearts and Heaven of Mormon Women and Men*. Walnut Creek, CA: Pivot Point Books, 2016. 242 pp. $19.95.

I have always been interested in the topic of polygamy and have, over the past few decades, read just about every book and commentary on the topic that I could find. I have spent many hours in the Church History Library, the L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library at BYU, and various other repositories poring over all of the source documents I could locate. Thus, I looked forward to reading a recent addition to the literary corpus on the subject contributed by Carol Lynn Pearson. Her book, *The Ghost of Eternal Polygamy: Haunting the Hearts and Heaven of Mormon Women and Men*, isn't a scholarly look at polygamy, but instead lays out her case for expunging polygamy completely from our history and disavowing its possibility in any future realm.

Though I have studied polygamy for decades, I always have trepidation when writing on the topic. This review essay is no exception. It is so easy to miscommunicate and for offense to be taken when none is intended. I have found that addressing the topic of polygamy is like walking through a minefield blindfolded.

My trepidation is compounded by the fact that while I have made my living as a writer, I freely acknowledge that I am nowhere near as gifted or eloquent a writer as Pearson. Though some may consider mine a fool's errand and fault my ineptitude in execution, I believe that Pearson comes up woefully short on her treatment of polygamy and her suggestions for change.

The Ghost of Eternal Polygamy consists of a dozen chapters, separated by a series of user-contributed stories collectively titled "Other Voices."

In her chapters Pearson talks about her "awakening" to the reality of polygamy, how she understands the history of polygamy, and what teachings (and scripture) the Church should jettison. She spends more than a little time talking about things she plans to tell historical figures (like Emma and Joseph Smith) in the hereafter about them and about polygamy.

Pearson's gift for writing is evident in this book. Her prose is easy to follow, easily flows, is engaging, and at times is engrossing and moving. It is not a particularly profound book or overly deep, which makes it an easy read; I was able to finish it in a long afternoon.

Once finished, though, I was troubled. The disquiet wasn't so much because of the topic but in the conclusions that Pearson draws from her understanding and treatment of the topic. If I had to synthesize Pearson's thesis as presented in her book, it is the following:

1. Polygamy is always wrong under all circumstances and has never had divine approval.
2. Polygamy in the early LDS church was a mistake attributable to Joseph's imperfections.
3. People have been hurt and continue to be hurt by historical polygamy.
4. Women are harmed when sealing policy allows men to be sealed to other women after divorce or death of an earlier wife.
5. Children are harmed by sealing policies that don't allow them to be sealed to their biological father if they are born in the covenant of their mother's previous sealing.
6. The Church needs to change canonized scripture to remove any mention of polygamy.
7. The Church needs to change sealing policies to address the hurt which Pearson sees occurring.

Pearson argues her case passionately but (to me) unconvincingly. Perhaps it is because I know the same sources as Pearson and, in all likelihood, have studied them as long as she has. I believe that her distaste for polygamy leads her to grave errors in interpretation, and her approach to addressing the topic borders on fear mongering to advance a cause.

The borders of fear mongering are approached when Pearson shares the stories solicited from others before the book was written. Many of the stories are poignant and even heartbreaking, and I'll address a few

of them later in this essay. The stories share real pain and anguish, but it is a pain and anguish that is rooted in not fully understanding some of our most basic doctrines. Pearson uses those stories to bolster points 3, 4, and 5 of her thesis. I believe it better (and ultimately more charitable) to instead teach correct doctrine, which has the power to enlighten and ultimately to change lives.

Even so, Pearson's thesis is worth considering. In this essay I seek to address the thesis in several areas, starting first with considering how polygamy should be approached and how marital systems should be assessed. I then look at how messy marriage can really be, consider how God might view polygamy, and provide some thoughts about plural marriage in heaven. Finally, I look at Pearson's specific ideas about changing the Church.

Approaching the Topic of Polygamy

In our society polygamy is generally (but not universally) abhorred. This extreme repugnance and utter loathing is likely rooted in the Victorian-era sensibilities of our societal subconscious. As Pearson notes, the 1860 Republican Party platform included ridding society of the "twin relics of barbarism," meaning slavery and polygamy (195).[1] Abhorrence of polygamy ran deep in American culture, a feeling that has continued to this day. Even though society finally rejected Victorian morality in the sexual revolution of the 1960s, abhorrence of polygamy has survived.[2]

In reading Pearson's book, I quickly came to the realization that she comfortably falls into the camp that doesn't just dislike polygamy, she abhors it; it is anathema to her concept of all that is right, good, and proper.

There is nothing wrong, per se, with abhorring polygamy; I know many faithful members of the Church who do. However, such strong feelings can color everything that one reads, thinks, does, and says

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1   This platform plan was actually adopted four years earlier, at the birth of the Republican Party in 1856. A good overview is provided at ushistory. org, "GOP Convention of 1856 in Philadelphia," http://www.ushistory.org/gop/convention_1856.htm.

2   It is ironic that other sexual dynamics entirely inconsistent with Victorian morals are, today, culturally acceptable and even celebrated. Dynamics such as free love, pre-marital sex, open marriages, unwed mothers, living together without formal marriage, and same-sex unions barely turn a head, but the anathema of polygamy remains in Western culture. One reasonably wonders what it is about polygamy that makes it so different.

related to a topic. It can affect how one reads original sources. It can affect which original sources one views as credible. It can affect what one says about those sources. And it can affect how one views what others say about those interpretations, selections, and pronouncements.

Should such persons be relied upon for advice in the very area that gives rise to such strong feelings? I'm not sure that they should be, at least not fully. In other areas of life we are quick to say, "She is so against XYZ that she can no longer see clearly" or, "I'm afraid his bias is unduly coloring his judgment."

I believe that this has happened with Pearson — her strong feelings have foreclosed her ability to calmly consider the very subject she seeks to address. For example, despite Pearson's looking at what she terms the "why" of early LDS polygamy and saying that she would do so "as a dispassionate journalist would" (55), she fails to examine all sides of the possible reasons why polygamy was implemented and easily slips into the role of partisan. In other words, she picks a side and argues against possible reasons why polygamy was practiced. Such an approach is anything but dispassionate.

Consider another example, where Pearson flatly states:

> … we want to be not only on the right side of history but to be on the side of right, because polygamy bears bad fruit and has failed the test of Joseph's own words, of being "virtuous, lovely, of good report and praiseworthy." It has proved itself to be a destroyer. (200)

Forgetting for the moment that history doesn't have "sides" or take sides, these are clearly the words of one who isn't examining an issue but is arguing for her interpretation of an issue that she clearly and forcefully dislikes. They are also words that are not balanced or fair in their disdainful judgment of history. Joseph Smith, contra Carol Lynn Pearson, clearly saw no disconnect between the 13th Article of Faith and plural marriage, yet Pearson gives no effort to understand why that might be the case.

I know a good man who, like Pearson, detests polygamy. He sees absolutely nothing right and everything wrong when it comes to the topic. It is the chief reason he disbelieves that Joseph was a prophet. Were he half as sensitive and eloquent in his writing, he could have ghostwritten for Pearson in this book. (No pun on the book's title was intended.) Talent aside, he has written long, rambling diatribes against the topic — and against Joseph — over the decades I have known him.

Recently this good man was asked by a mutual friend, "If God commands you, personally, to marry a second wife, would you obey God and take another wife?" His answer was "Yes, of course, but I would have to see God in front of me declaring such and He would need to ask me directly, not through a supposed representative of His."

I share this back and forth because, I think, it may be instructive when it comes to dealing with historical polygamy. Ironically, the one condition under which this good man would personally accept polygamy is the one condition under which Joseph Smith accepted it, and yet my friend disparages Joseph for acting in the same way in which he said he would act under the same circumstances.

How might this be instructive? By remembering first and foremost that those who participated in polygamy did so because they believed they were being obedient to God. It doesn't matter whether we believe them or not — the fact remains that *they* believed it, and a charitable reading of history almost demands that we accept that belief at face value.

All authors bring a bias to their writing; it is inevitable. Those biases are more often than not ingrained in us by our experiences and feelings about what we consider right or wrong. When dealing with historical issues — such as polygamy — an author must try as much as possible to recognize the bias and compensate for it. The author must try to charitably and compassionately understand how and why historical people acted the way they did. I have no sense that Pearson writes with that understanding or that compassion at all, as she certainly does not attempt to compensate for her bias.

Assessing Marital Systems

What is socially acceptable in marriage is determined by the prevailing thought of the society in which those marriages exist. One needs only to look at how "normal" marriages today differ from what was considered normal half a century ago. Before one can fairly consider polygamy — as Pearson purports to do — one must come to terms with what marriage means and how it has been experienced historically.

Unfortunately, Pearson has a hard time disentangling polygamy from women's issues and, more broadly, gender issues.[3] To my mind, what she misses is that polygamy is not solely a women's issue. It is

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3 Pearson has long championed women's issues and been viewed by many as a voice for women's rights — a view she has personally fostered. For instance, the "About" section on her Facebook page simply states "Carol Lynn Pearson is well known for her work for women and for the LGBT community, as well as for

more accurate to say that polygamy is a relationship issue generally and a marriage issue specifically — both men and women are affected. It should be obvious that polygamy affects all, regardless of gender.

That obviousness is underscored by over 100 personal stories submitted by both men and women at Pearson's request and shared by her in the book.[4] The vignettes speak, primarily, about polygamy as damaging to relationships. Most echoed a variation on the thoughts that polygamy is "corrosive to my marriage" (49), "has been very destructive to every relationship" (74), or is "destructive … to marriages" (160).

Even so, it may be technically incorrect even to speak of polygamy as a "relationship issue," just as it is incorrect to refer to monogamy as a relationship issue. These are not issues about relationships; they are relationship frameworks — they are distinct marital systems, if you will.

Throughout recorded history, these marital systems have functioned as societal constructs. At different places and times both systems — monogamy *and* polygamy — have been practiced. Even then, that is a simplistic view. At various times societies have taken widely divergent approaches to marriage. For millennia families arranged marriages to solidify power, enhance status, or increase wealth. Only in relatively recent history have marriages been entered into in the warm light of romantic love.

Pearson makes it very clear where she stands when it comes to marriage: "I believe in romantic love" (149). Her utter disdain for polygamy is evidenced in her juxtaposition of it against her concept of romantic love:

> Polygamous romantic love is an oxymoron for both man and woman. Polygamy does not increase a man's emotional opportunities — it halves them, or quarters them, or eighths them. No man has an endless supply of intimate giving. The beauty of romantic love is its depth, not its breadth. And for a woman polygamy is giving all and receiving part. To "adulterate" is to "render something poorer in quality by adding another substance, typically an inferior one, to make impure, degrade, spoil, taint." "Adulterate" and "adultery" are

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her more general inspirational writing." See https://www.facebook.com/clpauthor/about/.

4 Pearson actually has thousands of stories she solicited from people, over 8,000 as of the writing of her book (8). There are presumably many more stories to date, as Pearson actively solicits such stories at the end of the book and on her website (http://carollynnpearson.com).

> sister words, and in this sense polygamy functions precisely
> as adultery does, adding something that taints to something
> that was pure. (153)

That sounds plausible, but it doesn't bear up under consideration in a historical context. Pearson passionately argues for a vision of love, romance, and marriage that very few societies in history have adopted — which is another way to saying that "all who came before are inferior to where we are now." Such an attitude seems, to me, ignorant bias at best and cultural imperialism at worst. It is steeped in the cultural narcissism of the present and oblivious to the many ways that other marital systems have benefitted both men and women throughout history.

It is human tendency, when in the all-encompassing grip of romantic love that Pearson extols, to blindly assume that nobody else in all of history has loved as deeply, as fully, or as passionately as we then love. Perhaps our feelings of exclusivity overwhelm our better (and more charitable) selves when we assume that nobody in history has benefitted to the degree that we have in the marital system we lately find preferable and even ideal.

The Messiness of Marriage

Marriage is (or can be) a "messy thing." Throughout history there have been minor offenses and terrible injustices perpetrated in whatever marital system was being practiced. For every injustice and horror one can point to in a polygamous paradigm, one can find equally unjust or horrific behavior in a monogamous paradigm.[5] We should not expect anything different because regardless of the marital system, it is still people — imperfect and sometimes deeply flawed people — who are involved.

The interesting thing, though, is that with our romantic sensibilities rooted in Victorian morality and sharpened through the lens of feminist individualism, we abhor polygamous relationships and seek to embrace

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5   In a weak head-nod toward the possibility of at least marginal happiness in a polygamous paradigm, Pearson notes "It is possible to find occasional stories of polygamous families who lived in some contentment. Making the best of a difficult situation is a Mormon characteristic" (111). The dismissive approach to such "occasional stories" — bordering on being a backhanded compliment — is consistent with an overtly biased approach to polygamy that colors all that one considers on the topic.

the ideals of monogamous relationships.[6] That is, unfortunately, a double standard — one of which we may not even be aware.

How, then, does the messiness of marriage translate into the uniquely LDS concept of eternal marriage? Would it be fair to characterize eternal marriage as "an eternally messy thing?" Probably not; one can hope that with time, learning, knowledge, wisdom, change, and the oversight of a loving Father, it is possible for any mess to be sorted out — including marriages.

Perhaps not tangentially, there is at least indirect evidence that Pearson believes in the concept of eternal marriage. The story of Pearson's marriage to her husband Gerald is well known — how they met, were sealed, how Gerald gave into same-sex attraction[7] and pursued the gay lifestyle, how Pearson stood by his side and cared for him as he contracted AIDS and finally died from AIDS-related complications. Of that marriage she states:

> He and I are still sealed, you know, but Mormon authority is the least of it. We are sealed as friends forever by the matter of love and grief and loss and learning, that eternal learning that moves us ever toward God" (209).

Whether this is a head-nod toward a belief that eternal marriage (sealing) is possible without priesthood authority is debatable.[8] What is not debatable is that LDS doctrine explicitly states that marriage by

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6 Academics, for some time, have recognized that the Western practice of marriage, divorce, and marriage again is simply another form of having multiple spouses. In the view of many, this practice is considered "serial polygamy." In the larger Christian world, some have questioned why "the same church that sanctions serial polygamy has serious problems with the simultaneous one." See, for example, Satoshi Kanazawa, "The paradox of polygamy I: Why most Americans are polygamous," *Psychology Today* (February 2008), at https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-scientific-fundamentalist/200802/the-paradox-polygamy-i-why-most-americans-are-polygamous; and Moses Mlenga, *Polygamy in Northern Malawi: A Christian Reassessment* (Luwinga, Malawi: Mzuni Press, 2016), 112–13.

7 I fully understand that Pearson would not agree with my choice of words stating that her husband "gave into same-sex attraction." I have no problem with that disagreement.

8 Some members of my family, who are not LDS, believe that they will be with their spouses after this life because of the depth of love they experienced and strength of marriage they established in this life. In their view, a merciful God would not nullify their marriage and thereby cause them eternal pain. Such belief is, of course, at odds with LDS doctrine, which states that marriage without proper authority is "not of force when they are dead" (D&C 132:15).

proper authority is necessary for a sealing to have efficacy in the hereafter. This is a staple of our theological distinctiveness when compared to other faith traditions.

Recognizing that marriage is messy, then, impels that one consider how that messiness is dealt with by a loving and just God. If marriage can, in fact, extend into the next life, how is that messiness carried forward into the hereafter? Toward consideration of this messiness, I would like to examine two major scenarios: Remarriage after divorce and remarriage after the death of a spouse.

Divorce and Remarriage

In our society divorce can happen for any number of causes. In fact, it can happen for absolutely no reason at all.[9] In Pearson's book, though, there are many poignant stories of spouse betraying spouse, resulting in divorce. This is just a part of one representative example:

> My current husband and his first wife were married in the temple and were active Latter-day Saints for years. His wife slept with another man and got pregnant. They divorced before the baby was born. This ex-wife then slept with a different man and got pregnant again. Both of these children are sealed to my husband, even though they are not his children. They were "born in the covenant," with him and that's the way it will stay.

> When he and I got married, we talked about getting sealed to each other. As I looked into it, I realized that if I got sealed to my husband, I would be signing on to live in plural marriage in the eternities, since he would then be sealed to two women.

> So now, on this earth, I need to make a terrible decision. Do I want to give up my husband in the eternities, or do I want to keep him and live in eternal polygamy? As of today I am not willing to commit to eternal polygamy, so we remain "unsealed." It is very sad for me, because my husband is my other half. He is a wonderful, delightful, kind, loving, and caring man. But according to church doctrine, unless I

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9 No-fault divorce has been adopted by all states over the past 47 years. California was the first state to enact no-fault divorce in 1969 and New York the last in 2010. See www.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2010/july/new-york-to-adopt-no-fault-divorce-bill.

choose to be sealed into polygamy, he will be with his first wife forever (just like the songs say!) instead of me. (48)

I have no idea of the name of the person sharing this story, but for clarity's sake I will refer to her as Sister Johnson. The sorrow and grief portrayed in Sister Johnson's story makes the heart ache. Pearson uses the story as evidence of how the Church and its teachings have caused pain and suffering.

But is that really what is at work here? What is actually causing the pain and suffering? I believe that Pearson lays the blame at the wrong feet and, thereby, offers no true solace for Sister Johnson's pain and suffering. Sister Johnson and, presumably, Brother Johnson have made decisions based upon faulty understandings. Pearson does nothing to help them.

Consider the belief that if Sister Johnson was sealed to her husband, she "would be signing on to live in plural marriage in the eternities, since he would then be sealed to two women." This is a false understanding, as it does not take into account agency or the effects of exercising that agency.

It is a basic tenet of our religion that in the pre-mortal realm we fought what has traditionally been called the "war in heaven." The basis of that war was the exercise of moral agency. God's plan, presented and championed by Christ, was for each of us to be able to choose whether to return to God by exercising our agency righteously. Satan's plan was that "one soul shall not be lost," thereby "destroy[ing] the agency of man" (Moses 4:1, 3).

Why would one presume that God would jettison the core principle of His plan (agency, or the right to choose) by forcing His children to be married in the hereafter when they refuse to be married in the here-and-now? The thought makes reason stare.

According to multiple recitations in D&C 132, the entire basis of establishing an eternal marriage is based upon three things:

1. A willing man and woman

2. Performance of the sealing ordinance by one holding the proper keys

3. Confirmation of the ordinance by the Holy Spirit of Promise

In the case of Brother Johnson and his first wife, only one of these conditions remains satisfied — the performance of the sealing ordinance by one holding the proper keys. The other two conditions have not been satisfied. Neither party is any longer willing to participate in an eternal

marriage with each other, nor has the Holy Spirit of Promise confirmed the ordinance.

What is the Holy Spirit of Promise? According to the study materials provided with our scriptures, the Holy Ghost is the Holy Spirit of Promise.

> He confirms as acceptable to God the righteous acts, ordinances, and covenants of men. The Holy Spirit of Promise witnesses to the Father that the saving ordinances have been performed properly and that the covenants associated with them have been kept.[10]

Does anyone wonder whether Brother Johnson's first wife was keeping "the covenants associated with" eternal marriage when she lacked the personal fidelity required for that marriage?

Consider, as well, the words of Elder Bednar in a General Conference address:

> The Holy Spirit of Promise is the ratifying power of the Holy Ghost. When sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, an ordinance, vow, or covenant is binding on earth and in heaven. (See D&C 132:7.) Receiving this "stamp of approval" from the Holy Ghost is the result of faithfulness, integrity, and steadfastness in honoring gospel covenants "in [the] process of time" (Moses 7:21). However, this sealing can be forfeited through unrighteousness and transgression.[11]

Note the final sentence and its application to Brother Johnson's first marriage — his sealing to his first wife was "forfeited through unrighteousness and transgression."

With a proper understanding of how eternal marriages and sealings work, Sister Johnson's heartache could have been avoided. She could reasonably and safely enter into a sealing with Brother Johnson and build an eternal marriage that met all three requirements without fear that Brother Johnson's first wife would somehow intrude during the eternities. The same could be said for the experiences of others whose stories Pearson highlighted in her book.

I believe that Pearson does her audience a disservice when she fails to express fully and adequately the real doctrine of the Church when it

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10   https://www.lds.org/scriptures/gs/holy-spirit-of-promise

11   David A. Bednar, "Ye Must Be Born Again," *Ensign* (May 2007), 22. See also https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2007/04/ye-must-be-born-again.

comes to eternal marriages. Yet, she assures her readership that she has fully and completely studied polygamy (and related topics, such as the sealing ordinances) over the course of years. Perhaps her understanding of the topics is colored by her bias, and that coloring affects her incomplete advice. Perhaps most sadly, Pearson allows wounds to continue festering that could be salved and healed if she, instead, taught pure doctrine.

Death and Remarriage

Many of the stories Pearson shares are of the abiding heartache experienced by adult children who had a parent who died and then the surviving parent remarried and was sealed to the subsequent spouse. Here is one story I found particularly poignant:

> As a new bishop I had a woman in our congregation who was trying to make her way back to church after years of not being active. The ward and I welcomed her and her children with open arms and warmth of spirit. It wasn't long before she requested an interview with me. When she came in to the bishop's office I could tell that she was troubled.
>
> She told me that when she was in her early twenties her mother passed away of a sudden heart attack. She teared up as she remembered the moment she found out her mother had died. A few years later her father married another woman in the temple and she was sealed to him. Hesitantly she asked, "Is it true that my father will have two wives in the next life?"
>
> I found myself struggling to share what I knew was the case. "Yes," I said, "according to current church practice, a man can be sealed for eternity to more than one woman."
>
> The words seemed to fall from my lips like daggers to her heart. Her voice shook as she said, "I thought we didn't believe in or practice polygamy anymore."
>
> At that moment, I found myself inadequately prepared and a little resentful that I had to be the one to answer these questions. What can a local leader say to ease the pain of this woman who now saw herself as part of an eternal polygamous family? I did my best but the wound was too great and the words of comfort felt hollow even to me.
>
> A few weeks later, she stopped coming to church. Despite our continued efforts to reach out to her, she and her children

never returned. Polygamy drove this sister away from a ward family that loved her. (77)

Again, not knowing the name of the storyteller, I'll assign a fictitious name for ease of reference. In this case, I'll call the storyteller Bishop Carter.

Perhaps one reason Bishop Carter's story was so poignant to me was that I could very easily identify with it. Not only did I serve for a time as a bishop who had people suffering real pain sitting across the desk but the story was also very similar to one in our family.

My mother-in-law was an amazing woman whom I love and revere. She raised an amazing daughter (my wife) and showed throughout her life how to weather whatever life might toss her way. One thing she was required to weather was never being sealed to her father, who died in a coal mine accident when she was in her teens. Her mother later remarried a non-member who converted to the Church. Both were later sealed in the temple, but my mother-in-law refused to be sealed to them because she wanted to be sealed to her "real father."

How would I have reacted had I been in Bishop Carter's position and, similarly, how would I have counseled my mother-in-law had she sought my counsel? I probably would have started with a short little exercise in imagination.[12] I would have asked them to consider a deceptively simple question: How do you envision life in the hereafter?

After talking about what we would do with our time, what prophets have said on the matter, and what personal desires would be, I would ask another question: How do you envision that eternal families will be organized in the hereafter?

At a young age we learn that we will live with our mother and father in a family unit. It didn't take me long to conclude that such a concept is incomplete and (dare I say it!) wrong. Our ward's annual Primary program recently featured a popular children's song that reinforces such an immature understanding:

> I have a fam'ly here on earth,
> They are so good to me.
> I want to share my life with them through all eternity.

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12   I would hope that Pearson would approve of such an approach. She favorably cites a quote attributed to Einstein that "imagination is everything. It is the preview of life's coming attractions" (187).

Fam'lies can be together forever
Through Heav'nly Father's plan.
I always want to be with my own family,
And the Lord has shown me how I can.
The Lord has shown me how I can.[13]

While such an arrangement would be wonderful if we are young — and wonderfully understandable to a young mind — what about when we are old? Do we expect that when we are 30, 40, or 50 that we will still live with our parents in whatever heavenly mansion awaits us? What, then, of our own spouse and our own children? If we expect to live with our parents, shouldn't our spouses expect to live with their parents? Would we expect our married adult children to abandon their families to live with us in our eternal family?

The fact is, we don't know what arrangements will be made in the hereafter for the eternal families we form here on earth. If Bishop Carter's congregant was worried that she might have to live with her father and two mothers, that seems (to me) to be creating an expectation of the hereafter that is based on such a limited understanding as to make it vanishingly improbable. It seems much more likely that one would live with one's eternal spouse, in one's own family unit, and not with parents and their spouses. It is likely, too, that our children will live with their own eternal family units upon which they have worked.

What, then, of my mother-in-law's situation? After she died, and consistent with Church policy, we had her father sealed to her mother (so her mother was now sealed to two husbands) and had her sealed to her father and mother, as she desired. What will be the living arrangements for such a sealed, eternal family in the hereafter?

Again, we don't know, and it is possible for us to drive ourselves crazy with speculations as to what *must* be or what *must not* be. What we do know for sure is what Joseph Smith himself stated, now canonized in the Doctrine & Covenants:

> And that same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy. (D&C 130:2)

What does sociality mean, in this context? According to Webster's 1828 dictionary (which reflects language meaning at the time that Joseph used the term), it means the quality of how people live in society or the

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13   "Families Can Be Together Forever," *Children's Songbook*, 188.

public in aggregate. In other words, we will live there as we live here, only amidst eternal glory.

Does that mean we will live in families there? Of course, if one defines a family as a husband and wife and provided those eternal, glorified families have been created according to the way that God has defined. (See, again, the three requirements mentioned in the previous section.)

Further in my discussion with Bishop Carter's congregant or with my mother-in-law, I have no doubt that the objection would be raised, "what about eternal polygamy, though? Won't my father or mother (in the case of my mother-in-law) be married to two spouses?"

The correct answer is, "yes, possibly." I say possibly because the only way that such a marital arrangement could persist is consistent with the foundational principle of agency, as already discussed. Such a relationship cannot exist without the willful agreement of all those involved.

Beyond that, we don't have the slightest idea of how things will work. Will all spouses live in the same home? Will they live in separate homes? Will they live in separate cities? Will there even *be* homes or cities in heaven? We just don't know.

What About the Children?

Similar to the situations addressed in the previous section are the seemingly thorny situations of children of the current spouse being sealed to a previous spouse. Here is how one person related her story in Pearson's book:

> As a single mother I raised my children in the church and supported my two sons on missions. My oldest son, who all of his life has been an active, worthy member of the church, is married to a wonderful woman who was widowed (while pregnant) at age twenty-one. They now have two children together, who are not sealed to their own father but to a man they don't know. My son's heart aches to be a part of the eternal family that he was always promised by the church he believes in.
>
> He now feels his mission was wasted by teaching people they could be with their families forever. He can't, and for no fault of his own (99).

Pearson shares other stories similar to this one, told from the vantage point of the adult children, realizing they are sealed to a man long deceased who wasn't even their biological father.

Will such children need to spend the eternities in the company of a stranger because they are sealed to that person? Will they forever be precluded from being with or around the man who actually is their father? For reasons already discussed in the previous section, it is doubtful that the adult children of such families — who are, hopefully, working on building their own eternal families — will live in the hereafter with either the first-deceased man (to whom they were sealed) or their biological father.

What those children do have, however, is the blessing and benefit of the sealing itself. The act of sealing children to parents represents an eternal linkage into the covenant relationship between God and His children. I still remember the overwhelming feelings of having my youngest son, adopted as an infant, sealed to our family very shortly after the adoption was pronounced legal. In my imperfect understanding at the time, I took solace that he was "eternally ours."

I missed the words of the sealing, however. While it is improper to discuss those words outside of the temple, I have since been to many sealing ordinances. The words say nothing specific about the child "belonging" to the parents. What they do say has to do with blessings the child receives through the sealing. The words talk about coming forth in the resurrection. They talk about being an heir to a covenant that started with the ancient patriarchs.

Once a child has received those blessings, they are not cavalierly taken away, and they certainly cannot be taken away by anything the parents do or don't do. The sealing isn't about who one will live with or who one "belongs to." It is not really about the parents at all — it is about individual blessings and possibilities for the child.

Thus, my youngest son, when he was sealed to me and my wife, was the recipient of the blessings in that sealing. If my wife and I had subsequently divorced, remarried, died, or even left the Church and thereby renounced our own sealing, those individual blessings granted in my son's sealing would have continued and been his, independent of us as parents and our choices or state. His sealing blessings, once pronounced, were then contingent upon the same three conditions of any other sealing ordinance, as already discussed.

Elder Robert E. Wells, of the Seventy, once addressed how the sealing of children to parents "works" when marital situations change.

He specifically addressed it in relation to blended families, where both parents brought children to a new marriage:

> Family members need not worry about the sealing situation of blended families as it might be in the next life. Our concern is to live the gospel now and to love others, especially those in our family. If we live the gospel to the best of our ability, the Lord in His love and mercy will bless us in the next life and all things will be right.

> I have seen some new blended families become torn apart by worrying about who will belong to whom and who will be with whom in the next life. My mother, who is sealed to my deceased father, is married to a widower who is sealed to his first wife, who died childless. My mother and her second husband have a son, who is my brother. We are not concerned about who will be sealed to whom. We simply trust in the Lord's wisdom and love and try to live righteously.[14]

God takes care of all His children if we let Him. A child who has been sealed to parents is the recipient of untold blessings. If we understand what sealings provide and promise, having the child subsequently sealed to a different parent wouldn't provide anything to the child that he or she didn't already have by virtue of the existing sealing. We can choose to be sorrowful over whom a child is sealed to, or we can take comfort in knowing that the child has eternal claim on blessings unspeakable. Pearson and some whose stories she shared obviously choose the former over the latter and thereby miss an opportunity to choose peace over heartache.

God and Polygamy

I cannot justify historical polygamy. Fortunately, I don't have to justify it. Likewise, I don't have to justify any possible future (heavenly) polygamy, nor would I try. What I try to do, instead, is accept others who were acting according to their beliefs, to the best of their ability. I have read and studied most — if not all — of the same original sources that Pearson has studied, but I've come to very different conclusions from that process.[15]

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14   Robert E. Wells, "Uniting Blended Families," Ensign (August 1997); https://www.lds.org/ensign/1997/08/uniting-blended-families.

15   Pearson concludes that all participants — including Joseph — were mistaken, misguided, and therefore wrong in their actions. This is a common (and understandable) conclusion of those who have an innate revulsion toward

I accept that early LDS who entered into polygamous relationships were doing what they understood that God wanted, just as I accept the same in Old Testament peoples. I also believe that God counted their obedience to their understanding of His will as righteousness. It is not my place to say that they were wrong (in other words, unrighteous) because my present-day sensibilities may be offended.

When it comes to God and polygamy, I believe that God is rather agnostic.[16] Earlier I mentioned that marriage systems can vary and, indeed, they have varied over the course of recorded history. Through it all, God has watched and generally accepted His people regardless of what marital system was practiced by the societies in which those people lived. As long as His people have done as He has commanded and expected, their works are acceptable to Him.

Pearson apparently disagrees, asserting at one point, "There is no documentation anywhere in the Bible that God commanded polygamy" (57). This appears to be nothing more than a carefully worded sentence seeming to claim divine approbation for Pearson's own rejection of polygamy. Truth be told, I agree with the precise words that Pearson used: We have no documentary evidence, in either the Old or New Testaments, of God's *commanding* polygamy. But even if God did not command polygamy, He certainly did not forbid it, either.[17] In fact, in at least one place He clearly condones it. Speaking to David through the prophet Nathan, the Lord said:

> And I gave thee thy master's house, and *thy master's wives into thy bosom*, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. (2 Samuel 12:8, emphasis added)

This is consistent with the LDS understanding that God can, if God decides, allow or even require His people to enter into marital arrangements that may not match our sensibilities:

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polygamy. Contra Pearson, I do not conclude that they acted wrongly and I believe that they were neither misguided nor mistaken.

16   One is said to be agnostic on a subject — such as polygamy — if he or she holds none of the opposing positions on the subject. I consider myself agnostic on the topic, as well.

17   Multiple non-LDS resources agree with such an assessment. A representative source can be found at https://bible.org/question/why-did-godly-men-ot-have-more

> 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 one wife; and concubines he shall have none;
>
> For I, the Lord God, delight in the chastity of women. And whoredoms are an abomination before me; thus saith the Lord of Hosts.
>
> Wherefore, this people shall keep my commandments, saith the Lord of Hosts, or cursed be the land for their sakes.
>
> For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things. (Jacob 2:27–30)

The command is clear to the Nephites that they are to be monogamous, but the final verse recognizes the fact that God can command otherwise, if He so chooses. If God could command his people to use or allow a marital system other than monogamy, we do nothing but impose our own limitations on God if we say that God would never do such a thing. In other words, we fashion God according to the dictates of our own abhorrence.

The point is not to justify polygamy; again, polygamy doesn't need to be justified. The point is that if God has at different times and in different places allowed, forbidden, condoned, or even commanded polygamy, what right or place do we have to universally reject it if, as we profess, we seek to become like Him?

Plural Marriage in Heaven

Pearson advocates the understanding that polygamy is required in heaven; that all marriages there will, eventually, be plural in nature. She asserts — and uses the feelings of her chosen story-sharers as support — that this is the Church's doctrine on the matter. This shows a profound misunderstanding of our doctrine.[18]

The supposed *prima facia* evidence for asserting that polygamy is required in heaven is D&C 132. And, the fact that this section of the D&C is canonized means it is Church doctrine. But what if D&C 132 doesn't say what some assume that it says?

-one-wife.

18   It is easy to create and subsequently destroy an argument based upon a misunderstanding of a foundational doctrine. There is also a formal name for such an argument: a straw man. For a quick overview, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Straw_man.

Wait. What? Doesn't D&C 132 say that God expects us to form polygamous unions, if not here then in the hereafter? The simple answer is no, it doesn't. Yes, the section was given at a time when the principle was being introduced to the Church. Yes, it was given at the urging of Hyrum Smith who mistakenly thought it would go far to convince Emma Smith.[19]

But it wasn't compulsory for everyone. Nowhere in the revelation does it say that God expected (or expects) everyone to practice the principle. Nowhere in the revelation does it say that practicing the principle was required for exaltation.

Did God expect that some should enter into polygamous marriages? Yes, He did. But He didn't require everyone to do so. Even at the height of early LDS polygamy, the majority of marriages were still monogamous. Pearson paraphrases the Church's Gospel Topics page about plural marriage: "Probably half of those living in Utah Territory in 1857 experienced life in a polygamous family as a husband, wife, or child at some time during their lives" (114).[20] This tidbit is made without consideration or explanation of what this really means. If one assumes an equal split between parents and children (which is a very conservative split in the times well before contraception), that means that only a quarter of all LDS adults lived in polygamous marriages.[21]

What about the other three quarters? Were these non-polygamous unions eternally condemned because those involved didn't "live the principle?" No, they were not, neither here on earth nor in heaven where, according to Joseph, the same "sociality" will exist. Those individuals — provided they were sealed in the temple in their monogamous relationships — were considered recipients of the same blessings as those choosing polygamous unions.

God does not require that all who enter heaven do so as polygamists nor will He require that they, at some point, become polygamists. He

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19   Pearson takes broad literary license with the historical record on this fact (83-84) and recounts a formal "healing blessing" she gave repudiating D&C 132 (85).

20   For the non-paraphrased quote see "Plural Marriage in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," https://www.lds.org/topics/plural-marriage-in-the-church-of-jesus-christ-of-latter-day-saints.

21   The percentage is diluted even more if one considers that the Gospel Topics page, cited by Pearson, indicates that their figures represent those living in Utah Territory. Obviously, not all LDS lived in Utah Territory, but one should expect that percentages were higher within the territory.

will do nothing to force His children's behavior in this or any other area, thereby removing their agency.

Banishment of the Ghost

In Pearson's view, nothing short of a disavowal of the "doctrine of plural marriage" as it pertains "to history, the present, or the eternal future" will do (194). She cites as precedent the 1978 revelation that extended the priesthood to all worthy males. In other words, if deep institutional changes can (and have) been made in one area, we can certainly make them in this one.

To some, that may sound reasonable. "When the Ghost is finally banished," Pearson effuses,

> each young and tender girl will learn at church and at home that if she marries she will become the singular and full partner of a husband of her choice and that her divine nature and individual worth are such that she will never be "one of," here or in heaven. (201)

Idyllic prose aside, I don't think that Pearson's proposals will really help those whom Pearson purports to champion — unless the Church entirely rejects the God-given authority to seal marriages.

Consider, for example, a hypothetical young couple who get married and sealed in the temple. One must recognize that there is at least a chance of their getting divorced or one of the couple dying at a young age. (Many stories shared in Pearson's book deal with at least one of these very real possibilities.)

In such a situation, how does such a reality square with Pearson's vision as just expressed? If the young woman's husband dies and she remarries, wouldn't her second husband become "one of" in heaven? How about if the imaginary tables are turned, and it is the wife who dies first? Should the surviving husband be barred from being married or sealed again, or if he chooses to do so, should the first sealing be entirely canceled and have no efficacy in the hereafter?

Pearson doesn't address such possibilities; she simply asserts that, somehow, things will be better. Her suggestions on how to "banish the ghost" present more potential pitfalls and conflicts than the system she seeks to replace. It is reasonable to conclude that implementing the changes Pearson proposes would also banish the meaning of "eternal marriages" and result in far more marital chaos than what she currently

senses. Marriage (even eternal marriages) can indeed be messy, but Pearson's suggestions do nothing to make them any less messy.

Conclusion

Pearson feels that love and feelings are at the apex of everything we do. Her Facebook page, for instance, features on its masthead the statement "let LOVE rule always."[22] Further, she states:

> I recall those wise and piercing words of Maya Angelou: "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." That is the indisputable test of all our teachings, our doctrines, our policies. (112)

I agree that we should teach with love and that our policies should be implemented with love. I agree that both should be formulated and passed on with consideration of the feelings of others. However, I strongly disagree that the "indisputable test" of our doctrines — the measure by which they should be judged — is how they make us feel. Such an approach would make doctrine subservient to the changing vagaries of the heart — a position untenable with the concepts of absolute truths and an unchanging God. The logical extension of Pearson's standard is that we should discard any doctrine that gives us discomfort. One wonders whether any doctrine would be able to stand.

Toward the end of her book, Pearson makes this very interesting comment, phrased as what she would like to tell Joseph Smith, were she to go back in time and meet him before his death:

> Joseph … Brother Joseph … the large and godly impulse you welcomed and embodied lives on … it has touched millions and it brings light … we are brothers and sisters and we hold a vision of Zion … we bring our light, brightened by your light … and we hold it high (208–209, ellipses in original).

This is actually a very good summary of Pearson's treatise, as presented in her book — it reflects her vision of Zion.[23] The problem is that we, as Latter-day Saints, aren't called to envision Zion. We seek for Zion, but it is not a Zion according to our desires or our blueprint. We

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22 See https://www.facebook.com/clpauthor/.

23 Pearson clearly states this earlier, as well: "I must not end before I articulate as clearly as I can the vision I hold, and that I believe many of you [her readers] hold" (187).

aren't the ones to draw up the plans of Zion; that would be tantamount to creating God in our own image.

Joseph understood this. He wasn't building his own vision of Zion; he sought for God to reveal His plans for Zion. That difference may be too subtle for some, but it should not be too subtle for Pearson. When she says that "we hold a vision of Zion," that is a non sequitur; it really doesn't matter if we hold a vision of Zion. What matters is if we understand God's vision for Zion.

Does God's vision for Zion require polygamy? I don't believe so, though it may allow it. Even in saying that, I'm willing to admit that we just don't fully know — which seems more than Pearson is willing to admit. During this time of limited understanding what we can say, along with Nephi, is that God "loveth his children" despite the fact that we don't "know the meaning of all things" (1 Nephi 11:17). We can also take comfort in the counsel that President Henry B. Eyring received:

> A prophet of God once offered me counsel that gives me peace. I was worried that the choices of others might make it impossible for our family to be together forever. He said, "You are worrying about the wrong problem. You just live worthy of the celestial kingdom, and the family arrangements will be more wonderful than you can imagine."[24]

Those family arrangements are provided by a God who loves each of His children.

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24   Henry B. Eyring, "The Hope of Eternal Family Love," *Ensign* (August 2016), 5. See also https://www.lds.org/ensign/2016/08/the-hope-of-eternal-family-love.

Review and various online venues, including Meridian Magazine. He joined the Church as a pre-teen in 1968 and has lived in various wards and branches in Ohio, Indiana, Utah, Wyoming, Idaho, California, and Arizona. Among other callings he has served — in no particular order — as Elder's quorum president (twice), YM president, bishopric counselor (two wards), branch presidency counselor, branch president, bishop, stake executive secretary, regional executive secretary, and ward mission leader.

The Great and Spacious Book of Mormon Arcade Game: More Curious Works from Book of Mormon Critics

Jeff Lindsay

Abstract: *A novel theory for the origins of Lehi's vision of the Tree of Life has been offered by Rick Grunder, who argues that the story was inspired by a June 1829 visit to Rochester where Joseph could have seen a "great and spacious building," a river, an iron railing, and even fruit trees. The purported source for the great and spacious building, the Reynolds Arcade, has even been suggested by one critic as a place where Joseph might have found "rare maps," such as a map of Arabia that could have guided his fabrication of Lehi's trail. As beautiful as such theories may be to their champions, they utterly fail to account for Nephi's text.*

Among the shortcomings of Grunder's theory and creative extensions of it, the timing is problematic, for Joseph's visit to Rochester likely occurred well after 1 Nephi was dictated. The proposed parallels offer little explanatory power for Book of Mormon creation. (For comparison, two online appendices for this article have been provided to illustrate how interesting random parallels can be found that may be more compelling than those Grunder offers.[1]) Further, any inspiration from a visit to Rochester as the plates of Nephi were being translated fails to account for the influence of Lehi's vision and Nephi's text on other portions of the Book of Mormon that were translated long before Joseph's trip to Rochester. Finally, Nephi's account of the vision of the Tree of Life and surrounding text cannot be reasonably explained by Grunder's theory of last-minute fabrication inspired by Rochester or by any other theory of modern fabrication, as it is far too rooted in the ancient world and far too artfully crafted to have come from Joseph Smith and his environment.

Critics of the Book of Mormon have offered many theories over the years to explain the origins of the "voice from the dust," the Book of Mormon. As many of its ridiculous blunders have gradually been eroded by ongoing scholarship to reveal surprising bedrock, often rich in gems, beneath its dusty surface, the old theories of Joseph as a bumbling fool have required updating. Efforts to ascribe Book of Mormon strengths to third parties like Solomon Spaulding or Sidney Rigdon have not proven fruitful.[2] Increasingly critics point to modern parallels and sources of information that Joseph or his allies theoretically could have mined to make up various elements in the text, though this seems to require an ever growing library of source materials that, in reality, may not have been easy for Joseph to have accessed even if he knew where to look. This was one of the points of the recent two-part article in *The Interpreter* on the evidences for Lehi's Trail, which examined the unsuitability of modern maps of Arabia to account for the impressive evidences for the authenticity of Nephi's account of the trek through Arabia.[3]

A major portion of the two-part series on Lehi's trail responded to the many arguments of an anonymous writer for *Faith Promoting Rumor*, RT, who has responded to the articles.[4] RT's displeasure with the many still unspecified methodological errors, rhetorical posturing, and "preposterous and uninformed" attitudes toward the scholarship of biblical minimalists are all outside the scope of this inquiry, though treated briefly elsewhere.[5] Instead, here we focus on an intriguing new lead from Rick Grunder, advanced and enhanced by RT, regarding Book of Mormon origins.

A Beautiful Theory: Rochester as a Major Source for the Final (Initial) Chapters of the Book of Mormon

To his credit, RT's response to the recent *Interpreter* articles on Lehi's trail did somewhat acknowledge one point, namely, the low probability of Joseph having ever accessed one of the maps of Arabia that had the name Nehem or Nehhm. RT had argued that such maps must have served as the source of Nahom in 1 Nephi 16:34.

> On the subject of maps, I agree with Lindsay about their rarity. In a strictly historical sense, the likelihood of JS encountering one in rural Western New York wasn't very high. But my argument for dependence on a map doesn't actually rise or fall on the question of accessibility, but on a combination of other factors, e.g. the BoM's fictional character, the vague geography of the journey through Arabia vs. the precision of

the location Nahom, the similarity between Irreantum and Erythraeum, other map features, etc. I assume that there were more maps available to JS in his world than we have record. Also, Rick Grunder has informed me that near to the time JS was dictating 1 Nephi he may have visited the Reynolds Arcade in Rochester, New York, which seems to form the material background for parts of the story of Lehi's dream. At the time the Arcade was an exceptionally large and lavish building that featured a library, rare maps, and periodicals. [Here RT links to Grunder's PDF file.[6]][7]

This shows some progress, perhaps, compared to his previous essay on Nahom that approvingly quoted Philip Jenkins: "The map evidence makes it virtually certain that Smith encountered and appropriated such a reference, and added the name as local color in the Book of Mormon."[8] Now RT at least recognizes that access to a Nahom-related map may not have been so likely, but still seems persuaded that the Book of Mormon ultimately depends on a map through some unspecified means. The "virtual certainty" appears to still be in place, but perhaps with bigger questions marks over how it came to pass.

In the above passage from RT, I was surprised by his endorsement and implicit expansion of Rick Grunder's theory regarding the Reynolds Arcade in Rochester, New York. Grunder maintains that this building was the inspiration for Lehi's great and spacious building in the opening chapters of the Book of Mormon. Grunder is a master of finding creative parallels for Book of Mormon elements (see the review of his work by Ben McGuire[9]), and his theory that Rochester may have been Joseph's inspiration for parts of 1 Nephi is perhaps the crowning achievement of his lifetime of looking for evidence of modern origins of the Book of Mormon, as Grunder suggests in a recent blog post:

> Across my desk, over the decades, have passed many sobering relics: Martin Harris' 1830 Book of Mormon, for instance, or another used at Hawn's Mill. … Yet nothing carried more impetus for what I regard as my life's work (though I couldn't have imagined it at the time) than a little Rochester brochure purchased so casually from a catalog nearly thirty years ago [a pamphlet on the majestic Reynolds Arcade in Rochester].
>
> Ironically, that minor piece isn't particularly important now. It was merely an *agent provocateur*. But how provocative the results! I could only say it plainly in retrospect: "The most

interesting Mormon parallel situations from the nineteenth century will offer similarities which are at least as good as ancient ones. And, they will be much more available and straightforward. So it is with the narrative of Rochester, New York." When Joseph Smith was dictating the dream of the iron rod in 1829, he was also looking at a substantial iron railing hundreds of feet long. This is not some dodgy, speculative connection. Rather, it is **an inescapable conjunction of history**, in my long-studied opinion. That rod protected a narrow path from which one might fall easily to one's death in the large, fast-flowing river below, on the other side of which rose — high into the air — a great and spacious building filled with the proudest, best-dressed people of Rochester, New York. This was the Reynolds Arcade, which according to historian Paul E. Johnson, "dramatized" the segregation of social classes when it opened in 1828 — one year before Joseph Smith and Martin Harris walked that same corner in search of a printer for the upcoming Book of Mormon then in preparation — at a moment in June 1829 that was close as I can calculate to the time when the dream of the iron rod was first spoken by Joseph Smith. …

Different perspectives inevitably divide Mormon Studies, and many of the entries I have written on other topics are intended merely as alternative views. **In the case of the Reynolds Arcade, however, I see no way out**. The first reviewer of *Mormon Parallels* observed that "**the image of the brand-new Reynolds Arcade will convince even the most stout believers of Joseph Smith's prophetic calling that the image of that structure could not but have been present in his mind**." [*emphasis added*][10]

Is Grunder's conclusion an "inescapable conjunction of history," leaving Mormon believers with "no way out"? Or does Grunder's crowning achievement bear a crown somewhat less regal than Grunder imagines?

The details of Grunder's find are shared in a PDF file from his work, *Mormon Parallels: A Bibliographic Source*.[11]

Figure 1. The great and spacious Reynolds Arcade in Rochester. The observatory on top was missing at the time.

According to Grunder, as Joseph neared the end of his translation work of the Book of Mormon in June 1829, near the beginning of the translation of the small plates of Nephi, he got the idea for the "great and spacious building" in Lehi's dream when he made a trip to Rochester to look for a printer of the nearly completed manuscript. Inspired by a large building in Rochester, the Reynolds Arcade, towering at four-and-a-half stories, and just a block or so from an iron railing on an aqueduct that crossed the local Genesee River, Joseph thought of the iron rod and the "great and spacious building" that play such a significant role in 1 Nephi. Joseph then quickly added that material to his dictated translation and voila, 1 Nephi was written, followed by the rest of the small plates material in short order.

An 1827 map of Rochester (Figure 3) shows the relationship between the aqueduct, the nearby bridges, and the Reynolds Arcade. Caution must be used in considering images of the aqueduct, for the original aqueduct was torn down in 1840 and rebuilt with a different structure.[12] A good collection of images (engravings and photos) of the aqueduct at various times is provided on ErieCanal.org.[13] The aqueduct is no longer there and has been converted into a conventional bridge:

With the construction of the Barge Canal in 1918, the canal was moved south of the city of Rochester. Since the Genesee River Aqueduct was no longer needed, a road deck for Broad Street was built atop the aqueduct in 1922–1924, and the aqueduct was modified internally to carry the tracks of the Rochester Subway (or Rochester Industrial and Rapid Transit Railway) from 1927 to 1956. The Broad Street Bridge deck was rebuilt as it stands today in 1973–1974.[14]

Figure 2. Reynolds Arcade, from an 1844 sheet music publication.[15]

An engraving from 1830 (Figure 4) illustrates what Joseph could have seen. An iron railing, a path, and a river are collocated, though not in the way the Book of Mormon describes. Could it have been viewed by Joseph just in the nick of time for translating 1 Nephi? Do these elements really offer such clear parallels as to be inescapable explanations for the details of Lehi's dream?
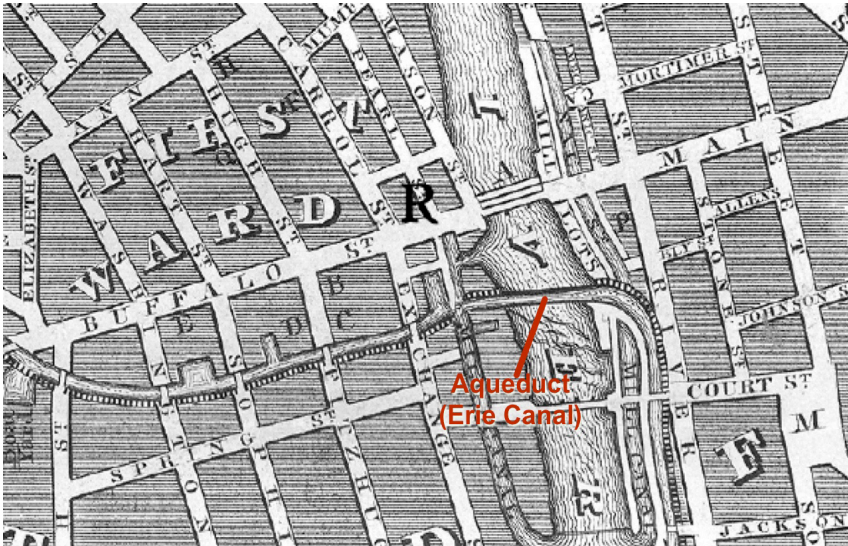
Figure 3. Detail of an 1827 map by Elisha Johnson as marked by Grunder. The R is the location of the Reynolds Arcade; I added the label for the aqueduct.[16]

VIEW OF ROCHESTER WITH A SECTION OF THE AQUEDUCT.

Figure 4. 1830 engraving shows the Erie Canal aqueduct passing over the Genesee River in Rochester.[17]

How Clear Are the Parallels?

Grunder makes an interesting case. There was an iron barrier — a fence or guardrail — running along the impressive aqueduct of the Erie Canal that crosses the Genesee River in Rochester. This barrier protected workers towing boats across the aqueduct as they moved along the towpath next to the canal. The iron railing and the aqueduct were not far from the original Reynolds Arcade, built in 1828, which in Grunder's view was *the* great and spacious building that inspired Joseph. It was a four-and-a-half story building with a unique open interior like modern malls. It had shops on the first and second floors, including a popular post office. While four stories may not seem tall enough to qualify as Lehi's towering edifice that "stood as it were in the air, high above the earth" (1 Nephi 8:26), it did originally include a small but lofty structure on the top that went well above the four-story bulk of the building, extending as high as 90 feet.[18] So if Joseph were the author of the Book of Mormon, he could have seen that building and been wowed.

The building, in fact, was associated with merchants and circles of wealth and power in Rochester, like many elegant buildings around the world, and so could be a fitting receptacle for the worldly mockers in Lehi's dream. As Diane Shaw writes in a chapter describing the Rochester Arcade, "The rare building type distinguished Rochester, giving it a particular panache among all American cities. The Arcade embodied the aspirations of the merchant class, whose members sought an efficient, profitable, beautiful commercial experience whose very space, products, and image served their business and social needs."[19] So if Joseph needed inspiration for a great and spacious building, the Arcade could do. Then he could have wandered a block or two away to the Genesee River to see the aqueduct and its railing, thus acquiring the idea of an iron rod and a river. The river, an iron railing, a narrow towpath next to the railing, and a large, elegant building, all in the same town — these parallels appear notable. On top of that, the region around Rochester had fruit trees. With those elements all brought together, the origin of Lehi's dream should be overwhelmingly clear, in Grunder's view, and can't be dismissed as utterly irrelevant to Lehi's dream. But do they really provide a reasonable basis for suspecting modern origins for 1 Nephi?

First, note that the parallels are not quite as clear and direct as Grunder might wish for. The Rochester iron rod is on an aqueduct going *across* the Genesee river, not running along the bank of the river, as in Lehi's dream (1 Nephi 8:19), nor does it lead to a tree and the head of a fountain (1 Nephi 8:20). The river does not divide the wicked in

the great and spacious building from the rod of iron in Lehi's dream (1 Nephi 8:26). The narrow towpath on the aqueduct does not lead to a tree adjacent a fountain of water, and it is unclear whether pedestrians could freely use it since it was obviously a structure for Erie Canal workers, apparently towers on horseback. While the iron fence would keep workers and horses from plummeting off the aqueduct into the river, pedestrians still would face the safety issue of having the exposed canal at their side, where they could fall into water or several feet down onto stone when the canal was dry, as apparently was the case in winter, making it seem unsuitable for ordinary traffic. Further, it would not be necessary for pedestrians since bridges for regular traffic were nearby, just a block away on both sides of the aqueduct, so the idea of numerous pedestrians pressing forward via the rod or wandering into strange paths adjacent the rod may not fit what Joseph could have seen.

Nevertheless, there was an iron railing and a river and not too far away was a rather tall building for upstate New York standards. While New York fruit trees might not have been very impressive or fruity in early June, still, Joseph would have recognized them as fruit trees. So Joseph could have seen all that in his 1829 trip to Rochester, where he tried to find a printer to print the Book of Mormon. Since the books of Nephi and the other material from the small plates were apparently translated in June 1829, offering a replacement for the material originally in the lost 116 pages, it would seem that an early June visit could have occurred before 1 Nephi was completed. If the visit were early enough, it would be theoretically possible for Joseph to have used the Reynolds Arcade and other elements from Rochester as inspiration for Lehi's dream as he wrapped up the dictation for the Book of Mormon project. Grunder is ecstatic with this find.

RT is intrigued by the iron rod plus Reynolds Arcade theory, and offers what I feel is a clearer, more succinct summary of the strengths of Grunder's position than Grunder does, with some of his own thoughts:

> In my view, the strength of the parallel relates to the conjunction of a long rod of iron and narrow path, a large swift flowing river and nearby falls ("terrible gulf"), and an exceptionally large and lavish building nearby. The appearance of a rod of iron in this setting is particularly important, since it is clearly not an ancient motif. There were no rods of iron set next to rivers at the time of Nephi in the Old World. I have always wondered where the notion could have come from, and so its

> presence here in a setting highly evocative of Lehi's dream
> and at a place JS is known to have visited is difficult to ignore.[20]

The link between the gulf mentioned in the Book of Mormon and the falls on the Genesee River depends upon Grunder's find in an 1824 dictionary that "gulf" means "a bay; a whirlpool," which he feels accurately describes the falls on the Genesee River, a couple of blocks downstream from the aqueduct.[21] But Grunder's theory does not need the falls; a strong river or any noteworthy body of water could be considered a gulf, if one is looking for parallels.

The alleged anachronism of a rod of iron in an ancient setting is addressed below.

Of course, the central image of Lehi's dream is not the rod nor the building, but the tree of life, and here Grunder's model does not provide a reasonable inspiration in Rochester apart from an 1838 article proclaiming that Rochester fruit markets showed the region was known for its fruit trees[22] — an observation one can make for many other parts of the U.S.

Beyond the parallels to Lehi's dream that Grunder and RT see in Rochester, RT sees even more in the Reynolds Arcade than Grunder did. RT, who has been looking toward rare European maps that might have been inspiration for the details of Lehi's trail, hopefully notes that at the time of Joseph's visit to Rochester, the Reynolds Arcade, according to Grunder, "featured a library, rare maps, and periodicals."[23] Could the Arcade not only provide inspiration for a major part of Nephi's record, but also solve the mystery of the "Dream Map," offering the source to the rare maps of Arabia that Joseph would need to complete the Book of Mormon? In a way, it's a beautiful theory.

Below we'll consider the components of this "beautiful theory," beginning with the purported rare maps and then continuing with the various components of Lehi's dream. Meanwhile, those interested in learning more about the Reynolds Arcade and its history and architecture (a great tidbit of American architecture, complete with a "Chinese pagoda" on top), there are a variety of further materials to consider.[24]

The Arcade: A Source of Rare Maps?

RT recognizes that the Arcade was a noted source of information in Rochester. But did the Arcade house "rare maps" that Joseph could have accessed and, perhaps, used to guide the route of Lehi's trail? What is the evidence for this?

RT cites Grunder, who cites an 1830 source that mentions maps at the Athenaeum, an educational institute in Rochester which was housed in the Arcade. According to Grunder:

> "Under its [the Arcade's] roof," reported New York City's *Monthly Repository* magazine in 1830, "are six stores, an extensive boarding house, the post office, printing and exchange offices, the Atheneum [sic], justices' and lawyers' offices, &c. The Atheneum is very creditable to the place, having a very valuable library, maps, the periodicals and newspapers from various parts."[25]

At least as of 1830, the Athenaeum housed maps. But where are the "rare maps" of RT? And more to the point, where are the rare maps of Arabia that might have inspired Joseph? No evidence that I have found supports that wishful notion.

To flesh out the theory, it helps to know a little more about the Athenaeum.

According to the Rochester Institute of Technology's (RIT's) "History of RIT,"[26] the Athenaeum was founded in 1829 by Colonel Nathaniel Rochester and other Rochester community leaders "for the purpose of cultivating and promoting literature, science, and the arts." It was housed in the Reynolds Arcade, and had a book collection that would grow over the years until 1847, when the Athenaeum merged with the Mechanics Literary Association, founded in 1836 by William A. Reynolds (son of Abelard Reynolds), to form the Rochester Athenaeum and Mechanics Association. The resulting merged library would have over 8,000 volumes, making it a truly significant library. It would be a major part of the roots of RIT. When it was in the Reynolds Arcade, it included a meeting room and a small reading room with a library, provided by Abelard Reynolds. Though small in 1829, could it have offered what Joseph needed?

One clue about the contents of the Athenaeum comes from the 1839 publication of the contents of the Rochester City Library, which included the contents of the Athenaeum.[27] While there appears to be precious little in the way of maps listed there, there is a noteworthy ten-volume series of books on geography and world travel by Josiah Conder called *Modern Traveler*, which included a volume on Arabia that includes a fold-out map of Arabia.[28] The series is listed as being printed in 1825, but apparently another edition came out in 1830 and another in 1833.[29] Regardless of its print date, based on the catalog number, the acquisition of that volume by the Athenaeum appears to be well after 1830.[30] Thus,

there is little chance that Joseph could have seen the Arabia volume of *The Modern Traveler* series in the Athenaeum.

If Joseph had been able to access Conder's volume on Arabia to study its map, what would he have gained? A limited resolution version of the map in black and white only is available online,[31] and a small version of Conder's full 1825 map is available online from Rooke Books of Bath, England,[32] who own of a copy of Conder's 1825 original. The owners of Rooke Books kindly provided a photograph of the region around Sana'a (Figure 5) to help me see if Nehem, Nihm, Nehm, or some other word related to ancient Nahom can be seen.[33]
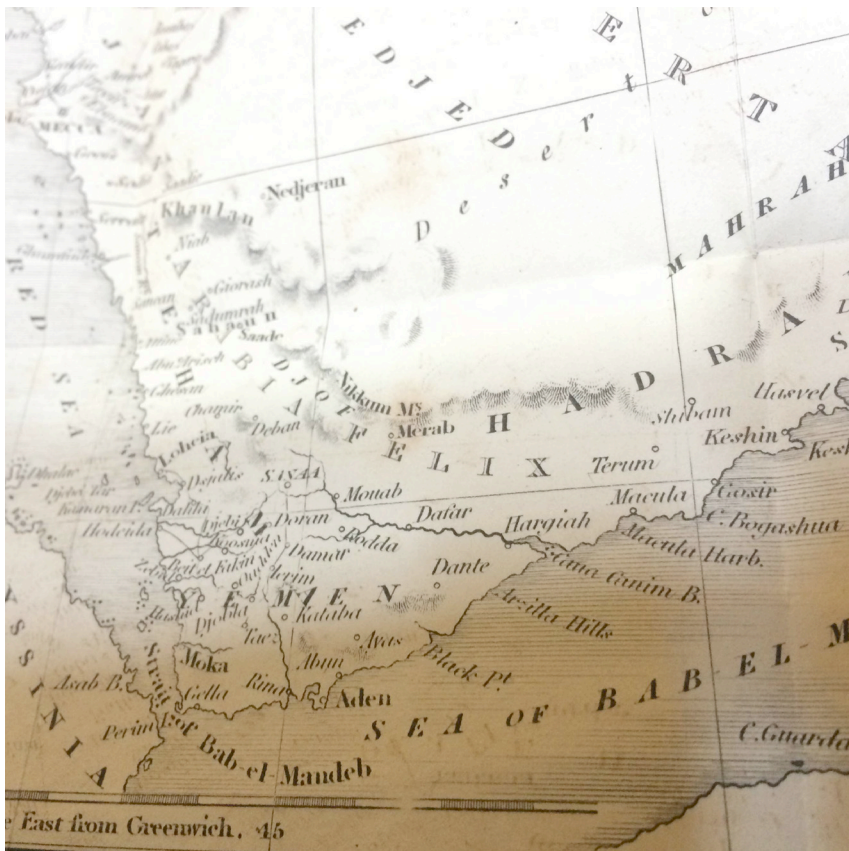
Figure 5. A section of Josiah Conder's 1825 map of Arabia from *The Modern Traveler*, courtesy of Rooke Books, Bath, England. The Nikkum Mountains are near the center, northeast of Sanaa.

There appears to be nothing that Joseph could have used to come up with the name Nahom. However, the Nikkum Mountains, present in the

region associated with the Nihm tribe, may have a connection to Nahom that a student of Hebrew or Arabic might appreciate. As discussed in "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Map: Part 1,"[34] one of the objections made against LDS efforts to identify Nephi's Nahom with the ancient and modern Nihm tribe is that the Hebrew word *nacham* (Strong's H5162, נָחַם), a word associated with death, mourning, and comforting suggestive of a wordplay in Nephi's text, has a hard H while the Arabic Nihm and the ancient South Arabian NHM of the Nihm tribe employ a softer H.[35] But the existence of the Nikkum name, in the text from both Carsten Niebuhr[36] and Conder[37] and on Conder's map, could be transliterated from a related NHM word with the hard H, which sometimes is transliterated with a K or KK. In other words, it could be that a local dialect in Yemen once used a hard H for an NHM name, possibly suggesting that previously a hard H may have been used. Thus, it may be that the linguistic gap between Arabic Nihm/Nehem/Nehhm/ NHM and Nephi's Nahom may not be as large as RT would make it. Perhaps Nephi heard locals naming the region with a Nikkum-like word that readily suggested the Hebrew cognate *nacham*. In any case, Hebrew has cognate NHM words with both soft and hard H (the soft-H word being *naham*, Strong's H5098, נָהַם[38]), casting further doubt on RT's assertion that Nephi would not have recognized a relationship between the local NHM name and NHM in Hebrew.

Thus, the best candidate for a map of Arabia in Rochester's Athenaeum appears to have been unavailable to Joseph in June or July of 1829, and even if he had seen it, it would not have given him any guidance to come up with the multiple impressive evidences supporting the authenticity of Lehi's trail. Further, that map, while not offering guidance on the existence of Nahom, weakens the argument of critics that the local NHM name in Yemen would be unrecognizable as the Hebrew NHM word associated with death, mourning, and comfort due to a difference in the H sounds. Joseph, having not yet studied Hebrew as the Book of Mormon was being translated, would be unlikely to make a connection between Nikkum and Nahom, but such a connection may exist, especially in light of the Nikkum Mountains on Conder's map being in essentially the right spot for the territory of the Nihm tribe and ancient Nahom.

Apart from the inability to explain the body of evidence related to Nahom, there is still no reasonable map-based explanation for Bountiful or its relationship to Nahom. Bountiful has been viewed as simply impossible even by highly educated moderns. So how did Joseph get that

so precisely right, nearly due east from Nahom with numerous details now verified, on his own? Nehem on a map, an insignificant detail among hundreds, does nothing to give us a semi-plausible explanation for Joseph's creation of Lehi's Trail. It just doesn't fit the facts.

Even if the Athenaeum did have rare European maps of Arabia that contained the name "Nehem" or "Nehhm," albeit not listed in the 1839 catalog, and even if they were there in time for Joseph's 1829 visit, there is still the problem of Joseph's *access* to the fledgling library and whatever exotic maps it may have had. Important information comes from the Rochester Athenaeum Collection at RIT:

> The first meeting of the Athenaeum was held on June 12, 1829, and Nathaniel Rochester was chosen as the first president. **For a $5 annual fee**, individuals could use the Athenaeum's space in the Reynolds Arcade building for private events. More importantly, however, they could use the organization's collection of books and journals. These materials were not limited to the field of science, but spanned a variety of subject areas. On February 12, 1830, the Athenaeum was granted a charter from the State of New York, with the stated purpose of "cultivating and promoting literature, science and the arts." [*emphasis added*]³⁹

Whatever treasures the Athenaeum had or would one day have, they probably were not available to Joseph. Like a variety of other libraries in the US at this time, this was not a free public library where any farm boy could wander in and handle rare maps of Arabia, if one imagines that the Athenaeum had such things. Joseph had just recently struggled to get money to buy paper for the translation process, and had to interrupt the translation in order to vainly seek for work in the area. He and Oliver had also been short on food. Joseph and Oliver were rescued from their dire impasse by Joseph Knight, Sr., who brought them food and enough paper to finish the translation.⁴⁰ Joseph was relying on a mortgaged farm from Martin Harris to pay the overwhelming costs of printing the Book of Mormon. It would seem improbable that he would be ready to spend $5 in 1829 dollars to pay an annual fee to access a fledgling library that he had nearly no time to enjoy. The possibility that a member could have invited him in for free can also be discounted, as it again seems improbable that established citizens of Rochester would put their reputation on the line by inviting the widely derided farm boy as their personal guest into the elite library. (Indeed, there is no evidence that Joseph frequented libraries of any kind, and, as Robert Paul noted, "it

is likely that during the 1820s he simply was not a part of the literary culture, that portion of the population for which books provide a substantial part of its intellectual experiences."[41]) The Athenaeum is simply not a promising candidate for Book of Mormon origins. As with other maps RT has proposed to explain Lehi's Trail, the proposed maps appear to be both inadequate and relatively inaccessible.

Of course, the contents of the Athenaeum are of no interest for Grunder's basic theory. Could the Reynolds Arcade itself have played a pivotal role, along with the nearby aqueduct and its iron railing?

In the Nick of Time? June or July for Joseph's Rochester Visit

The "nick of time" part for Grunder's theory is one of several problem spots. Did Joseph actually visit Rochester before he had completed Lehi's dream in the early chapters of 1 Nephi? June was a busy month for Joseph and I don't think there is adequate time in Grunder's scenario for a June Rochester trip followed by frenetic translation of almost the entire small plates of Nephi. First note that chronologies of the translation of the Book of Mormon put completion around July 1. For example, David Whitmer said that: "The translation at my father's farm, Fayette Township, Seneca County, New York occupied about one month, that is from June 1, to July 1, 1829."[42] According to John Welch, based on an extensive compilation of evidence, nearly all of the 1830 Book of Mormon was produced at a remarkable pace in early 1829, beginning in April with the speech of King Benjamin in the book of Mosiah, finishing the book of Moroni by May, and then translating the small plates (1 Nephi-Omni) and the Words of Mormon before the end of June. "Virtually no excess time existed during those three months for Joseph Smith to plan, to ponder about, to research, to hunt for sources, to organize data, to draft, to revise, or to polish the pages of the original manuscript of the book."[43]

On June 11, Joseph, possibly through the agency of Martin Harris, applied for a copyright for his book to help protect his rights, a process that required filing the printed title page of the Book of Mormon in a distant copyright office in Utica, New York, about 120 miles from Palmyra, as detailed by Michael Hubbard MacKay and Gerrit J. Dirkmaat.[44] The title page of the 1830 Book of Mormon makes it fairly clear that the account of Ether and the burying or sealing up of the plates had already been described,[45] so it seems fair to say that the translation of 1 Nephi was already underway by that date. A key question is when did Joseph go to Rochester and how much remained to be translated when he went?

Grunder depends on Joseph taking his time to get 1 Nephi started. He requires Joseph to have pretty much stopped translating after hitting the end of the Book of Mormon and its title page (apparently at the end) in order to seek out printers, before rushing to complete the last few pages. How many pages? There are 143 pages from 1 Nephi 1 to Omni in the 1981 printing of the Book of Mormon. Translation rates have been estimated at eight pages a day.[46] During June, Joseph would also deal with the three witnesses, he would travel to Palmyra and then Rochester and spend time seeking printers, he would travel back to work with scribes to translate the plates, and then he would need at least half of June to complete the translation at a rapid pace. It's no wonder that Grunder states that Joseph must have gone to Rochester early in June and then did the translation of 1 Nephi afterwards:

> The latest comparison of original sources suggests that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were not settled in the Whitmer cabin to begin this part of the dictation until about June 5 (EMD 5:417, detailed chronology assembled from extensive documentation). Very shortly thereafter, they visited the Grandin printing shop in Palmyra. Then Joseph went on to Rochester where he was reported again almost immediately with Martin Harris.[47]

The negotiation with printers did not initially require Joseph to abandon the work of translation, for he sent Martin Harris to Palmyra "by early June, and possibly before" with a manuscript copy of the title page to use in negotiations.[48] Martin met with Egbert B. Grandin in Palmyra. The man who became the typesetter, John Gilbert, reported that it was in early June when Harris and Grandin met.[49] Grandin was skeptical and refused to take on the project. Grandin would publish an article on June 26, 1829 mocking the Book of Mormon project as the "result of gross imposition, and a grosser superstition," showing that at this time in late June, Grandin was not seriously considering taking on the publication task.[50] After Grandin's rejection, Joseph and Martin together sought help from others in Palmyra, without success.

According to an employee of E.B. Grandin, Pomeroy Tucker, when the initial negotiations took place in June, Joseph brought the title page and some manuscript pages and was able to tell Grandin how many folios (sets of folded pages) would be needed to complete the book:

> In June, 1829, Smith and the prophet [sic], his brother Hyrum, Cowdery the scribe, and Harris the believer, applied to

> Mr. Egbert B. Grandin, then publisher of the *Wayne Sentinel*
> at Palmyra (now deceased), for his price to do the work of
> one edition of three thousand copies. Harris offered to pay
> or secure payment if a bargain should be made. Only a few
> sheets of the manuscript, as a specimen, with the title-page,
> were exhibited at this time, though the whole number of folios
> was stated, whereby could be made a calculation of the cost.
> Mr. Grandin at once expressed his disinclination to entertain
> the proposal to print at any price, believing the whole affair to
> be a wicked imposture and a scheme to defraud Mr. Harris,
> who was his friend, and whom he advised accordingly.[51]

This suggests that the manuscript, of course, was nearly complete
and Joseph at least knew how many more pages of text would be needed
to complete the translation. Is this consistent with theories that suggest
Joseph was ready to start creating major, lengthy new sections on the fly?
Yet it appears there may still have been some translation to be done, so
some additional content may have been forthcoming in the final days of
June.

An important question at this point is when did Joseph go to
Rochester to look for other printers to take on the task of publication?
Pomeroy Tucker states that Joseph and his team "immediately" went to
Rochester after visiting Grandin,[52] but Tucker probably would not know
the details of their trip apart from what Joseph would later tell Grandin
sometime after his return. Of course, given early June negotiations with
Grandin, one can assume that the trip to Rochester happened shortly
thereafter, giving a mid-June estimate for that trip, which is what some
authors have accepted.[53]

More recently, however, MacKay and Dirkmaat in *From Darkness
Unto Light* state that Joseph Smith and Martin Harris decided to visit
printers in Rochester, "likely arriving in Rochester sometime in July."[54]
After several days discussing and negotiating with printers in Rochester,
Elihu Marshall agreed to take on the project. This was not yet a good
solution for Joseph, though, who would have a hard time staying close
to the work in a town almost 25 miles from Palmyra, but the offer from
Marshall gave him standing to renegotiate with Grandin, who now
realized that someone was going to print to the book after all, and he
might as well be the one to get the work, but under rather harsh terms
that he would impose. According to MacKay and Dirkmaat, "While it
is not known definitively when the men settled on terms with Grandin,
by 11 August 1829, Jonathan Hadley reported in his paper that the

Book of Mormon was 'soon to be put to press' in Palmyra rather than in Rochester."[55] The deal with Grandin was likely settled in late July or early August.[56]

In John Welch's detailed review of the production of the Book of Mormon, the visit to Rochester is assigned to July 1829.[57] A chronology at *FairMormon* also puts the Rochester visit in July 1829,[58] with the Grandin deal being finalized in August. Further, in the widely cited and detailed Book of Mormon chronology compiled by Eldon Watson,[59] the Rochester trip does not appear to take place in June at all, which is packed with Book of Mormon translation work. In that chronology, 1 Nephi 11 is completed by June 7, 1829. Later, 2 Nephi 27, giving details about the three witnesses, is estimated to be translated on June 20. It was the translation of 2 Nephi 27 with its mention of witnesses to the Book of Mormon that gave rise to the three witnesses event near the end of June. Whether Rochester was visited in mid-June or in July, Watson's chronology leaves no room for speculating that something on that trip was a catalyst for material in 1 Nephi 8 and 1 Nephi 11. Lehi's vision was already in ink.

If a bid from Elihu Marshall had been obtained in mid-June, why the lengthy delay in getting back to renegotiate with Grandin? Thanks to Marshall, Joseph had won an all-important competitive bid that he could leverage to make a deal with a printer much closer to home where the security of the manuscripts and the details of the work could be adequately supervised. If the issue of finalizing the printing plans was important enough for Joseph to delay the translation project in mid-June, why not follow-up immediately with Grandin upon returning from Rochester?

Arriving in Rochester in *July* means that Joseph wasn't interrupting his urgent translation work to travel to Rochester. It would mean that he was probably done with the translation and would be able to soon provide the initial pages of the manuscript (which Oliver would be working on rapidly in July, producing the Printer's Manuscript) once the printer was secured. In this scenario, if accurate, no matter how impressed Joseph was by the 4.5 stories of the Arcade, or any other tall building in Rochester, complete with nearby iron rod, a river, and fruit trees in the region, it would be too late to start dreaming about how to use that material in Lehi's vision.

Of course, if Joseph did not go to Rochester in June, one could speculate that he made an earlier unrecorded trip to Rochester, or that an ally went there and created the story for him. Neither possibility

provides a satisfying or evidence-based approach, and neither overcomes the many other deficiencies in Grunder's theory.

An Early June Visit Fails to Solve the Timing Problem: The Significance of the Lost 116 Pages and Book of Mormon Intertextuality

Even if Joseph did visit Rochester in early June of 1829, early enough to have preceded the dictation of Lehi's vision in 1 Nephi 8, the "nick of time" problem still isn't resolved for Grunder's theory or for RT's twist on it (the proposal that Joseph found a rare map of Arabia in the Arcade). Making up the content of the books of Nephi at this late stage to incorporate newly encountered scenes from Rochester leaves us with significant problems. First, the record of Lehi, which was in the 116 lost pages that could turn up at any time, as far as Joseph knew, most likely contained some aspects of Lehi's vision, for it is in the midst of Lehi's discussions after his dream and just before Nephi's own version of that dream that Nephi tells us that the many details of Lehi's preaching at this time are given in the large plates (1 Nephi 10:2, 15). Nephi also tells us in the midst of Lehi's dream-related account in 1 Nephi 8:29 that he is not going to write all the words of his father on this matter, which follows 1 Nephi 1:17 where Nephi explains that he is abridging the record of his father and then will give his own record. The lost 116 pages, apparently largely from Lehi's record, can be expected to provide more details from Lehi's visions and preaching than we find in Nephi's abridgement, so we can expect the account of the rod of iron and the great and spacious building to have been included in the lost pages in some form, and thus to have already been committed to ink early in the Book of Mormon translation process. The same should apply to details of life and struggles along Lehi's trail, including details that one might allege could come from a map.[60]

This is a point to emphasize. The material about Lehi's vision and Lehi's journey was very likely already on the lost 116 pages that Martin Harris had taken and shown to others. If Joseph were a con man making things up and fooling his scribes, Lehi's vision — and the gist of the travels through Arabia — cannot be freshly concocted at this stage or else his primary source of funding and whoever may have seen the 116 lost pages could cry foul. Innovations from a mystery map in the Arcade don't help, nor does inspiration from four floors of great spaciousness at the Reynolds Arcade. None of this is in the nick of time in any scenario.

Of course, postponing the proposed discovery of a map of Arabia to the very end of the Book of Mormon translation project resolves none of the many problems that have been noted with RT's basic "Joseph had a map" theory and may only exacerbate them. Further, if Lehi's vision, the details of Lehi's trail, and other elements presented in 1 and 2 Nephi were devised by Joseph near the end of the Book of Mormon "translation" project, how does one account for allusions to such material elsewhere in the previously translated text? The intertextuality of Book of Mormon records linking its later writings to the writings of Nephi greatly reduces the plausibility of Grunder's theory.

Many details in Nephi's writings are relied on in subtle ways throughout the Book of Mormon, such as Lehi's and Nephi's use of dust imagery, building on the theme of rising from the dust in Isaiah 52, which is fittingly used by Moroni to close the Book of Mormon and is employed in other subtle ways in the text. Walter Brueggemann has shown that the Old Testament uses the concept of rising or returning to the dust to deal with themes of kingship and enthronement as well as resurrection and keeping divine covenants.[61] In light of Brueggemann's work, David Bokovoy explores Lehi's call for his sons to "rise from the dust" and sees Nephi's response as being carefully constructed to buttress his claim to spiritual and political authority.[62] Recognizing that Nephi and Lehi gave great emphasis to Isaiah 52, where we find Isaiah's call to "rise from the dust," we can better understand the significance of Moroni's closing words, which again cite Isaiah 52, and see the influence of Isaiah 52 as a major source of Nephite teaching woven into other sections of the Book of Mormon. In a recent essay, I argue that understanding the dust-related themes introduced by Lehi and Nephi, and affirmed by Jacob, provides even more unity to the Book of Mormon than Bokovoy identified. For example, it helps make better sense of the puzzling question posed by King Noah's priests to Abinadi in an effort to challenge his teachings. It also can strengthen our appreciation of the artistry of Alma 36 as an even richer work of Semitic poetry than previously appreciated.[63]

While the iron rod is not explicitly mentioned later in the Book of Mormon, several concepts related to Lehi's vision are present elsewhere, including:

- the need to "lay hold upon the word of God" to lead us in a "strait and narrow course across that everlasting gulf of misery which is prepared to engulf the wicked" (Helaman 3:29);

- the need to avoid "that everlasting gulf of death and misery" that represents death and hell (Alma 26:20; Helaman 3:28–30; Helaman 5:12);
- the consistently negative implications of "spacious buildings" (Mosiah 11:8–9, referring to Noah's "elegant and spacious buildings" and "spacious palace," and then Mormon's condemnation of Riplakish, who taxed the people to "build many spacious buildings" in Ether 10:5);
- the tree of life (though this is an important theme from Genesis as well) and its fruit (e.g., Alma 5:34, which juxtaposes the fruit with the waters of life as in 1 Nephi), particularly the white fruit alluded to in Alma 32:42 that is introduced as the fruit of the tree of life in 1 Nephi 8:11;
- "mists of darkness" in 3 Nephi 8:22, part of the destruction accurately prophesied by Nephi in 1 Nephi 12:4 and a feature of Lehi's vision in 1 Nephi 8:23–24; and
- an apparent relationship between the description of the great and spacious building, which "**stood** as it were in the air, **high** above the earth" (1 Nephi 8:26) and the Rameumptom of the Zoramites (Alma 31:21), a high "holy stand" or "a place for **standing**, which was **high** above the head" (Alma 31:13). This relationship appears to draw upon a wordplay involving the name Zoram, where the –*rām* element (as in Rameumptom) can mean "high" or "lifted up," as Matthew Bowen discusses in detail.[64]

Many aspects of 1 Nephi and 2 Nephi and the experiences and teachings along Lehi's trail are artfully woven into the Book of Mormon (just as the vision of Lehi and Nephi is later woven into Nephi's own concluding words at the end of 2 Nephi[65]). The brass plates retrieved from Laban play a critical role. The Liahona plays an important role (see Alma 37). The basic story line with Nephi, Lehi, Laman, Zoram, etc., is integrated throughout the book in numerous references, as is the basic idea of their exodus from Jerusalem in a difficult trek that would take them to the New World where the Nephites will again apply the name Bountiful from Nephi's account.

One intriguing example of the pervasive intertextuality of Nephi's writing with the rest of the Book of Mormon was recently reported in Matthew Bowen's "Alma — Young Man, Hidden Prophet" at *The Interpreter*.[66] Bowen explains several apparent Hebraic wordplays involving the name Alma (once mocked as an obviously female name

from Latin or Spanish, but now known to be an authentic ancient Hebraic name for a man, attested by archaeological work long after Joseph Smith passed away[67]), and then notes how the wordplays appear to deliberately parallel Nephi's apparent wordplay on his own name, which can mean "good" or "goodly" in Egyptian. He writes:

> Indeed, the aforementioned wordplay on "Alma" as a "young man" becomes even more striking in view of earlier wordplay in the Book of Mormon. For example, when we compare the biographical introduction of Alma to his ancestor Nephi's autobiographical introduction and a related biographical description of himself and why his faith diverged from his brothers, the textual dependence of Alma's biography on Nephi's autobiography is clear:

1 Nephi 1:1; 1 Nephi 2:16	Mosiah 17:2
I, <u>Nephi,</u> having been born of <u>goodly</u> parents , therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father [ʾăbî] and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days, nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days; yea, having had a great knowledge of the <u>goodness</u> and the mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days. (1 Nephi 1:1) And it came to pass that I, Nephi , being exceedingly <u>young</u> , nevertheless being large in stature, and also having great desires to know of the mysteries of God , wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord; and behold he did visit me, and did soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father [ʾăbî]; wherefore, I did not rebel against him like unto my brothers. (1 Nephi 2:16)	But there was one among them whose name was <u>Alma</u> , he also being a descendant of Nephi . And he was a <u>young man</u> , and he believed the words which Abinadi had spoken , for he knew concerning the iniquity which Abinadi had testified against them; therefore he began to plead with the king that he would not be angry with Abinadi, but suffer that he might depart in peace.

On one hand, the onomastic wordplay on Alma and "young man" imitates the autobiographical wordplay of 1 Nephi 1:1 (on Nephi and *nfr*, "good[ly]," "goodness," etc.). On the other hand, the wordplay cunningly incorporates Nephi's subsequent autobiographical description of himself as "young." Beyond this, the two texts from Nephi's personal

writings share numerous lexical connections that Mosiah 17:2 utilizes — e.g., Nephi, knowledge/know, my father, "taught in all the learning of my father"/"did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father"....[68]

This level of intertextuality, with Semitic wordplays on one man's name being patterned on the introduction from Nephi, is difficult to explain using theories based on fabrication by Joseph Smith, with Nephi's record being spewed out on the fly at the end of the fabrication process. It would be difficult to explain even if Joseph were a well-educated scholar with abundant time and resources at his disposal, with a text that was worked out slowly over years and not simply dictated from a hat.

Loren Blake Spendlove and Tina Spendlove also recently discussed a relationship between the words of Christ to Alma and the words of Lehi in discussing the tree of life:

> Lehi's dream, in the initial chapters of the Book of Mormon, focuses on Lehi's desire that his family members come to the Tree of Life — to that same tree that was in the center of the Garden of Eden, our place of origin. It is interesting to observe Lehi's persistent desire that his family "come unto me and partake of the fruit" (1 Nephi 8:15, 16, and 18). Lehi's words echo those of Christ himself as he spoke through the prophet Alma: "Repent and I will receive you. Yea, he saith: *Come unto me* and ye shall *partake of the fruit* of the tree of life; yea, ye shall eat and drink of the bread and the waters of life freely. Yea, *come unto me* and *bring forth works of righteousness*, and ye shall *not be cut down and cast into the fire*" (Alma 5:33–35).[69]

Alma 5 appears to draw upon several aspects of Lehi's vision, including his specific words, "come unto me and partake of the fruit," the water of life, and the concept of judgment and the opposing elements of salvation and damnation that are involved in his vision, which strengthens the intertextuality in the Book of Mormon related to Lehi's dream. While these elements are also biblical concepts, they are thoroughly at home in a variety of contexts in the ancient Near East and its large body of tree of life literature, as discussed below.

The More Serious Timing Problem:
Improvising an Ancient Text

Grunder's theory makes 1 and 2 Nephi a hastily composed text spewed out on the fly by Joseph in the last days of his Book of Mormon project, inspired in part by his encounter with scattered elements in Rochester. For those who have examined the literary strengths of Nephi's writings, Grunder's theory may well seem absurd.

As early as 1972, the structural sophistication of Nephi's writings, including overarching chiasmus, was already noted.[70] Modern Bible scholars exploring the origins of biblical texts routinely point to the significance of doublets — instances where a story element appears to be repeated unnecessarily — as important clues about origins of the text. For some scholars, doublets are routinely considered to indicate that two different sources have been patched together by a redactor, and this line of thought has been important in development of the so-called Documentary Hypothesis.[71] For example, the pair of creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2, the two versions of the flood story in Genesis 6–9, and two apparent versions of David's introduction to Saul's court in 1 Samuel 13 and 15 have been considered as evidence of redaction from different incompatible texts. On the other hand, some scholars consider the possibility of higher literary purposes in such doublets, and have argued that the double occurrence of some elements is due to the influence of ancient narrative and poetical tools in which repetition can play an important role that is foreign to modern sensibilities. Robert B. Chisholm has provided detailed arguments that the "parade examples" of doublets used to support the Documentary Hypothesis, namely the accounts of the flood and David's introduction to Saul's court, actually show literary unity with the doubled elements and appear to be the result of deliberate choice by the author.[72] G.J. Wenham has proposed that chiasmus in the flood account provides strong evidence for the unity of the account and its doublets, whether it is present as originally drafted or has been redacted to provide the unity that Wenham sees.[73]

The use of chiasmus in particular has been used by several scholars to suggest that there may be literary unity in some passages long assumed to be fragments from two or more disparate sources. The presence of the obvious doublet in Lehi's vision, with Lehi's version in 1 Nephi 8 being presented followed by Nephi's vision in 1 Nephi 11 and a discussion of the meaning of the tree of life in 1 Nephi 15, may strike a casual modern reader as redundant, scattered, and rambling, as one might expect from a novice dictating a poorly considered story on the fly, in a hurry, with

little opportunity for revision. However, there may be significant design and structure present, as John Welch showed in an early article on chiasmus on the Book of Mormon:[74]

a Lehi's dream leads him to prophesy warnings to the Jews (1 Nephi 1)
  b The departure from Jerusalem (1 Nephi 2)
    c Nephi accomplishes a great feat in obtaining the brass plates
        of 1 Nephi 3:7; the brothers are confounded (1 Nephi 3–5)
      d Ishmael joins the group with his daughters (1 Nephi 7)
        e The tree of life (1 Nephi 8)
          f Lehi prophesies about the Old World and the coming
              of the Lamb (1 Nephi 10)
            g Nephi and the Spirit of the Lord (1 Nephi 11)
          f Nephi prophesies about the New World and the coming
              of the Lamb (1 Nephi 12–14)
        e The tree of life interpreted (1 Nephi 15)
      d The sons of Lehi marry the daughters of Ishmael and
          Ishmael dies (1 Nephi 16)
    c Nephi accomplishes a great feat by building a ship of 1 Nephi 17:3;
        the brothers are confounded (1 Nephi 17)
  b The departure from the Old World (1 Nephi 18)
a Nephi warns the Jews and quotes the prophecies of Isaiah (1 Nephi 19–22)

Welch offers this commentary on the significance of the chiastic structure, and responds to those who will say it is merely contrived and accidental:

> More than ever before, we are now in a position to admire the purposeful and stunning unity of Nephi's message. The long-neglected principle of chiasmus unfolds the fact that when Nephi revised the record of Lehi, Nephi's mind was clearly organized and his heart was intent upon expressing the central importance of his great vision with the Spirit of the Lord. He achieves this expression via chiasmus. …
>
> Should we consider it contrived that Ishmael is mentioned only twice in the entire Book of Mormon and that these two occurrences just happen to fall symmetrically around 1 Nephi 11? How else, except by chiasmus, can we explain the postponed interpretation of the vision of the tree of life? One would expect the interpretation to follow immediately after the dream, as most interpretative passages in the Book of Mormon do, and not several chapters later.

Are we to believe that the unruly brothers of Nephi really waited nine chapters to marry the daughters of Ishmael? Are we to neglect such specific parallels between the first half of 1 Nephi and its second half — e.g. 3:7 and 17:3 — or again the fact that Nephi is bound by cords once in chapter 5 and again in chapter 18? Or how are we to explain the fact that Nephi wrote two books (1 Nephi and 2 Nephi) instead of just running it all together into one, except by reference to the individual structure of each book?

To answer any of these questions, chiasmus must be called into the discussion to explain the underlying structural organization behind Nephi's written record.

Fortunately, it is a perfectly natural thing to appeal to chiasmus in cases such as these. After all, if Lehi were the one who was telling the story, he would have told it much differently. Would Lehi have spent so much time on the story of Laban and so little time on the vision that prompted him to get out of Jerusalem? Surely not. What we have in 1 Nephi is Nephi telling the story, and he does so in Nephi's way of seeing things. Thus it is perfectly natural to find that Nephi gives his autobiography a structure all its own, a structure that conveys by its very form a message of emphatic centrality and symmetrical contrasts about important events in Nephi's life.[75]

Noel Reynolds has also observed that there is significant literary structure in Nephi's writing that helps illustrate his purposes and his superb craftsmanship in creating 1 Nephi.[76] Reynolds points to textual clues showing that Nephi has deliberately split 1 Nephi into two parts. After noting that Nephi's selection of episodes in his account appear to be designed to support his overarching theme stated in 1 Nephi 1:20, that he will show us the "tender mercies of the Lord," Reynolds writes:

Yet further analysis reveals a far more complex structure. At the beginning of the book, Nephi explains that he will first make an abridgment of his father's record, then an account of his own doings. Beginning at chapter 10, he states that he will now commence with an account of his own proceedings, reign, and ministry. At the end of chapter 9, as at the end of chapter 22 (the last chapter in 1 Nephi), Nephi concludes with a restatement of his thesis, punctuated by the formal ending,

> "And thus it is. Amen." The suggestion seems to be that there
> are two records, an abridgment of Lehi's record followed by
> an account of Nephi's proceedings, but if those few verses
> were removed, we would never suspect two records. The
> story is continuous; Nephi is the narrator of the entire book
> from beginning to end. And the very next verse continues
> the speech of Lehi that was interrupted to end chapter 9. We
> know of Lehi's teachings through Nephi's report, not through
> a condensation of Lehi's own record. So why does Nephi
> divide the book in this seemingly arbitrary manner?[77]

Based on his detailed analysis, Reynolds shows that Nephi's record in 1 Nephi is not two distinct texts that have been joined together but rather is one unified text drawing upon several sources (Nephi's recollection and writings, Lehi's writings, and the brass plates) that has been crafted to have two parallel parts that achieve a masterful literary structure. The first part, 1 Nephi 1–9, which Reynolds labels as "Lehi's account," has detailed pairings with the episodes in the second part, 1 Nephi 10–22, "Nephi's account," showing evidence of deliberate and even intricate pairing (see especially Reynolds' Table 1 and Table 2[78]). For example, the stories told for the seventh item in each of these two sections, the trip to bring back Ishmael and his family in the first half and the journey to the ship in the second half, respectively, can each be broken into eight elements that are presented *in exactly the same order* in both parallel accounts.[79]

In addition to this broad parallelism, Reynolds finds significant chiastic structure (introverted parallelism) in 1 Nephi, with both the first and second parts showing chiasmus that focuses on key historical elements in both halves, the retrieval of the brass plates and the construction of the ship, respectively. He also finds other aspects of the structure that appear to have been tailored to create chiasmus. Reynolds finds intricate structure, including several forms of parallelism, in 1 Nephi, while 2 Nephi appears more to be a collection of additional theological discourse and other items without the same level of structure.[80] More recently, Dennis Newton has shown that 15 relatively compact, multi-level chiasms in Nephi's writings feature high levels of thematic unity and craftsmanship with significant evidence of intent.[81] The sophisticated literary structure in 1 Nephi, rich in ancient Hebraic forms of parallelism that were not widely appreciated in Joseph's day, is inconsistent with a few days of hasty dictating from a hat by young

Joseph Smith, awestruck by the wonders of Rochester and trying to shoehorn some bold new images into his book at the last minute.

Joseph's Hat Trick? What Scholarship Reveals about Nephi's Writings

The theory that Joseph fabricated Nephi's writings based on Joseph's environment, dictated in a hurry from a hat, becomes all the more implausible when one considers the treasures that scholars have uncovered in Nephi's artfully composed works. Time after time his works reflect the skill of an ancient craftsman. Based on a partial sampling of such finds, to fabricate Nephi's works you would need to

1. Create Nephi's psalm in ways consistent with ancient patterns of psalm writing that would be studied and expounded long after the fabrication. For example, using form-critical analysis, Matthew Nickerson has shown that Nephi's psalm fits the pattern of the "individual lament" with five elements: 1) invocation, 2) complaint, 3) confession of trust, 4) petition, and 5) vow of praise.[82] It has also been the subject of scholarly analysis of its eloquent poetical elements that are consistent with ancient Semitic authorship[83] and for its adherence to covenant patterns in the Psalms.[84] Of course, critics can argue that Nephi's lyrical psalm could be fabricated in modern times by one thoroughly steeped in the Bible.

2. Use chiasmus not only for the overall structure of 1 Nephi but also for multiple sections of your writings. For example, Nephi's psalm has the chiasmus a) my soul delighteth, b) my heart pondereth, c) great goodness of the Lord, c') great and marvelous work, b') my heart exclaimeth / my heart sorroweth, a') my soul grieveth (2 Nephi 4:16–17). Of course, critics can argue that chiasmus is accidental or the result of osmosis from the Bible without any need for Joseph to have understood this ancient poetical form.

3. Imbue the tree of life description with significant allusions to ancient Wisdom themes from pre-exilic Israel,[85] including association of the tree with a woman (in Nephi's case, Mary, the mother of Christ).[86]

4. Use "up" and "down" in referencing travels around Jerusalem that accurately and consistently reflect the topography.[87]

5. In quoting Isaiah, make subtle changes that reflect a sophisticated knowledge of Hebrew, years before you begin studying Hebrew.[88]

6. Build multiple ancient Hebraic and Egyptian wordplays into your text, frequently with great relevance to the message. Such wordplays include the name of Nephi itself and the way it is used in the Book of Mormon,[89] the association of Nahom with the mourning over the death of Ishmael,[90] wordplay involving the name Joseph,[91] wordplay on the name Mary in 1 Nephi,[92] and several instances of Hebraic wordplay in the Book of Enos.[93] There is also the possible Egyptian wordplay involving the word of God as a rod, discussed below.

7. Integrate exodus themes and other ancient Jewish themes into your account in a way that shows rich and often subtle artistry firmly anchored in antiquity.[94] One example is the way that Nephi's description of the slaying of Laban is patterned after the account of David and Goliath, thereby serving as an important basis for Nephi's descendants in recognizing the validity of Nephi's claim to be the rightful ruler of the people, as Ben McGuire's work demonstrates.[95]

8. Create the sense of decades of maturing in a real character, Nephi, whose perspectives and objectives change over the course of his writings in a way that is consistent with what can be inferred from the text regarding the timeline of his writings.[96]

9. Write Nephi's section with a voice distinctly different than Mormon and Moroni's, the voices that had just been used in the previously written Book of Mormon sections.[97] In fact, make that voice reflect what Nephi claims to be: a Hebrew man steeped in Jewish scripture, thought, and symbolism, from the viewpoint of a conservative religious devotee opposing religious apostasy in the Jerusalem of 600 bc, accurately reflecting the religious tensions between traditional worshippers and Deuteronomist reformers in pre-exilic Israel.[98] Do it so thoroughly that it will impress a modern non-LDS scholar specializing in that topic.[99]

10. Introduce numerous details in the story that will seem like anachronisms but will later be validated as plausible elements. Examples include the idea of writing Hebrew in some form of Egyptian,[100] the concept of ancient scripture

on metal plates,[101] Laban's steel sword and its gold hilt,[102] Lehi's practice of offering sacrifices,[103] storing scriptures in a treasury,[104] and so forth.

11. And don't forget to describe the journey across Arabia in ways that would seem ridiculous in 1830 and only become plausible over a century later, with remarkable finds relating to geographical details for places like the River Laman and Bountiful, with accurate and plausible directions, and even future archaeological finds verifying the ancient authenticity of an important name of the area where Ishmael was buried, a name obviously obtained from locals.[105]

This list doesn't even include the most fundamental aspects of the case for the authentic nature the Book of Mormon, such as the diverse witnesses of the gold plates and their reliability, the witnesses of the translation process, and other extensive internal and external evidences.[106] Grunder's theory or any extensions thereof do not begin to address these issues. They are thus completely lacking explanatory power.

Weighing the Iron Rod: Modern Architectural Element or Ancient Symbol?

Grunder's focus on modern elements, like conventional iron railings and modern aqueducts, fails to consider the strengths of the Book of Mormon that emerge when we give it a chance and consider its connections to the ancient world. RT feels the iron rod is anachronistic, and is grateful for Grunder's work that clarifies the source of that Book of Mormon element. But both men are overlooking rather noteworthy ancient connections that might better clarify the Book of Mormon on this point.

Before assuming that the Book of Mormon is referring to a modern iron railing, we should consider the iron rod in the context of the Book of Mormon as well as the Bible. Joseph was presumably familiar with railings and fences. Why not describe the rod as such? "Rod" is not a common way in modern English to describe the function of what we perceive as a common railing in Lehi's dream. But it is an appropriate word for an ancient Semitic text.

Anciently, a rod conveyed the meaning of authority and divine power. In the Old Testament, the word "rod" is introduced in Moses' encounter with God on Sinai, when the Lord asks a significant question: "And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said,

A rod" (Exodus 4:2). The rod of Moses would become a tool for smiting enemies or overcoming the barrier to liberty and bringing the Israelites to the promised land, just as the rod in Lehi's dream brings us to the tree of life. Interestingly, Christine Meilicke observes that Moses' staff is almost always associated with some kind of water (Nile, sea, well in the wilderness), just as the rod of iron protects travelers from a filthy river (waters of death) and leads them to the waters of life from the tree of life.[107] She also observes that the staff of Moses and the blooming rod of Aaron, another symbol of authority, are often blended into one.[108]

The rod can be used as a weapon to thwart or subdue enemies of God, as in Psalm 2:9 and the smiting rod in Isaiah 10:24 and 11:4. In the latter verse, the Lord "shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth," showing a connection to the role of the rod as the "word of God." Similar action against the wiles of the adversary is also a function of "the word of God" (in context, arguably the rod) in Helaman 3:29. The rod from the stem of Jesse is a Messianic symbol (Isaiah 11:1). All these uses provide relevant context for the significance of the rod, as it might have been understood in Nephi's world.[109]

In the Book of Mormon, Nephi first uses "rod" in an interesting scene in 1 Nephi 3:28–29, where the rod is used both as a tool for smiting and implicitly as a symbol of authority:

> And it came to pass that Laman was angry with me, and also with my father; and also was Lemuel, for he hearkened unto the words of Laman. Wherefore Laman and Lemuel did speak many hard words unto us, their younger brothers, and t**hey did smite us even with a rod**.
>
> And it came to pass as **they smote us with a rod**, behold, an angel of the Lord came and stood before them, and he spake unto them, saying: **Why do ye smite your younger brother with a rod?** Know ye not that the Lord hath chosen him to be a **ruler** over you, and this because of your iniquities? Behold ye shall go up to Jerusalem again, and the Lord will deliver Laban into your hands. [*emphasis added*]

The angel not only spares Nephi's life, but specifically questions the use of a rod by the wicked brothers. The question isn't merely "Why do ye smite your younger brother?" but why do they smite him *with a rod*? This is followed by a challenge to their leadership status: "Know ye not that the Lord hath chosen him to be a ruler over you and this because of your iniquities?" The right to wield the rod is Nephi's, not his elder brothers'.

Here the rod is a misused symbol of authority as well as a smiting tool, consistent with ancient Near Eastern perspectives.[110]

In that context, I suggest it is improper to neglect what Nephi and other scriptures (e.g., Psalm 2:9; Isaiah 10:24, 11:4; cf. the much later Revelation 2:27) already have told us about the symbol of the rod when we encounter it again in Lehi's dream. Obviously the rod, however it was portrayed, was much longer than a typical hand-held rod, staff, or scepter. It extended along a bank and led to the tree of life. But that doesn't necessarily make it a modern railing held up by periodic vertical shafts.

In the Book of Mormon, those who gained the benefits of the rod "caught hold of the end of the rod of iron" and then pressed forward by "clinging to the rod" (1 Nephi 8:24), and finally reached the tree of life by "continually holding fast to the rod of iron" (1 Nephi 8:30). The interaction with the rod seems to be one of grabbing and not letting go. This could be advancing along the rod, one grip or handhold at a time, but the language leaves open the possibility that the rod might have been extended toward people on the bank to then *pull* them toward the tree of life if they would but grab the end and hold on, contrary to the image we tend to have of moving along the rod as we do with a conventional railing. Perhaps the rod as "word of God" played a more dynamic role in leading, guiding, and shepherding people (see the quote from Margaret Barker below on this idea), while also being able to "divide asunder" the cunning, the snares, and the wiles of the devil as does the word of God in Helaman 3:29, to "land their souls" in the kingdom of heaven (Helaman 3:30). In any case, it's a dream and elements don't have to have normal dimensions and properties.

Nephi continues using the word "rod" in his writings. In 1 Nephi 17:41, he refers to an active use of the rod to "straiten" the Israelites in the wilderness as he juxtaposes the rod of Moses with the story of the brass serpent on a pole:

> And he did straiten them in the wilderness with his rod; for they hardened their hearts, even as ye have; and the Lord straitened them because of their iniquity. He sent fiery flying serpents among them; and after they were bitten he prepared a way that they might be healed; and the labor which they had to perform was to look; and because of the simpleness of the way, or the easiness of it, there were many who perished.

The rod of Moses, famous for its association with serpents in Exodus 4, is linked here with the brass serpent on a (rodlike?) pole,

and the overall effect is to "straiten" the Israelites, or to guide them on a strait (narrow) course that, like the yoke of Christ, is easy but often rejected. Here the rod, the Messiah, and the straight and narrow path are associated. Later uses of "rod" by Nephi are in quoting from the Old Testament, where the smiting action of the rod is mentioned several times (2 Nephi 20: 5, 24, 26; 21:4, 24:29, 30:9).

In 2 Nephi 3:17, the rod as a symbol of power is found in a prophecy of the Lord given anciently to Joseph the son of Jacob and recorded on the brass plates, possibly in the Egyptian script or language that Joseph may have used: "I will raise up a Moses; and I will give power unto him in a **rod**; and I will give judgment unto him in writing." In this couplet, the rod and writing are linked, possibly drawing upon the Egyptian language wordplay in which "rod" (*mdw*) means "words," in line with the apparent wordplay in Lehi's dream where the iron rod is explicitly identified as "the word of God." On this matter, one of Matthew Bowen's many notable contributions in Book of Mormon studies is recognizing the ancient Semitic wordplay apparently involved in Nephi's identification of the iron rod as the word of God:

> Further support for the antiquity of Nephi's imagery is detectable in his own comparison of the word to a rod, a comparison that may involve wordplay with the Egyptian term for "word" and "rod." Although we have the Book of Mormon text only in translation and do not know the original wording of the text, we can use our knowledge of the languages that the Nephite writers said they used — Hebrew and Egyptian (1 Nephi 1:2; Mormon 9:32–33) — to propose reasonable reconstructions.

> We note that the Egyptian word *mdw* means not only "a staff [or] rod" but also "to speak" a "word." The derived word *md.t,* or *mt.t,* probably pronounced **mateh* in Lehi's day, was common in the Egyptian dialect of that time and would have sounded very much like a common Hebrew word for rod or staff, *matteh*. It is also very interesting that the expression *mdw-ntr* was a technical term for a divine revelation, literally the "the word of God [or] divine decree." The phrase *mdw-ntr* also denoted "sacred writings," what we would call scriptures, as well as the "written characters [or] script" in which these sacred writings were written.

Now consider Nephi's comparison of the word and the rod in the context of the Egyptian word *mdw:*

> I beheld that the **rod** [*mdw/mt.t,* Hebrew *matteh*] of iron, which my father had seen, was the **word** [*mdw/mt.t*] of God. (1 Nephi 11:25)

> And they said unto me: What meaneth the **rod** [*mdw/mt.t,* Hebrew *matteh*] of iron which our father saw, that led to the tree? And I said unto them that it was the **word** [*mdw/mt.t*] of God; and whoso would hearken unto the **word of God,** and would **hold fast unto it,** they would never perish. (1 Nephi 15:23–24)

An indication of Nephi's awareness of the play on words is his use of the expression "hold fast unto" the "word of God," since one can physically hold fast to a rod but not to a word (compare Helaman 3:29). Nephi's comparison of the rod of iron to the word of God also makes very good sense in light of other scriptural passages that employ the image of the iron rod. But the comparison takes on even richer connotations when viewed as a play on multiple senses of the Egyptian word *mdw.* Since Lehi's language consisted of the "learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians" (1 Nephi 1:2), we would reasonably expect that Lehi and his sons (Nephi in particular) were aware of, and probably even used, the common word *mdw/mt.t* in at least some of those senses. It seems unlikely that the word's phonetic similarity to Hebrew *matteh* would have escaped their attention. On the contrary, it would plausibly explain Nephi's apparent substitution of "word" for "rod" in later remarks to his brothers in 1 Nephi 17:26, 29: "And ye know that by his **word** [*mdw/mt.t*] the waters of the Red Sea were divided .... And ye also know that Moses, by his **word** [*mdw/mt.t*] according to the power of God which was in him, smote the rock, and there came forth water."

Nephi's imagery itself, along with its possible Egyptian language wordplay, further attests the antiquity of the Book of Mormon. Certainly Joseph Smith in 1829 could not have known that *mdw* meant both "rod" and "word." However, Nephi, in the early sixth century BC likely had a good understanding of such nuances, and he may have employed

them as part of a powerful object lesson for his brothers. [*footnotes omitted, emphasis original*][111]

In fact, the Egyptian hieroglyph for "word" is the symbol of the walking stick, a rod.[112] Further, Bowen observes in a footnote that Nephi's introduction of the rod of iron may involve a polyptoton, in which words derived from the same root are used in a single sentence. Related to the Egyptian word for rod and word, *mdw*, is the Hebrew word *maṭṭeh* (מטה) meaning staff, rod, or shaft, which derived from the root NTH meaning to "stretch out, spread out, **extend**, incline, bend." Thus, 1 Nephi 8:19 could be an interesting polyptoton: "And I beheld a rod [*maṭṭeh*] of iron, and it extended [*nth*] along the bank of the river, and led to the tree by which I stood." Bowen also notes that an Egyptian transliteration of the Hebrew *maṭṭeh* ("rod") and Egyptian *mdw/mt.t* ("rod, word") would have been graphically similar or even identical if written in demotic characters.[113]

I find the potential wordplay around related Hebrew and Egyptian words to be highly interesting, difficult to attribute solely to another lucky guess from Joseph, and not the kind of thing one would think up on the fly after being impressed by an aqueduct in Rochester, or even with leisurely study in 1829.

Inherent in the wordplay and in the meaning of the iron rod is the link between the abstract concept of the word and a physical rod. This is also part of the previously mentioned intertextuality between 1 Nephi and Helaman 3, particularly vv. 29–30:

> Yea, we see that whosoever will may lay **hold upon the word of God**, which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil, and **lead the man of Christ in a strait and narrow course** across that everlasting **gulf of misery** which is prepared to engulf the wicked —
>
> And land their souls, yea, their immortal souls, at the right hand of God in the kingdom of heaven, to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and with Jacob, and with all our holy fathers, to go no more out. [*emphasis added*]

Here language is used that echoes Nephi in several ways. In addition to laying "hold" on the word of God, something one can physically do with an iron rod but not to words themselves, we learn that the word, like the iron rod, serves to lead one in a straight course to eternal life (similar to the tree of life) and to avoid the "gulf of misery" that Nephi

also speaks of (2 Nephi 1:13, possibly building on the "terrible gulf" of Lehi's dream in 1 Nephi 12:18 and the "awful gulf" of 1 Nephi 15:28; cf. Alma 26:20 and Helaman 5:12). The dangerous journey to eternal life is made possible if one will "lay hold upon" the word of God and pursue its straight and narrow course. The iron rod theme seems to have been part of background in Helaman 3, and thus not readily explained by something Joseph saw *after* dictating Helaman.

Consistent with Nephi's usage, John Tvedtnes observes that the Old Testament links the voice of God with the concept of a rod:

> The use of a rod to represent words or speech is found in Proverbs 10:13 and 14:3. In other passages, it refers specifically to the word of God. In Isaiah 30:31, "the voice of the Lord" is contrasted with the rod of the Assyrians. In a few passages, the rod is compared to a covenant with God which, like a rod, can be broken (Ezekiel 20:37; Zechariah 11:10, 14). Micah wrote, "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it" (Micah 6:9). Isaiah wrote of the Messiah, "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Isaiah 11:4).[114]

These connections are useful after the fact in examining the appropriateness of the iron rod as a symbol for the word of God, but seem inadequate to provide a basis for fabrication of that concept, particularly in light of the clever wordplay involved.

RT's objection, mentioned above, was not to the use of a rod *per se* in the dream, but an iron rod. He states that "it is clearly not an ancient motif," and observes that there were "no rods of iron set next to rivers" in Nephi's time, which is correct as far as I know. Thus, he finds Grunder's suggestions convincing, or at least "difficult to ignore."[115]

Is a rod of iron a nineteenth century concept? Is it impossible to have been used in a divinely inspired vision in 600 bc? First realize that iron itself is not the problem. The Iron Age was well underway in Lehi's day.[116] Even the "fine steel" of Laban's sword is not anachronistic,[117] as some critics have claimed (especially those in the first few decades after the Book of Mormon, before the history of iron became better known), though high-quality steel could be rare and precious. So the problem raised by RT appears to be not the iron itself, but an iron rod as described by Nephi and Lehi. In saying it was not an ancient motif, perhaps RT

refers only to iron rods next to rivers. Of course, in the Old Testament and related ancient records we find that there were iron knives, iron swords, iron tools, iron cups, iron beds, iron yokes, etc., and even iron rods. Psalm 2:9 specifically mentions an iron rod in a setting related to divine authority and the ruling or conquering of nations. Here is the context from verses 7–10:

> Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.
>
> I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.
>
> Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
>
> Thou shalt break them with a **rod of iron**; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.
>
> Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. [*emphasis added*][118]

The iron rod here is not just an aberrant KJV translation. The NIV also has "iron rod" while the NASB has "rod of iron."

The KJV also mentions iron bars in Psalm 107:16 and Isaiah 45:2. The Hebrew word for "bars" is *bĕriyach* (בְּרִיחַ), Strong's H1280, which can mean a crossbeam or bar used to connect wooden boards of the tabernacle or can be a bolt or bar for shutting doors or gates.[119] Here we have an iron beam-like or rod-like object that appears to be horizontal, again suggesting that iron horizontal objects serving some kind of structural or barrier function would not be inconceivable to Lehi, though here the function of the rod is not to guide. Interestingly, in Isaiah 45:2, the iron bars are mentioned after stating that the Lord would make that which was crooked (crooked paths, apparently) *straight*.

Jeremiah 1:18 also speaks of an iron pillar: "I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land...." The brass walls coupled with iron pillars (vertical rodlike elements?) defend the city. The Hebrew word translated here as "pillar" can also be a platform or scaffold,[120] so could this include a fencelike function? Probably not. However, structural iron elements should not be unrecognizable to Lehi, including iron structures used to protect people, even if rare and expensive at the time.

Like RT, I am not aware of any ancient rivers in the Middle East that had iron rods along them, but that does not mean it could not have

been an intelligible concept in a dream nor does it require that we look to modern sources for the concept of an iron rod. Given the presence of iron in Lehi's day, the significance of rods, and the reference to an iron rod in Psalm 2, as well as other structural iron features in the Old Testament, iron in the form of a rod within a mere dream should not be overly puzzling.

Adding further credibility to the argument for ancient roots of the iron rod as portrayed in the Book of Mormon, non-LDS scholar Margaret Barker writes:

> Consider as well the mysterious rod of iron in this Book of Mormon vision (1 Nephi 8: 20; 11: 25). In the Bible, the rod of iron is mentioned four times as the rod of the Messiah. Each mention in the King James Version says the Messiah uses the rod to "break" the nations (Psalm 2:9) or to "rule" them (Revelation 2: 27; 12:5; 19:15). The ancient Greek translation (the Septuagint) is significantly different; it understood the Hebrew word in Psalm 2:9 to mean "shepherd" and it reads, "He will shepherd them with a rod of iron." The two Hebrew verbs for "break" and "shepherd, pasture, tend, lead" look very similar and in some forms are identical. The Greek text of the Book of Revelation actually uses the word "shepherd," *poimanei*, of the Messiah and his iron rod, so the English versions here are not accurate. The holy child who was taken up to heaven (Revelation 12:5) was to "shepherd the nations with a rod of iron." The King James Version of Micah 7:14 translates this same word as "*Feed* thy people with thy rod," where "guide" would be a better translation. Psalm 78:72 has, "He *fed* them ... and guided them," where the parallelism of Hebrew poetry would expect the two verbs to have a similar meaning: "He *led* them ... he guided them." Lehi's vision has the iron rod *guiding* people to the great tree — the older and probably the original understanding of the word.[121]

Let's not make the mistake of projecting modern views of iron railings into Lehi's dream and then finding that the iron rod is too modern to be from an ancient text. Iron rods, pillars, and bars are attested in the Old Testament and could have been known and recognizable to Lehi and Nephi, with symbolism and even linguistic aspects relevant to Nephi's usage in an ancient era. Lehi's dream and the rod of iron fits the ancient setting of the Book of Mormon better than a modern railing from Rochester in Joseph's day.

The Tree of Life and the Whiteness of Its Fruit

The tree of life as portrayed in Lehi's dream and in related references later in the Book of Mormon (e.g., Alma 5:33–36, 62; Alma 12:21–26; Alma 32:38–42; Alma 42:1–17) certainly draws upon biblical themes,[122] but also resonates with other ancient concepts from the Near East.[123] In Nephi's account, it is a symbol of salvation, spiritual nourishment, and ascent into the presence of God, as well as a Messianic symbol, a symbol of the love of God, and a symbol of the mother of Christ. C. Wilfred Griggs discusses elements in the Book of Mormon account similar to Old World cultures, including:

> (1) the difficulty of gaining access to it; (2) the various destructive forces around and about it; (3) the spiritual qualities required to make its fruit acceptable and nourishing to its partakers; and (4) the divine nature of the tree and its fruit, which render them unavailable to mortals lost in darkness and laden with sin.[124]

While Rick Grunder found an 1838 publication boasting of the abundant fruit in New York, nearly every state has fruit trees and regions that are well known for fruit (Washington apples, Georgia peaches, Wisconsin's Door County for cherries, etc.). However, finding fruit in New York to explain the fruit of the tree of life is hardly interesting, and doesn't address what really stands out in the Book of Mormon: the unique *white fruit* of the tree. This fruit is referenced later in the Book of Mormon, in text translated long before 1 Nephi was dictated, in Alma 32:40–42, where Alma has compared the word of God to a seed that can be planted in our heart and then grow, if carefully nourished, to yield "the fruit of the tree of life" (v. 40). Alma's description of that fruit mirror's Lehi's, for it "is sweet above all that is sweet, and … **white above all that is white**, yea, and pure above all that is pure; and ye shall feast upon this fruit even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst" (Alma 32:42). 1 Nephi 8:11, Lehi explains that the tree's fruit "was most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted. Yea, and I beheld that the fruit thereof was white, to exceed all the whiteness that I had ever seen." Later, after Nephi has his version of the vision, he reports in that "the beauty [of the tree of life] was far beyond, yea, exceeding of all beauty; and **the whiteness thereof did exceed the whiteness of the driven snow**" (1 Nephi 11:8). This is not a New York apple tree.

Margaret Barker was impressed with Lehi's description. She writes:

> The tree of life made one happy, according to the Book of Proverbs (Proverbs 3:18), but for detailed descriptions of the tree we have to rely on the noncanonical texts. Enoch described it as perfumed, with fruit like grapes (1 Enoch 32:5), and a text discovered in Egypt in 1945 described the tree as beautiful, fiery, and with fruit like *white* grapes.[125] I do not know of any other source that describes the fruit as white grapes. Imagine my surprise when I read the account of Lehi's vision of the tree whose *white fruit* made one happy, and the interpretation that the Virgin in Nazareth was the mother of the Son of God after the manner of the flesh (1 Nephi 11:14–23).[126] This is the Heavenly Mother, represented by the tree of life, and then Mary and her Son on earth. This revelation to Joseph Smith was the ancient Wisdom symbolism, intact, and almost certainly as it was known in 600 BCE.[127]

Barker above touches upon the complex issue of the divine mother and the Asherah, the tree-like symbol from pre-reform Israelite religion, a topic also explored by Daniel Peterson, who finds significant evidence for early Near Eastern concepts in Nephi's links between the tree of life, the Savior, and Mary.[128] Brant Gardner, after reviewing scholarship on the role and meaning of the Asherah, observes:

> The cultural linkage between the tree and Asherah explains how Lehi moved so easily from the Tree to the Messiah, and how Nephi so readily moved from the Tree to the "mother of God." In pre-reform Israelite religion, Asherah was the divine mother. Therefore, Asherah as the Tree of Life was a logical symbol for the Messiah's physical birth. The issue of whether Asherah should be considered a part of true Israelite belief is quite another discussion. The important information is that the complex of ideas surrounding Asherah would have informed Lehi and Nephi's cultural understanding. That cultural background allowed them to easily make a transition from the tree to the mother of Yahweh, a transition difficult for us but natural for them.[129]

Related to the complex of ideas around the Asherah are the ancient Israelite traditions around Wisdom, personified as a woman in Proverbs 8 and in many other canonical and extracanonical sources from the ancient Near East. For example, speaking of wisdom, Psalm 3:18 says,

"She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her." In the Book of Mormon, one must take hold of the iron rod (1 Nephi 8:24) or "lay hold" (Helaman 3:29) upon the word of God and upon arriving at the tree of life, as we learn in Lehi's vision, one must persevere rather than wander into forbidden paths and be lost (1 Nephi 8:25, 28). It is staying at the tree of life and partaking of its fruit that brings happiness (1 Nephi 8:12; 11:21–23).

Peterson notes parallels between ancient Wisdom literature and concepts in Lehi's dream and elsewhere in the Book of Mormon, including a potential wordplay.[130] In related research, John Tvedtnes has found several early Christian texts in which Mary is associated with a tree or particularly the tree of life, as in 1 Nephi.[131]

Insights on a Temple Gone Dark: The Use of "Spacious" in the Book of Mormon

The Book of Mormon's use of the term "spacious" is another interesting twist in this story. That word is not used in the King James Bible, but is consistently used in a negative context in the Book of Mormon. And in most cases, possibly all, it has an architectural connection (buildings). Thus we have "spacious buildings" (Mosiah 11:8–9), referring to Noah's "elegant and spacious buildings" and "spacious palace," and then Mormon's condemnation of Riplakish, who taxed the people to "build many spacious buildings" in Ether 10:5. But before we read of the great and spacious building, Nephi introduces "spacious" to describe a field, of all things. But there's something unusual about this field and the other words used to describe it in 1 Nephi 8, as Nephi quotes Lehi:

> 9 And it came to pass after I had prayed unto the Lord I beheld a **large and spacious field**.

> 20 And I also beheld a strait and narrow path, which came along by the rod of iron, even to the tree by which I stood; and it also led by the head of the fountain, unto a **large and spacious field, as if it had been a world**. [*emphasis added*]

A large and spacious field? As if it had been a *world*? This always sounded odd to me — until I read D. John Butler's book, *Plain and Precious Things: The Temple Religion of the Book of Mormon's Visionary Men*.[132] Butler identifies numerous temple themes in Nephi's writings, and explains how the three parts of the ancient Jewish temple are reflected there, as I previously mentioned in a 2012 post, "A Temple Gone Dark,"[133] (written before I noted the use of "spacious" elsewhere in the

Book of Mormon, which strengthens the argument made there). Among the three parts of the Jewish temple, first is the *ulam*, often translated as "porch," a room that may be roofless or very tall. Then comes the *hekal*, the main middle room. That word literally means "building" or "great building." A high, lofty building. And then comes the *debir*, the holy of holies, representing the presence and power of the Lord.[134]

As Lehi begins his travel in the dream, he encounters a "dark and dreary wilderness" that joins a "large and spacious field, as if it had been a world" (1 Nephi 8:20). The Hebrew word *ulam* for the first part of the temple is very close, almost identical in sound, to *olam*, the word that means "world." In Butler's view, there is a Hebrew play on words linking the great and spacious field, "a world," to the temple's *ulam*.[135] If "the world" is a play on words linked to the courtyard of the temple, then "spacious" again could convey an architectural sense. There is a great and spacious courtyard, but dark and dreary from apostasy.

After the *ulam* comes the *hekal*, the "great building." Recall Lehi's words of what he saw after the spacious field/world/*ulam*, describing:

> a great and spacious building; and it stood as it were in the air, high above the earth. And it was filled with people, both old and young, both male and female; and their manner of dress was exceedingly fine; and they were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those who had come at and were partaking of the fruit. (1 Nephi 8:26–27)

The word "fine" is used repeatedly in the Old Testament to describe the clothing of the priests in the temple, not secular clothing. The people with the fine clothing in the great and spacious building include the priests of the temple in a sinister *hekal*, part of Lehi's dark temple experience.[136] Butler also compares the fumes of incense that are part of the *hekal* with the mists of darkness that lead people astray.[137] The waters of life that are part of many temple scenarios in ancient literature are replaced with dangerous filthy waters.

Only those who resist the corrupt religious establishment of Lehi's day and the temptations and pressures of the adversary, clinging to the word of God (the iron rod) can make it past the dark *ulam* and sinister *hekal* and arrive safely to the *debir* and the tree of life, also rich in temple imagery.[138]

As is so often the case, there is much more going on in the Book of Mormon than meets the eyes of a casual reader rushing through the text.

A Plagiarized Straight and Narrow Path?

Some critics see evidence of plagiarism or modern origins in Nephi's language about the "straight and narrow path." First, I must say that I agree with John Welch's very thoughtful and intelligent discussion of the confusion around "strait and narrow" versus "straight and narrow."[139] He argues convincingly that the word should be "straight" as it was printed in all editions of the Book of Mormon until 1981.

Whether "strait" or "straight," the direct combination with "narrow" does not occur in the Bible, but does occur in *Pilgrim's Progress*, a widely known Christian tome published by John Bunyan in 1678.[140] In a dream, Goodwill tells the protagonist, Christian, that there are many ways that go down, "and they are crooked and wide; but thus thou mayest distinguish the right from the wrong, the right only being **straight and narrow**." Did Joseph plagiarize from John Bunyan?

The phrase is actually older than *Pilgrim's Progress*. The use of "straight" near "narrow" is, of course, found in Matthew 7:13–14:

> Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in threat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Welch explains that "Had the Lord said, 'Strait is the gate, and straight and narrow is the way,' it would have been more descriptive but less poetic."[141] But there is really no need to specify the shape of the path in this bit of poetry. Crooked, winding paths are already ruled out in the scriptures His audience would have known (e.g., Deuteronomy 5:32–33; see also Psalms 5:8 which asks the Lord to "make thy way straight before my face" and Isaiah 40:3, "make straight in the desert a highway for our God").

Bunyan was not the first to see that the Lord's narrow path was also straight, not just strait. According to Welch:

> Cyprian, a church father of the third century, in an apparent paraphrasing of Matthew 7:13–14, wrote, "How broad and spacious is the way which leadeth unto death, and many there are who go in thereby: how **straight and narrow** is the way that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it!" He also wrote, "We must persevere in the **straight and narrow road** of praise and glory." [*emphasis added*][142]

Origen also wrote of the "the straight and narrow way, which leads to life."[143]

Welch attributes the popularity of the phrase to Bunyan's influence. However, a search of Google Books shows it was also in use in modern English, or rather, Early Modern English, before Bunyan's day, when the Early Modern English era was nearing its end.[144] For example, the opening page of John Dee's 1591 "Dr. Dee's Apology" sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury speaks of the "true, straight, and most narrow path" of Christians.[145] Two examples from 1632, both in a Christian context, including a work by Richard Hooker et al.[146] and a work by Robert Chetwind,[147] have "straight and narrow." Examples are easier to find using a database of Early Modern English such as the Early English Books Online (EEBO) proximity search at the University of Michigan.[148] There one can find, for example, a poem published by Robert Albott in 1600 with "For straight and narrow was the way that he did showe."[149] In 1608, Thomas Bell wrote, "First, that the way to heauen (that is to say Gods commaundements) is very straight and narrow, not wide and long, or easie."[150] There are other examples of "straight and narrow" in non-religious contexts, indicating that the pairing was more useful than just paraphrasing scripture. There are many dozens of examples to consider, with many obviously referring to the way to salvation.

One noteworthy point is that "straight and narrow" was not only part of English vocabulary in Joseph's day but was also part of the vernacular of Early Modern English. I mention this because an important observation about the language of the Book of Mormon — not a theory that we Mormons need to buttress our faith but a fact-based observation that we are struggling to understand — is that much (not all) of the language of the Book of Mormon shows strong apparent influence from Early Modern English in ways that are not readily derived from the KJV Bible, almost as if there were some form of tight control in the translation to give an English text that was often moved away from the English of Joseph's day or from KJV English into something slightly earlier and strangely different, yet plain and familiar, readily understandable to English speakers (unlike some Early Modern English). With this came grammar that is bad by modern standards but acceptable in Early Modern English, a story that has been well covered before.[151] For now, the important thing is that "straight and narrow," though related to the KJV, is not a direct KJV phrase, but was an established phrase before Bunyan came along. While its presence in the Book of Mormon may come from Joseph's own vernacular, as we might expect with a translation, it is also consistent

with the unexpected observation that there are many instances of text in the Book of Mormon showing Early Modern English influence.

One skeptic objected to the proposal that "straight and narrow" might be explained as part of Joseph's vocabulary or as Early Modern English possibly transmitted to Joseph Smith through some form of tight control. "You can't have it both ways!" he told me.[152] However, I have it both ways all the time when I translate between Chinese and English, as do many others in translation work. I turn to automated tools or Chinese friends who give me words directly, but I may edit those myself or do translation in my own words at other times. Normal translation is a complex process and the Book of Mormon itself shows much complexity in the language used. If any mental effort was required from Joseph, and it appears that it was, then his mind and language were not entirely separated from the text. To require that every word in the Book of Mormon fit into a single model of translation or a single straightforward process, tight or loose, is unrealistic.[153]

Further, the charge of "plagiarism" is inappropriate. Using a well-known phrase that has entered into the common vocabulary of a language is not plagiarism. Those who speak of quantitative easing, global warming, a black swan event, a utopian society, etc., are drawing upon recently developed phrases that can legitimately be used in an original work because they are part of our language now, as "straight and narrow" was in Joseph Smith's day, and as it was in the Early Modern English era.

Whether the account of Lehi's dream was dictated with tight control using an Early Modern English base text or "setting" of some kind, or whether it was translated more loosely in Joseph's own vernacular, "straight and narrow" can be used to describe the path leading to eternal life even if that is not literally how the straightness or strictness of the way was expressed on the gold plates. It is a plausible term to use in a translation and is not a sign of "plagiarism."

An Ancient Desert Landscape?

The landscape in Lehi's dream and Nephi's vision arguably fits the features of the Arabian Peninsula in ways that verdant Rochester does not. The river of filthy water has been compared to the dangerous, dirty, debris-laden flows that occur in Arabian wadis after a rainstorm.[154] The broad paths that lead to destruction can be compared to the confusing landscape among desert wadis that channel in many directions and where death can be swift for those journeying in dangerous paths,

especially if swept away by flash floods or, more commonly, faced with heat and lack of water. Further, as S. Kent Brown observes,

> Lehi's dream began in "a dark and dreary wilderness" wherein Lehi and a guide walked "in darkness" for "many hours" (1 Nephi 8:4, 8). Plainly, they were walking at night, the preferred time for traveling through the hot desert.[155]

Further, the great and spacious building rising as if it were in the air has been compared to buildings such as fortresses in the Arabian Peninsula rising from rocky outcroppings or buttes in the desert, which when lit up from within at night would appear to be floating in the air. However, the region most famous for lofty structures in Arabia, Yemen, would not have been encountered yet when Lehi had his vision relatively early in their journey, but viewing such structures later could have reinforced the image of the dream. S. Kent Brown writes:

> The "great and spacious building" of Lehi's dream appeared unusual enough to his eye that he called it "strange" (1 Nephi 8:33). He also wrote that this building in his dream "stood as it were in the air, high above the earth" (1 Nephi 8:26). Why would Lehi, who had evidently traveled a good deal during his life (he possessed "tents," 1 Nephi 2:4), call a building strange? And does the word *strange* fit with the fact that the building soared into "the air, high above the earth"? Evidently, Lehi's descriptions of this building point to architecture unfamiliar to him. Furthermore, his words prophetically anticipate architecture that he and his party would see in south Arabia.

> Recent studies have shown that the so-called skyscraper architecture of modern Yemen, featured most vividly by the towering buildings in the town named Shibam in the Hadhramaut Valley, has been common since at least the eighth century BC and is apparently unique in the ancient world. The French excavations of the buildings at ancient Shabwah in the 1970s, including homes, indicate that the foundations of these buildings supported multistoried structures. In addition, "many ancient South Arabian building inscriptions indicate the number of floors within houses as three or four, with up to six in [the town of] Zafar." Adding to the known details, "these inscriptions also provide the name of the owners" of these buildings.

In this light, it seems evident that Lehi was seeing the architecture of ancient south Arabia in his dream. For contemporary buildings there "stood as it were in the air," rising to five or six stories in height. Such structures would naturally give the appearance of standing "high above the earth" (1 Nephi 8:26).[156]

Writing of Yemen's architectural landscape, Yusuf 'Abdullah writes:

The towns and villages of the country's central region, bathed in sunshine from dawn till dusk, are situated in the steep mountains which tower into the blue sky. … Viewed from a distance, the houses and other buildings of these human settlements seem themselves like silent cliffs and hillocks that have grown out of the bedrock. … The dwellings atop the stony peaks and hills and in the valleys were built of carefully hewn stone from the local quarries. Most of them have several storeys and form settlements or villages capable of … defending the community.[157]

He also refers to the 4th-century historian and scholar, al-Hasan ibn Ahmad al-Hamdani, who described buildings and towns that are still reflected in the architecture of modern Yemen (see Figure 6). One fortress described by al-Hamdani was at Na'it, a white fortress on top of a mountain, while Sana'a was said to have a palace as tall as 20 stories, which may be exaggerated, but reflects ancient Yemen's fascination with tall structures.[158] Though al-Hamdani was long after Lehi, as Brown observed, there is evidence that the desert skyscrapers of Yemen have their roots in much more ancient times and may have been part of the landscape Lehi would see. However, such buildings are not mentioned by Nephi, weakening Brown's proposed architectural significance of the great and spacious building.[159]

In light of the architectural, cultural, and geographical aspects of Lehi's dream, Brown concludes that:

Lehi's dream, perhaps more than any other segment of Nephi's narrative, takes us into the ancient Near East. For as soon as we focus on certain aspects of Lehi's dream, we find ourselves staring into the world of ancient Arabia. Lehi's dream is not at home in Joseph Smith's world but is at home in a world preserved both by archaeological remains and in the customs and manners of Arabia's inhabitants. Moreover, from all appearances, the dream was prophetic — and I emphasize

this aspect — for what the family would yet experience in Arabia. To be sure, the dream was highly symbolic. Yet it also corresponds in some of its prophetic dimensions to historical and geographical realities.[160]

Figure 6. Modern Shibam reflects the ancient Yemeni tradition of multistory buildings.[161]

Grunder, on the other hand, is convinced that the Book of Mormon wilderness is simply the verdant wilds and swamps of New York, since Nephi never mentions the desert, just "wilderness," and since he feels thirst is not a significant problem for Lehi's group as one would expect for a real journey through Arabia.[162] However, the sufferings of Lehi's group along Lehi's trail did include thirst (Alma 18:37 and Alma 37:42) and did include many details consistent with a record from someone who had crossed Arabia as described.[163] While Grunder thinks Nephi's use of "wilderness" and his failure to use the word "desert" means Joseph was just thinking of the moist wilderness of New York when writing the Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi offers much more than anything Joseph could have dreamed up based on New England terrain. In dealing with a similar objection from RT, I point out that the word "wilderness" in the Book of Mormon is an appropriate translation for at least two commonly used biblical Hebrew terms that are sometimes also translated as "desert."[164] In fact, as the group came to the southern end of the Dead

Sea, they would encounter the wide rift valley of *Arabah*, a name that actually means *wilderness*, just as Nephi had recorded. Nephi's use of "wilderness" is reasonable and also subtly links their wilderness journey to the Exodus in a way entirely appropriate for an ancient Hebrew author describing a sacred journey to a new promised land.

The reality of Nephi's trek through the desert in the Arabian Peninsula, not an imaginary jaunt through New York, is greatly underscored by archaeological evidence such as the ancient altars bearing a Nahom-related tribal name found in an appropriate region to validate an important part of Nephi's record, and the discovery of an excellent candidate for Bountiful nearly due east of Nahom, just as Nephi wrote, issues that have been covered at length by Warren Aston and others.[165] Grunder's swift dismissal of the evidence is highly disappointing.

The growing body of recently discovered evidences related to Lehi's Trail greatly strengthens the sense of authenticity of Nephi's account and suggests that Grunder's exclusive focus on modern parallels is a tragic case of stubbornly looking in the wrong place.

Extensions of the Iron Rod: An Active, Divisive Rod, or Even a Sword?

Criticism about the rod of iron as an anachronistic structure seems to draw upon our modern views of iron railings. We assume that the rod of iron is a nicely anchored, stationary railing made according to modern standards, nicely cemented into place with supports ever 30 or so centimeters. But the rod of iron in Isaiah 11:4 is used for smiting, a rather dynamic act, and when Mormon appears to refer to the iron rod and other themes from Lehi's dream in Helaman 3:29–30, he urges us to "lay hold upon the word of God which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil, and lead the man of Christ in a strait [straight] and narrow course across the everlasting gulf of misery..." The word, which we must hold, is "quick" — alive, active — and can "divide" the artifices of the Adversary.[166] This suggests motion, the kind of motion you might get from a rod that is being wielded by a divine agent. In leading us to salvation (or to the tree of life), perhaps its action is also more than merely a passive support. Perhaps the iron rod is pulling us or actively moving us in the right direction. It actively wrecks Satan's deceitful artifices while bringing us, perhaps vigorously, to our goal.

The physics may seem questionable, but this is from a dream. We're not sure what Lehi saw. But importing modern images into the dream

and then declaring that the dream seems too modern may be rather fallacious.

The possibility of the rod playing an active, dynamic role is not just Mormon's idea in Helaman 3. Nephi, in explaining the significance of the rod of iron to his brothers, states that "it was the word of God, and whoso would hearken unto the word of God and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; **neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction**" (1 Nephi 15:24). Thus, as Tvedtnes has noted, "This makes the rod both a source of support (as the word of God) and a weapon of defense against the devil's 'fiery darts' ...."[167] Nephi's concept, nicely built into Helaman 3, suggests the role of the iron rod is more than just a static railing. Zachary Nelson has compared the iron rod in Lehi's dream to tools used for defense and gathering such as the shepherd's rod or staff, and rods in the Old Testament used as weapons to smite others.[168] Nelson also notes that a rod can serve as a measuring stick (related perhaps to the concept of the scriptural canon) and as a scepter, again reminding us of its role as a symbol of authority.

If the rod Lehi saw was an exaggerated iron scepter, a symbol of God's power and also of the word of God, building on the clever wordplay suggested by Matthew Bowen above, then in the dream it could have served as a barrier/railing but also as a dynamic tool to protect people and draw them home. Lehi doesn't say it was permanently anchored, just that "it extended along the bank of the river and led to the tree" (1 Nephi 8:19). There was a path along the rod of iron (1 Nephi 18:20) and since a path is static, the rod may have been, but this is not necessary. The people who reached the tree of life "caught hold of the end of the rod of iron" and then pressed forward, "clinging to the rod or iron" (1 Nephi 8:24). It had a finite length, and the key was grabbing the end of it and holding on.[169] That makes sense for a static structure, but it need not be, especially in a dream.

What if we compare the rod of iron with another metallic symbol of power, a sword? As we can see in Royal Skousen's *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon*, 1 Nephi 12:18 currently has "the **word** of the justice of the Eternal God" serving to "divide" the wicked from the blessings of eternal life, but it should actually read "the **sword** of the justice of the Eternal God."[170] It is the sword, not the word, that is doing the dividing, which is more logical and consistent with ancient usage and with the dividing action in Helaman 3:29, though there it is

the word of God carrying out that action. As Tvedtnes has pointed out, rods, swords, and the word of God may all be connected.[171]

Tvedtnes sees Helaman 3:29 as a build upon Lehi's dream, but with the word likened to a sword, based on common language with Hebrews 4:12:

> For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Tvedtnes writes:

> The epistle to the Hebrews probably quoted a more ancient source, which was also borrowed in Helaman 3:29–30. …

> The inclusion of the "strait and narrow course" and the "gulf of misery," along with the "snares and the wiles of the devil," clearly ties this passage to Lehi's vision, where it is the rod or the word of God that brings people safely past Satan's obstacles (the mist of darkness, the gulf, the fiery darts of the adversary, and the forbidden paths) to the tree of life (I Nephi 8:19–24; 12:17–18; 15:24,28). In the Helaman passage, however, the word of God seems to be compared to a sword.

> The power of the word of God was emphasized by Alma; he noted that "it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, which had happened unto them" (Alma 31:5; cf. 61:14; Ecclesiastes 9:18). This reminds us that Nephi and other Book of Mormon prophets spoke with "the sharpness of the power of the word of God" (2 Nephi 1:26; Words of Mormon 1:17; Moroni 9:4; cf. Alma 1:7).[172]

The ability of the quick and powerful word of God to "divide asunder" in light of Hebrews 4:12 certainly suggests the action of a sword, but this may not necessarily be intended in the text and may be an artifact of the translation process that uses familiar KJV language, including numerous phrases, rather heavily. But does the similarity in phrasing in Helaman 3 really mean that the author intended to depict the word of God as a sword here? In fact, the word of God as a rod may still have been intended. "Laying hold" of a sword, especially Paul's double-edged sword, can be a dangerous exercise, in contrast to the safety suggested by laying hold of the word. The ability of a sword to divide asunder is also within the

scope of specifications for biblical rods. As Moses brings the Israelites out of Egypt, the Lord commands him to "lift up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea" (Exodus 14:16). The gulf of death before the Israelites was safely crossed through the action of the rod of Moses and its power to *divide* the sea.

Regardless of the original language and intent in Helaman 3, the relationship between the sword and the word in the Book of Mormon squares nicely with recently recognized relationships in ancient Hebrew texts, as Joshua Berman demonstrated several years after Tvedtnes' article on the rod, the sword, and the word.[173] Berman explains that the term for double-edged or multi-edged sword, whether in Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic, is literally a "sword of mouths" and typically refers figuratively to the power of speech.[174] This further illustrates ancient connections between the sword and the word. Yuval Harari's discussion of Jewish lore about the sword of Moses and its connections to the engraved name of God, the Torah, and the power of prayer may also be of interest.[175]

While swords and rods are symbols of power, protection, and smiting, I suggest that Helaman 3:29 is evoking both the image of the rod of Moses as well as the rod of Lehi's dream, both associated with deliverance from a gulf and the quest to reach the promised land or tree of life. The word, once firmly gripped, can lead us to salvation, as Nephi's iron rod which "led to the tree" (1 Nephi 8:19) and helps us ward off the fiery darts of the adversary (1 Nephi 15:24) that would otherwise destroy us or lead us to destruction.

Another connection occurs in 1 Nephi 15:30, when Nephi explains "that our father also saw that the justice of God did also divide the wicked from the righteous; and the brightness thereof was like unto the brightness of a flaming fire...." The bright, flaming justice of God, a sword (as originally in 1 Nephi 12:18) that divides or separates the wicked from the tree of life, here appears to draw upon the image of the cherubim and flaming sword of Genesis 3:24, placed there by God "to keep the way of the tree of life." The "way" is *derek*, Strong's H1870, which means road, path, etc.[176] Lehi's dream seems to build on that concept. The divine sword of justice/the sword of cherubim and a divine rod can all have a dividing effect. They can smite. They can be symbols of authority and power. And they seem to be used with skill and propriety in the Book of Mormon.

There may be more to the iron rod than meets the modern eye, and much more to the Book of Mormon's use of that theme than Joseph could

have gleaned from a quick glance at a Rochester aqueduct in his frantic final moments of dictating the beginning of the Book of Mormon. The alleged weakness of an anachronistic iron rod structure in Lehi's dream may actually be a strength pointing to sophisticated usage drawing upon ancient concepts and even ancient Near Eastern wordplays.

Conclusion

The problem with looking only at modern sources to explain the Book of Mormon is that it leaves one blind to the abundant evidence of ancient origins. A fair evaluation should consider the Book of Mormon in the context it offers, determine if it is plausible, and weigh how the evidence for ancient origins compares to other theories.

A useful theory of Book of Mormon origins should explain how the text was generated. It should not just account for a few scattered elements, but should also be able to explain the strengths of the text, including new discoveries showing pervasive links to the ancient world and intricate craftsmanship in the text. Grunder's theory does none of this.

There's on old joke about a man on his hands and knees looking for something on the ground under a streetlight one night. A passerby asked him what he was doing. "Looking for a lost key." Where did you lose it? "About a block down the street." So why aren't you searching there? "Because the light is better here." Searching for parallels in the modern era is more convenient, but it's not the right place to fairly evaluate the Book of Mormon.

As is often the case, when looking for parallels to a text in the wrong place, something can always be found, but what is found may not be as meaningful or informative as the parallels encountered when one searches nearer the source. The fake "keys" to the Book of Mormon from Joseph's environment don't really open the book to us. They don't fit the data. Whether it's a railing and a building in Rochester or a book like *Pilgrim's Progress* as purported sources for a section of Nephi's writing, they fail on numerous counts and don't come close to offering plausibility or explanatory power for the riches that are there.

The ancient Old World connections related to the tree of life vision and the iron rod suggest that the Book of Mormon account is rooted in antiquity. Given the evidence from the text and external sources regarding the tree of life vision, Grunder's theory of fabrication is far more fanciful, far more modern, and far less enduring than Nephi's account.

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Endnotes

1. Appendix 1: "The Rod of Iron: A Double in Dublin? Appendix for "The Great and Spacious Book of Mormon Arcade Game," JeffLindsay.com, Oct. 5, 2016, http://www.jefflindsay.com/lds/rod-of-iron-in-dublin/. Appendix 2: "Walt Whitman as the Source for Lehi's Dream and More?," JeffLindsay.com, Oct. 5, 2016, http://www.jefflindsay.com/lds/walt-whitman-lehis-dream/.

2. "The Spalding Theory of Book of Mormon Authorship," *FAIRMormon*, http://en.fairmormon.org/Book_of_Mormon /Authorship_theories/Spalding_manuscript, accessed June 9, 2016.

3. Jeff Lindsay, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Map: Part 1 of 2," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 19

(2016): 153–239, http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/joseph-and-the-amazing-technicolor-dream-map-part-1-of-2/, and Jeff Lindsay, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Map: Part 2 of 2," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 19 (2016): 247–326, http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/joseph-and-the-amazing-technicolor-dream-map-part-2-of-2/.

4. RT, "Critiques of Nahom and Lehi's Journey," *Faith-Promoting Rumor*, May 9, 2016, http://www.patheos.com/blogs/faithpromotingrumor/2016/05/critiques-of-nahom-and-lehis-journey/, accessed May 10, 2016.

5. Jeff Lindsay, "The Great and Spacious Book of Mormon Arcade Game," *Mormanity Blog*, May 23, 2016, http://mormanity.blogspot.com/2016/05/the-great-and-spacious-book-of-mormon.html.

6. Rick Grunder, "The Dream of the Iron Rod," PDF file taken from Entry 350, "Reynolds Arcade (Rochester, New York)," in *Mormon Parallels: A Bibliographic Source*, 2nd ed. (Lafayette, NY: Rick Grunder — Books, 2014), 1367–1431; available at http://www.rickgrunder.com/parallels/mp350.pdf.

7. RT, "Critiques of Nahom and Lehi's Journey."

8. RT, "Nahom and Lehi's Journey through Arabia: A Historical Perspective, Part 3" (hereafter Part 3), *Faith Promoting Rumor*, Patheos.com, Oct. 24, 2015, http://www.patheos.com/blogs/faithpromotingrumor/2015/10/nahom-and-lehis-journey-through-arabia-a-historical-perspective-part-3/, here quoting Philip Jenkins, "The Nahom Follies," *The Anxious Bench*, Patheos.com, June 14, 2015; http://www.patheos.com/blogs/anxiousbench/2015/06/the-nahom-follies/.

9. Benjamin L. McGuire, "Finding Parallels: Some Cautions and Criticisms, Part One," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 5 (2013): 1–59, http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/finding-parallels-some-cautions-and-criticisms-part-one/ and "Finding Parallels: Some Cautions and Criticisms, Part Two," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 5 (2013): 61–104, http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/finding-parallels-some-cautions-and-criticisms-part-two/.

10. Rick Grunder, "The Great and Spacious Building," *Worlds Without End*, April 27, 2015, http://www.withoutend.org/great-spacious-building/.

11. Grunder, "The Dream of the Iron Rod."

12. "Old Rochester Aqueduct, Genesee River, Rochester, NY," *The Travels of Tug 44*, http://www.tug44.org/canal.history/rochester-aqueduct/, accessed June 17, 2016.

13. Frank E. Sadowski, Jr., "Images of the Erie Canal in Rochester and Vicinity," *ErieCanal.org*, http://eriecanal.org/Rochester-1.html, accessed June 17, 2016.

14. Frank E. Sadowski, Jr., "The Broad Street Bridge," section in "Contemporary Photographs from Rochester," *ErieCanal.org*, http://eriecanal.org/Rochester-2.html, accessed June 17, 2016.

15. Lithograph from the cover of William C. Glynn, "The Rochester Arcade Quick Step," (1844), Historic Sheet Music Collection, Paper 651, *ConnColl.edu*, http://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/sheetmusic/651, with the PDF file at http://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1650&context=sheetmusic, accessed Aug. 4, 2016. Also see Diane Shaw, *City Building on the Eastern Frontier: Sorting the New Nineteenth Century City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 124–130 (much of the text is viewable at https://books.google.com/books?id=c9m5lKqOUecC&&pg=PA123).

16. Elisha Johnson, *A Directory for the Village of Rochester* (Rochester, NY: Elisha Ely and Everard Peck, 1827), as cited by Grunder, "The Dream of the Iron Rod."

17. "View of Rochester with a section of the Aqueduct", 1830, wood engraving from "Monthly Repository and Library of Entertaining Knowledge," 1/5 (October 1830), provided at "Images of the Erie Canal in Rochester and Vicinity," *ErieCanal.org*, http://eriecanal.org/Rochester-1.html, accessed Aug. 3, 2016.

18. Shaw, *City Building on the Eastern Frontier*, 125.

19. Ibid., 123.

20. RT, "Critiques of Nahom and Lehi's Journey."

21. Grunder, "The Dream of the Iron Rod," 1383.

22. Ibid., 1371.

23. RT, "Critiques of Nahom and Lehi's Journey," 2016.

24. Recommended readings include: (1) Bob Marcotte, "Reynolds Arcade," from the "Retrofitting Rochester" series in

partnership with the Office of the City Historian of Rochester, *Democrat and Chronicle*, Rochester, NY, 2012, http://media. democratandchronicle.com/retrofitting-rochester/reynolds-arcade; (2) "Walking Tour of Rochester's One Hundred Acre Plot," *LowerFalls.org*, http://www.lowerfalls.org/100acrestour/, which features several photos and drawings of the Reynolds Arcade and other prominent buildings in Rochester, with some history; (3) "Reynolds Arcade," *Libraryweb.org*, Monroe County (NY) Library System, http://www.libraryweb.org/rochimag/architecture/ LostRochester/Reynolds/Reynolds.htm, with several historic views of the Reynolds Arcade; and (4) Diane Shaw, *City Building on the Eastern Frontier: Sorting the New Nineteenth Century City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 124–130 (viewable at *Amazon.com*). Incidentally, Shaw points out that the glass roofing shown in some photos is from a remodeling effort long after Joseph might have seen the building.

25. Grunder, "The Dream of the Iron Rod," 1402.

26. "History of RIT," *RIT.edu*, https://www.rit.edu/overview/history-rit, accessed May 28, 2016.

27. *Catalogue of the Rochester City Library, April 1839*, provided by the Rochester Athenaeum and Young Men's Association (Rochester, NY: Shephard, Strong, and Dawson, 1839), http:// www.libraryweb.org/~digitized/books/Catalogue_of_the_Roch_ City_Library_1839.pdf. Thanks to *Mormanity* reader James Anglin for finding this resource, as discussed in comments of Jeff Lindsay, "The Great and Spacious Book of Mormon Arcade Game," *Mormanity Blog*, May 23, 2016, http://mormanity.blogspot. com/2016/05/the-great-and-spacious-book-of-mormon.html.

28. Josiah Conder, *Arabia*, in *The Modern Traveler: A Popular Description, Geographical, Historical, and Topographical, of the Various Countries of the Globe,* (London: James Duncan, 1825). *The Modern Traveler* and its 10 volumes are listed (without author, date, or publisher information) in *Catalogue of the Rochester City Library*, 17.

29. I have found four online editions of Conder's books printed at three different dates, with all but the first lacking the full map of Arabia in the electronic document:

(1) a scan of the 1825 printing at *ExploreDoc.com*: Josiah Conder, *Arabia*, in *The Modern Traveler: A Popular Description, Geographical, Historical, and Topographical, of the Various Countries of the Globe,* (London: James Duncan, 1825), at "James Duncan, The Modern Traveller, Arabia, 1825," *Exploredoc.com*, http://exploredoc.com/doc/3937504/james-duncan--the-modern-traveller--arabia--1825, which features the unfolded map of this volume before the title page;

(2) a c.1825 printing at *Google Books*: Josiah Conder, *A Popular Description of Arabia: Geographical, Historical, and Topographical* (London: James Duncan, 1825) at https://books.google.com/books?id=hugji007ouMC&pg=PA1 (no date is listed in the book but Google's "About this book" info states it is from 1825);

(3) an 1830 printing at *Archive.org*: Josiah Conder, *Arabia*, vol. 4 of *The Modern Traveler: A Description, Geographical, Historical, and Topographical, of the Various Countries of the Globe, in Thirty Volumes* (London: James Duncan, 1830), https://archive.org/stream/moderntraveller04condiala#page/n3/mode/2up; and

(4) an 1833 version at *Hathitrust.org*: Josiah Conder, *Arabia, Comprising Its Geography, History, and Topography* (Philadelphia, PA: Thomas Wardle, 1833), https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark:/13960/t6xw53h33;view=1up;seq=17. All links accessed July 30, 2016. The fold-out map can also be seen in a display from Rooke Books of Bath, England, *RookeBooks.com*, http://www.rookebooks.com/product?prod_id=16526, accessed July 28, 2016. A larger image of Conder's 1825 map can be viewed at "Topography; The Modern Traveller-Arabia-1825," *Catawiki.com*, http://auction.catawiki.com/kavels/2005491-topography-the-modern-traveller-arabia-1825, accessed July 30, 2016. A clearer map, though black and white only, is available at the *Exploredoc.com* link given above.

30. The catalog number for Conder's volume on Arabia is 1171. Nearby catalog numbers include 1191 for Grenville Mellen's *Book of the United States*, which was printed in 1838 (see https://www.amazon.ca/book-United-States-Grenville-Mellen/dp/B006BYJ6D6/159-0006769-5803450?ie=UTF8&*Version*=1&

entries=0#reader_B006BYJ6D6), and 1118, G.B. Cheever, *An American Commonplace Book of Prose*, printed in 1839 (see https://www.amazon.com/American-Common-Place-Book-Prose/dp/B002NSN21G), while titles mentioning earlier post-1830 dates are found in lower numbers such as 972, (*Sketches of Travel in Turkey and Greece in 1831–2*) and 796, *Continent in 1835*.

31. Conder*, Arabia* in *Modern Traveller*, 1825, fold out map viewable at *Exploredoc.com*, http://exploredoc.com/doc/3937504/james-duncan--the-modern-traveller--arabia--1825.

32. Conder, *A Popular Description of Arabia*, c.1825, *RookeBooks.com,* http://www.rookebooks.com/product?prod_id=16526. See also the map at *Catawiki.com*, http://auction.catawiki.com/kavels/2005491-topography-the-modern-traveller-arabia-1825.

33. Personal correspondence with Rooke Books, Bath, England, May 26, 2016.

34. Lindsay, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Map: Part 1."

35. Stephen D. Ricks, "On Lehi's Trail: Nahom, Ishmael's Burial Place," *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 20/1 (2011): 66–68, http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1401&index=5.

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134. Butler, *Plain and Precious Things*, 12–13.

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136. Ibid., 22–23.

137. Ibid., 23.

138. Ibid., 25–26.

139. John S. Welch, "Straight (Not Strait) and Narrow," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 16/1 (2007): 18–25, 83–84, http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1404&index=4 (text only) or https://journals.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/JBMRS/article/download/20114/18674 (PDF).

140. John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress* (London: Nathaniel Ponder, 1678), http://www.gutenberg.org/files/39452/39452-h/39452-h.htm, accessed Aug. 4, 2016.

141. Welch, "Straight (Not Strait) and Narrow," 19.

142. Cyprian *Treatise* 12.3.6, "Three Books of Testimonies against the Jews," in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 534, and *Epistles of Cyprian* 6.3 in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 5:284, both as cited by Welch, "Straight (Not Strait) and Narrow."

143. Origen, *Commentary on John* 10.28, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 10, ed. Allan Menzies (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), 408, as cited by Welch, "Straight (Not Strait) and Narrow."

144. "Early Modern English," *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_Modern_English, accessed July 28, 2016.

145. John Dee, *Dr. Dee's Apology* (1591), https://books.google.com/books?id=iikdAQAAMAAJ&pg=PP64.

146. Richard Hooker, *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie* (1632), 318, https://books.google.com/books?id=5AI8AQ AAMAAJ&q=%22straight+and+narrow%22&dq=%22st raight+and+narrow%22&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj pqu25-obNAhVE2GMKHcDNA1AQ6AEIJTad.

147. Edward Chetwind, *The Strait Gate and Narrow Way to Life, Opened and Pointed Out Upon Luk. 13, 23, 24 ... The Second Edition, Corrected and Revised* (London: John Beale, 1632), 165, https://books.google.com/books?id=D_FmAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA1 65&dq=%22strait+and+narrow%22&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKE wiDsN2--YbNAhUL_mMKHcBzBQgQ6AEIKDAC#v=onepage &q=%22strait%20and%20narrow%22&f=false.

148. *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*, University of Michigan, http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=eebo;c=eebo2;g=eebogr oup;xc=1;page=boolean.

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150. Thomas Bell, *The Iesuits antepast conteining, a repy against a pretensed aunswere to the Downe-fall of poperie, lately published by a masked Iesuite Robert Parsons by name, though he hide himselfe couertly vnder the letters of S.R. which may fitly be interpreted (a sawcy rebell.)* (London: William Jaggard, 1608), http://quod.lib. umich.edu/e/eebo?ALLSELECTED=1;c=eebo;c=eebo2;didno=A0 7868.0001.001;g=eebogroup;rgn=full+text;singlegenre=All;size=2 5;sort=occur;start=1;subview=detail;type=simple;view=reslist;xc =1;q1=straight+and+narrow.

151. Stanford Carmack, "A Look at Some 'Nonstandard' Book of Mormon Grammar," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 11 (2014): 209–262, http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/a-look-at-some-nonstandard-book-of-mormon-grammar/; Stanford Carmack, "Why the Oxford English Dictionary (and not Webster's 1828)," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 15

(2015): 65–77, http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/why-the-oxford-english-dictionary-and-not-websters-1828/; and Stanford Carmack, "What Command Syntax Tells Us About Book of Mormon Authorship," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 13 (2015): 175–217, http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/what-command-syntax-tells-us-about-book-of-mormon-authorship/. Also see several related posts on the *Mormanity Blog* available at http://mormanity.blogspot.com/search?q=carmack+stanford.

152. Comment posted at Jeff Lindsay, "The Iron Rod: Inspired by an Aqueduct in Rochester?," *Mormanity Blog*, May 30, 2016; http://mormanity.blogspot.com/2016/05/the-iron-rod-inspired-by-aqueduct-in.html.

153. Joseph's editing of the Book of Mormon text after dictation and the initial printing points to both tight control during dictation but an overall willingness to accept a form of loose control since he was willing to edit some things from the dictation that he didn't like. The edited elements include what appear to be Hebraisms or valid Early Modern English but awkward modern English. See, for example, Carmack, "A Look at Some 'Nonstandard' Book of Mormon Grammar," and John Tvedtnes, "The Hebrew Background of the Book of Mormon," *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, ed. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1991), 77–91, http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1111&index=9.

154. "What was the Great and Terrible Gulf in Lehi's Dream?," *Book of Mormon Central*, Jan. 19, 2016, https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/what-was-great-and-terrible-gulf-lehi%E2%80%99s-dream, accessed June 28, 2015.

155. S. Kent Brown, "New Light From Arabia on Lehi's Trail," in *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon*, ed. Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2002), 64, http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1082&index=5.

156. Ibid. Brown cites Jean-François Breton, "Architecture," in *Queen of Sheba: Treasures from Ancient Yemen,* ed. St. John Simpson (London: The British Museum Press, 2002), 142–48, "Architecture," with quotations from 143.

157. Yusuf 'Abdullah, "The Past Lives on: Man, Landscape, and History in Yemen," in *Yemen: 3000 Years of Art and Civilisation in Arabia Felix*, ed. Werner Daum (Innsbruck, Austria: Pinguin-Verlag, 1987), 472–479, quote at 472.

158. Ibid., 473.

159. Further, Brown's discussion of the word "strange" from Lehi may miss another possible meaning of "strange" as in "strange flesh" in Jude 1:7, suggestive of a perversion rather than an unusual appearance, as one anonymous peer reviewer of this paper observed. "Similarly, a strange building could absolutely refer to a corrupted temple" (Personal communication, Sept. 29, 2016). Instead of referring to the architecture, Lehi may have been emphasizing the perversion of religion represented by the great and spacious building. The reviewer also observes that if Lehi's dream were anticipating tall buildings they would later encounter, it seems odd that Nephi would not mention them when encountered later, though this theoretically could have been mentioned in the lost 116 pages.

160. Ibid.

161. Photo of the high-rise architectures at Shibam, Wadi Hadhramaut, from Jialiang Gao, available at "Shibam," *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shibam, accessed Aug. 2, 2016, licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.

162. Grunder, "The Dream of the Iron Rod," 1386.

163. Warren P. Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia: The Old World Setting of the Book of Mormon* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Publishing, 2015); also see Lindsay, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Map," Parts 1 and 2.

164. Lindsay, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Map," Part 1, at point #34 of the brief responses to RT.

165. Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*.

166. Christine Meilicke observes that the staff of Moses "embodies the power to split, to separate and to divide. It is used in making a distinction between the Israelites and the enemies of God by bringing redemption to the Israelites and at the same time

destroying their adversaries." Meilicke, "Moses' Staff and the Return of the Dead," 352.

167. Tvedtnes, "Rod and Sword as the Word of God." Regarding criticism of Nephi's "fiery darts" in this passage, see Stephen O. Smoot, "The 'Fiery Darts of the Adversary' in 1 Nephi 15:24," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 18 (2016): 5–9, http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/the-fiery-darts-of-the-adversary-in-1-nephi-1524/.

168. Zachary Nelson, "The Rod of Iron in Lehi's Dream," *Religious Educator* 10/3 (2009): 49–58, https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/volume-10-number-3-2009/rod-iron-lehi-s-dream.

169. This theme of grasping and not letting go in order to receive a blessing may also relate to the tale of Jacob wrestling the angel in Genesis 32:22–31. See also Philippians 3:12–14; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 Timothy 6:12; Hebrews 3:6, etc.

170. Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part One: 1 Nephi 1 – 2 Nephi 10* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2014), 257–258, http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/books/volume-4-of-the-critical-text-of-the-book-of-mormon-analysis-of-textual-variants-of-the-book-of-mormon/part-one-1-nephi-1-2-nephi-10/. Also see Royal Skousen, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 32, 748 (1 Nephi 12:18).

171. Tvedtnes, "Rod and Sword as the Word of God."

172. Ibid.

173. Joshua Berman, "The 'Sword of Mouths' (Judges III. 16; Psalms CXLIX 6; Proverbs V 4): A Metaphor and Its Ancient Near Eastern Context," *Vetus Testamentum*, 52/3 (July 2002): 291–303, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1585054.

174. Ibid., 292–93.

175. Yuval Harari, "Moses, the Sword, and The Sword of Moses: Between Rabbinical and Magical traditions," *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, 12/4 (2005): 293–329, with citations at 303, 318 and 325, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40753384.

176. Strong's H1870, *Blue Letter Bible*, https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H1870&t=KJV.

Experiencing Battle in the Book of Mormon

Morgan Deane

Abstract: *Historical chronicles of military conflict normally focus on the decisions and perspectives of leaders. But new methodologies, pioneered by John Keegan's* Face of Battle, *have focused attention on the battle experience of the common soldier. Applying this methodology to a careful reading of details within the Book of Mormon shows an experience in battle that is just as horrific as it is authentic.*

*T*he *Face of Battle* by John Keegan started an important method of inquiry into battle. Instead of focusing on the decisions of leaders, this method asks a very simple question: What is it like to be in a battle?[1] Put another way, what was battle like for the average soldier? This very simple question revealed new dimensions of understanding the battlefield. At the Battle of Agincourt, for example, this approach examined the soggy night before the engagement and its impact on the battle as much as Henry V's decision to fight there. As we study the Book of Mormon during the 2016 Sunday School curriculum, the "war chapters" are the focus of at least two lessons, and matters of warfare touch upon countless other lessons. I answer the question of what battle was like by looking at verses that show the individual experiences of soldiers on each side. This leads to a more universal understanding of the battle experience.

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1   John Keegan, *The Face of Battle: A Study of Agincourt, Waterloo and the Somme* (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 16. The same line of questioning is addressed in Alexander Rose, *Men of War: The American Soldier in Combat at Bunker Hill, Gettysburg, and Iwo Jima* (New York: Random House Books, 2015), 3.

In writing this paper, I consciously chose not to look at individual battles, opting instead to look at the overall experience of war detailed throughout the book. This necessarily means that the approach will not be chronological (as the Book of Mormon covers approximately 1,000 years of time), but instead will focus on the overall experience of battle itself. Specifically I look at the period of time just before battle, the movement of armies to the battle, what happened on the battlefield, and the aftermath of those battles.

Before the Battle

The Book of Mormon offers a great deal of information that helps us picture what the average soldier would experience before battle. However, in typical readings of the text this information is easily missed.

For the most part, the Book of Mormon describes an agrarian people — farmers largely preoccupied with feeding their families and communities. These communities would not maintain full-time armies, so when war ensued, the armies would be conscripted from the general population (Alma 44:23, Alma 53:7). Outside of perhaps Teancum's force, the Nephite armies followed this pattern.[2] Raising an army wasn't always an easy or a quick task, either. It wasn't uncommon for an attacking army to destroy a city before a defending army could be assembled.[3] Kings sometimes had difficulty mustering armies,[4] and armies would have to be conscripted by force.[5] Conscripts were understandably reluctant to fight in such situations, as their lives were not always valued by their leaders. For example, Amalickiah was known to throw his soldiers into futile attacks against heavily fortified cities.[6]

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2   There are numerous comparisons that could be made between Teancum's army and other Nephite armies. Compare, for example, Alma 51:31 with Alma 16:3 or Helaman 1:24.

3   See, for example, Alma 16:2–3 where the city of Ammonihah was destroyed before "the Nephites could raise a sufficient army to drive them out of the land."

4   An example is in Alma 47:1–2 where the Lamanites were fearful of the Nephites and disobeyed the king's call to arms.

5   Alma 47:3–4 recounts how Amalickiah was given authority to "go forth and compel" the people to arms. Similarly, Ether 14:27 and Alma 62:9 references people being given a choice to join or die, a choice not inconsistent with a type of forced conscription of the population.

6   Alma 49:10 states that Amalickiah would have compelled the Lamanites to attack the city of Ammonihah because "he did care not for the blood of his people."

The soldiers received a small ration that was likely inadequate for their duties (Alma 55:9;[7] 60:9[8]). As a result, this made stealing the wine a naturally appealing option. Wine — whether stolen or not — had a corollary benefit of providing some liquid courage and numbing the senses (Alma 55:11).[9] During more extreme circumstances, consistent with what we know of historical practice, the soldiers likely had so little food and represented such a logistical burden that they supplemented their meager rations by stealing food from widows (Moroni 9:16) and, sometimes, eating human flesh (Moroni 9:10).[10]

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7 Historically, the common soldiers' rations would be too small or watered down. Combined with the natural tendency to be bored and hungry on guard duty (as I personally experienced), I don't think they believed their rations adequate. The verse says they are "weary," but this sounds like a hunger or thirst resulting from boredom and inadequate rations. See footnote 9 concerning alcoholic rations as well.

8 Premodern peasants usually didn't eat well at home. They could hardly be expected to eat better while on military campaigns during a time of great stress on the state. While the Nephite armies usually got supplies from the government (which is why Moroni complained when those supplies didn't arrive), I hardly think it was generous to the average soldier, and it was frequently irregular. See Alma 62:39 and Alma 45:11 which shows how warfare is closely related to famine. Even fairly early in the war chapters, the Nephite forces had to deliver the people from famine (Alma 53:7).

9 These twin benefits of wine were not limited to Book of Mormon peoples. As late as World War I soldiers received a ration of wine (or an even stronger libation) before heading into battle (Keegan, *The Face of Battle,* 245). In fact, the word "Dutch Courage" and the belief that alcohol grants some form of battlefield performance boost comes from British experience. During the 30 Years War British soldiers serving in the Low Countries believed their gin ration stiffened their resolve. Edgar Jones and Nicola T. Fear, "Alcohol use and misuse within the military: A Review," *International Review of Psychiatry,* April 2001; 23: 166–72. http://www.kcl.ac.uk/kcmhr/publications/assetfiles/alcoholsmoking/Jones2011-Alcoholuseandmisusewithinthemilitary.pdf

10 The verse doesn't explicitly state these are rations. As indicated in footnote 7, warfare is often associated with cannibalism because it is the practical effect of constant warfare. Considering the chapter includes armed competition over food and starvation of widows, I think the use of this scripture in regards to human rations is still supported. Moreover, there are numerous examples of armies being reduced to eating people in extreme situations, and even the Wikipedia page on "cannibalism" has several examples. See, for example, David Graff, *Medieval Chinese Warfare, 300-900* (New York: Routledge Press, 2002), 47.

Guard duty is the unexpected chore that comes with marching off to war.[11] Time on duty presented a great deal of opportunity for boredom and a natural desire to drink the shift away (Alma 55:14). Soldiers functioned as guards to protect key positions such as Moroni's immediate area (Alma 44:12), the Chief Captain or King during battle (Alma 2:32–33), and the gates of the city (Helaman 1:18). In addition to being guards, soldiers were presumably the planned executioners of the believers just before the birth of Christ (3 Nephi 1:9).[12] Outside of guard duty, soldiers at various times had additional non-battle functions. In desperate situations, they had to fight during the day and fortify their positions at night (Alma 56:15–16). The army was deployed to deliver "their women and their children from famine and affliction" (Alma 53:7).

Battle also often had a ritualistic component, as the Title of Liberty ceremony illustrates (Alma 46:13–21).[13] Near the end of the Book of Mormon, rape and cannibalism served a ritualistic function, as evidenced by these horrible acts being considered "a token of bravery" (Moroni 9:10). Another ritualistic behavior happened at the end of battle — when an army in Mesoamerica conquered a city, they typically pulled down and defaced leadership monuments in those cities.[14] Interestingly, Alma 51:17–18 appears to describe such behavior when it states, "they did pull down their pride and their nobility," leveling them "with the earth."[15]

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11 Again, this is not unique to Book of Mormon times. As a Marine I spent more time on guard duty and cleaning than actually training for battle. The Marines who deployed to Iraq faced significantly more guard duty than battle.

12 I say "presumably" because it is more likely that armed soldiers would carry out the will of the nonbelievers towards the believers than that it would be done by other citizens.

13 After Captain Moroni finished praying over the Title of Liberty, the Nephites ran and ripped their garments "in token, or as a covenant" (Alma 46:21). For a deeper discussion on this point, see Kerry Hull, "War Banners: A Mesoamerican Context for the Title of Liberty," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 24 (2015): 84–118. http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=3592&index=4

14 See, for example, David Freidel, Barbara MacLeod, and Charles Suhler, "Early Classic Maya Conquest in Words and Deeds," *Ancient Mesoamerican Warfare,* Kathryn Brown and Travis Stanton eds. (Oxford, UK: Alta Mira Press: 2003), 192–196.

15 I think this provides additional context to Captain Moroni's actions against the King Men. The "pulling down" can refer to specific objects such as the statues or monuments that represent their authority. While not directly stated, given the possible Mesoamerican location of Book of Mormon events and the political

In addition to effecting rituals and tokens, the senior leaders held war councils (Alma 52:19). Many soldiers even spent time with their families (Alma 56:28).[16] When battle seemed imminent, some armies altered their appearance to help identification between and among groups (Alma 3:4). At other times, soldiers manipulated their appearances in order to look imposing by dying their bodies in blood and shaving their heads (3 Nephi 4:7).[17]

Of course, the activities that immediately preceded battle varied based on national policy. The Nephites focused more on fortifications and thus would have faced more guard duty or had an emphasis on defensive armor. The Lamanites, on the other hand, often aggressively attacked the Nephites and thus would experience more marching and plunder.[18] But the age still witnessed large similarities in the battle experience for the common soldier.

In summary, even before the army got to battle, they were often malnourished, tired, overworked, undercompensated, had altered their appearance, and had tried to curry divine favor as best they could through pre-battle ritual.

To the Battle

When two opposing armies operated within close proximity, they moved toward each other in complex pre-battle maneuvers. This was typically done during the dry season, for the wet season would flood rivers, muddy trails, and generally make travel difficult. The dry season, in contrast, facilitated movement and allowed the conscripted soldiers to be away from their fields. Indeed, John Sorenson's research concluded that most

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subjugation of the King Men, combined with the unique phrase to "pull down," it makes this an intriguing idea.

16   See Morgan Deane, *Bleached Bones and Wicked Serpents: Ancient Warfare in the Book of Mormon* (Ebookit Press, 2014), 109–120.

17   An idea as to why the armies of the Gadianton Robbers manipulated their appearance is intimated in 3 Nephi 4:9: They believed that "the Nephites had fallen with fear *because of the terror of their armies*" (emphasis added).

18   See Alma 17:14. Alma 47:33 includes a tantalizing statement where the queen asked the leader of the army to "spare the people of the city." I believe this implies that the army would otherwise sack the city. Sacking includes burning down the city, raping the women, and pillaging the city. This was a common practice in history and one of the few ways that the average soldier was consistently paid (i.e., rewarded with women). The other way to get paid was the looting of dead bodies; see below.

battles coincided with the Mesoamerican dry season.[19] However, the dry season generally meant more heat, and this warmth would frequently lead to fatigue (Alma 51:33, 37) and other heat-related casualties as well, causing soldiers to drop out of the ranks and decreasing their fighting power. In letters, Mormon emphasized to Moroni his advantage in being able to bring fresh armies into battle as opposed to the over-marched Lamanites (Alma 52:28, 31). Helaman's account to Moroni acknowledges that the speed of the march fatigued the Nephite army, contributing to the death of Antipus and the army's leaders (Alma 56:50–51). Teancum's one-man campaign to slay the Lamanite king in the evening was successful for the very reason that the army was fatigued "by the labors and heat of the day" (Alma 51:33).[20]

The heat and long marches weren't the only sources of discomfort while marching to battle. In some cases the forces had to hide in swamps,[21] and while it might have been hot during the day, cool shore breezes (Alma 51:32) and lower temperatures would have added to the warriors' discomfort at night and made resting difficult. While on campaign, the armies may have lived in somewhat flimsy but useful tents made out of woven grass mats.[22] While these details rarely made the cut in ancient records, it is consistent with the location, time period, and historical practice to believe that warriors experienced a significant amount of discomfort marching and maneuvering, even before battle.

19 John L. Sorenson, "Seasonality of Battle in the Book of Mormon and Mesoamerica" in *Warfare of the Book of Mormon,* Stephen Ricks, William Hamblin eds. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991).

20 This is rather common throughout history. American Civil War General Stonewall Jackson became famous for his long marches with his foot cavalry, yet even his forces struggled with stragglers and dropouts to the point that it ended his famous Valley Campaign. Based on my personal experience, I can say that in addition to the danger of being a heat casualty, excessive heat and sunshine produce a great deal of chafing along the neck as the sweat and armor moves against the skin. For a more extensive treatment of the subject, see Morgan Deane, *Bleached Bones and Wicked Serpents: Ancient Warfare in the Book of Mormon* (Ebookit Press, 2014) 53–66.

21 Alma 52:22 indicates that Mulek was near the seashore, where it is common to have swamps. This is verified if we accept Sorenson's location of Mulek; if we don't, it is still plausible they operated in swamps elsewhere. See John L. Sorenson, *Mormon's Codex: An Ancient American Book,* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2013)*,* 538–539.

22 John L. Sorenson, "Vive Zapato! Hurray for the Shoe!," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (Provo: FARMS, 1994), 332. http://publications.mi.byu.edu/publications/review/6/1/S00010-51b10a39a975910Sorenson.pdf

On the Battlefield

Once the opposing armies finally reached each other on the battlefield, the conflict followed a generally consistent sequence of events. Linda Schele and David Friedel suggested that the Mesoamerican battlefield included ritualistic pre-battle insults. These activities followed an "honorable precedent" that went back 20 katuns (about 400 years) or more.[23] Yet a study of historical battlefields finds these behaviors unrealistic. Real-life battles, even in the early stages of the conflict, were a confused melee of screaming warriors bellowing battle cries; commanders attempting to shout orders; battle drums, gongs, trumpets, or cymbals; the braying of pack animals or cavalry horses; and the pounding of one's own heart. This noise had to be processed or understood by those likely wearing helmets or head gear that limited hearing. The Book of Mormon doesn't mention all these specific things, of course, but logic insists that battle amongst thousands of people would be a noisy affair — and the early battle sounds would be quickly added to by thousands of clashing weapons and the screams of the wounded and dying. Moreover, the rush of adrenaline triggers physical reactions that make battle notoriously difficult to understand for those participating in it.

> "Studies have found at least half of participants [in battle] will experience the event in slow motion, a fifth in faster-than-normal time; two-thirds will hear at 'diminished volume' … a fifth at amplified levels; about half will see … with tunnel vision and black out everything not directly ahead and the other half with amazingly heightened clarity. Most individuals will suffer memory loss, while others will 'remember' events that never occurred."[24]

Based on the analysis of the chaotic and loud battlefield then, Schele and Freidel's recreation of Mayan battle fails to take into account the impractical nature of trying to understand each other during this kind of physical stress on a chaotic battlefield.[25] As other historians have

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23   Linda Schele and David Freidel, *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1990), 151.

24   Alexander Rose, *Men of War: The American Soldier in Combat at Bunker Hill, Gettysburg, and Iwo Jima* (New York: Random House Books, 2015), 72–73.

25   Karl Friday, *Samurai Warfare and the State in Early Medieval Japan,* (New York: Routledge Press, 2004), 145–149. While modes of battle aren't the same between Samurai and Book of Mormon peoples, the important points are the practice and effect of pre-battle insults, as well as the general chaotic nature of the pre-battle phase and the effect it had on participants.

suggested when examining pre-battle insults, this honorable tradition is more likely a stylized recreation of the account embellished long after the battle rather than a realistic recreation of events. Some kind of pre-battle yelling and insults probably did happen, but instead of ritual communication between groups it was far more likely they were prearranged outbursts with some elements of spontaneity to strengthen the shouter's morale and that of nearby comrades.[26] We would expect that writers with military experience, such as Mormon and Moroni, would avoid stylized after-action accounts of battles in favor of more realistic descriptions.

Actual bloodshed started with an exchange of missile fire (Alma 49:2), though some would die by slings and stones (Alma 17:36; 49:20). Remembering that the bulk of ancient armies, including those in the Book of Mormon, consisted of untrained peasants, slings and missile weapons would be familiar weapons. As David showed when he slayed Goliath (1 Samuel 17:49-50), slings were the natural strength of pastoral shepherds and would be a natural favorite of untrained soldiers. (Note how Zeniff armed his people in Mosiah 9:16.) During such an exchange of volleys, the Nephites recorded that they received occasional wounds in their legs and other unarmored extremities that could be very severe (Alma 49:24; Alma 43:38). The Nephite focus on defensive armor (which protected vital organs) and strong fortifications is a possible difference in the battle experience between them and the Lamanites.

After the opening volleys came the clash, wherein opposing groups of infantrymen rushed toward each other, seeking to cut their way through to their destination or out of a trap (Alma 52:33–34; Alma 43:39–43). The ferocity with which the forces fought was often accentuated when they faced overwhelming odds.[27] The contestants hacked and slashed at each other until one side collapsed into a confused retreat. Pre-battle

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26 See, for example, Alma 43:49–50 and 3 Nephi 4:8–9. In these examples, warriors are crying (shouting) to God "with one voice," which can be seen as a form of ritualistic or symbolic prayer designed not only to implore God's intervention but to strengthen the morale of the warriors. In addition, these shouted prayers fit the exact moment in the battles when battle cries would normally occur. Notice in verse 9 that the Gadianton Robber army has some kind of battle shout as well.

27 Historically, commanders often place their soldiers in hopeless situations — backed up to rivers or mountains that limited or removed escape routes — in order to focus attention on fighting through and conquering the enemy ahead. See Morgan Deane, "Forming the Formless: Sunzi and the Military Logic of Ender Wiggins" in *Ender's Game: The Logic Gate is Down,* ed. Kevin Decker (New York, Black Well Press: 2013), 81-82 (78-88).

maneuvers had their share of heat casualties, and the missile exchanges early in battle could produce serious wounds, but it was the clash of infantry that was the most deadly portion of the conflict. Soldiers could have their head or chest plates cracked in two (Alma 43:44), their arms cut off (Alma 17:37–38,[28] 43:44), javelins could pierce the hearts of unarmored opponents (Alma 51:34, 62:36), and soldiers could be scalped (Alma 44:12–14). Nephite writers used metaphors such as fighting like dragons (Alma 43:44), two lions hunting prey (Mosiah 20:10; Alma 14:29),[29] and perhaps a jawbone-wielding opponent to highlight particularly scary or fierce events.[30]

Despite the chaotic noise that permeated the battlefield, some communication was still possible. If soldiers felt trapped, ferocious reactions or collapse could ensue (Alma 43:36, 39–43; 52:36; 56:52). To prevent this, commanders who sensed an oncoming collapse could inspire their men using the battle standards that reminded them of their duty and motivations (Alma 43:48). This implies that armies were big enough that command and control was needed outside of the chief captain's immediate area. The commander's voice couldn't reach all the soldiers in battle, so he had to use battle standards that the soldiers could see.[31] Some parts of the army could collapse, while others kept fighting (Alma 44:15–16). Rumors (or real) information about bad news could spread panic and cause collapse or confusion (Alma 56:51). In some instances, the battle could end for some of the soldiers and continue for others when surrender was accepted for part of the army (Alma 44:15–16; 52:36, 39).

Historically, capturing prisoners was one of the most dangerous tasks on a battlefield. Ancient armies didn't have flex cuffs or riot gear

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28   Some may not see the story of Ammon and those who came to scatter the king's flocks as a military conflict. However, there can be military conflicts short of war, and this clearly qualifies as a life-or-death situation that today we would easily classify as a "skirmish" or "military skirmish." This kind of hit-and-run raid on flocks is actually one of the oldest forms of warfare practiced by pre-modern societies.

29   The reference to Alma 14:29, while not overtly about a battle, has militaristic overtones, particularly when compared to Mosiah 20:10.

30   Some have drawn a tenuous connection between Lehi and the Semitic meaning of his name ("jawbone"). Lehi certainly inspired fear in his opponents. See Alma 49:17; 52:29. See also https://onoma.lib.byu.edu/index.php/LEHI

31   Though it is possible that the armies were small and personally led, the same loud and chaotic battlefield that made pre-battle insults seem like an embellishment likely hampered verbal communication.

to contain prisoners using relatively nonviolent measures. The Nephites learned during the prison riot in the city of Cumeni that even unarmed men can be dangerous in large numbers (Alma 57:14), and shifting from combat to disarming and then controlling those individuals on a battlefield is difficult.[32]

The end of the battle was not always clear but was usually signaled with the surrender, annihilation, or flight of one side. Wounded soldiers would find survival difficult but not impossible. At an old age Gideon withstood not only Nehor's words but, according to some authors, multiple blows from his opponent (Alma 1:9).[33] The heavy armor adopted by Moroni meant that the Nephites were much better protected in battle and fell only "now and then" (Alma 43:38). The Lamanite king was incapacitated from his wound, and the people of Limhi found him alive among the dead (Mosiah 20:12). Loss of blood was a frequent cause of collapse. Accounts of the Stripling Warriors (Alma 57:25), Coriantumr, Shiz, and the last contingents of "large and mighty men" suggest that soldiers commonly passed out from the loss of blood (Ether 15:9, 26–27, 29). Indeed, at the end of his battle, Coriantumr had to rest upon his sword before he delivered the fatal blow to Shiz; his fatigue likely caused a strike that didn't completely and cleanly sever the head, which would explain the account of upper body spasms and struggle for breath (Ether 15:30–31).[34]

In short then, the battle itself was a trying experience filled with the credible and likely loss of life and limb. Soldiers faced physical trials before they even entered battle, then had to muster the courage and physical exertion to survive, stay mentally strong against fear and rumors, and continue swinging their weapons to outlast the enemy. The battlefield could be so brutal that dying was often one of the better outcomes. As I will discuss shortly, those that fled were chased, the

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32   At Agincourt, for example, the English were castigated for capturing and then killing French prisoners when it seemed the battle might turn against them. As the battlefield changed from one of victory to near defeat and back to victory, the loss of control among the capturing and captured forces makes this somewhat understandable, if still morally questionable (Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, 108–12).

33   John W. Welch cites the multiple blows as a suggestion Gideon wore armor, a suggestion with which I concur. See John Welch, "The Trial of Nehor," *The Legal Cases of the Book of Mormon,* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2008), 224, fn18.

34   M. Gary Hadfield, "Neuropathology and the Scriptures," *Brigham Young University Studies* 33 no. 2 (1993), 325.

captured sometimes faced brutal conditions, and the wounded faced a grueling task just trying to survive.

After the Battle

Fleeing combatants were sometimes pursued until they reached wilderness areas or other natural stopping points (Alma 2:37, 51:32), and some hid in the woods (Mosiah 19:9–12). The blood and bodies of the dead — and likely the blood of the wounded — could attract wild animals or scavenger birds (Alma 16:10; see also Alma 2:37–38). Soldiers fleeing from the battlefield could undermine the morale and even induce the collapse of the places to which they fled, as Lehi and Teancum found (Alma 62:32).[35] Nephites sometimes used prisoners to fill labor parties (Alma 53:1, 3–4). Other times, Lamanite prisoners joined peaceful and tributary groups like the people of Ammon (Alma 62:27) or were allowed to take a covenant and depart in peace (Alma 44:15). As wickedness permeated the land leading up to the final battle at Cumorah, both the Lamanites and the Nephites used their captured prisoners as human sacrifices and what could be viewed as religious tokens (Mormon 4:14, Moroni 9:10).

For the surviving but wounded members, even of the victorious army, the hardships were not over. Outside of exceptions such as the ancient Romans,[36] ancient medical practice was rudimentary. Nephites did have an understanding of medicinal herbs used to cure fevers (Alma 6:40) and they had ritual healers.[37] Alma the Elder was wounded

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35   This is a strategic and not a tactical example. Even so, the verse indicates a snowball effect where the fleeing people from one city cause the collapse of another and another.

36   Christon Archer, John Chris, Holder Herwig and Timothy Travers, *World History of Warfare* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002). 95. "Imperial soldiers lived well … on average they lived five years longer than civilians. All forts had effective sanitation and fresh water, while large ones had a hospital. Military doctors had effective forceps, scalpels, surgical saws, and medicinal herbs. Doctors used opium to kill pain and conducted sophisticated and successful procedures like amputation and removing arrows from chest cavities. Through ligatures, tourniquets, and surgical clamps, doctors handled hemorrhages and minimized infection, gangrene, and blood loss from cuts to major arteries. Not until the days of penicillin did any soldiers have better medical care than the Romans."

37   Mark Alan Wright, Nephite Daykeepers: Ritual Specialists in Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon, *Ancient Temple Worship: Proceedings Expound Symposium, 2011,* (Salt Lake City: The Interpreter Foundation, 2014) 243–257.

in battle and recovered enough to lead the nation and preach for years.[38] In a miraculous case, the Stripling Warriors fainted from their loss of blood, but not a single person died. They returned to fight Lamanites in later battles without the years of convalescence required by others (Alma 57:25). Coriantumr received numerous serious wounds, to the point that he was thought dead. His wounds were serious enough to help bring him to repentance (Ether 14:30–15:3).[39] Earlier, a simple thigh wound had been enough to keep him from battle for two years (Ether 13:31), so his convalescence for those more serious wounds must have been intense and lengthy.

The survival of these individuals suggests some kind of medical care on the battlefield, though the majority of cases refer to off-field treatment. When Coriantumr fell from his wounds he was carried away from the battlefield. When the people of Limhi found the Lamanite king they took him and "bound" his wounds (Mosiah 20:13). In the aftermath of the battle, and with limited resources, the wounded elites from the victorious army would have been treated first, the common soldiers next, and the enemy wounded treated last — assuming they survived the delay and didn't crawl away to die.[40] Even if the wounded were able to sleep while suffering from intense untreated wounds, they still would have been kept awake by the moans of the dying and the stench of the dead (Alma 16:11, Ether 14:23).[41] Those cries were added to by the living who rent the air with their howling cries of mourning (Ether 15:16–17).

While military actions are frequently considered a man's domain, the battle fronts were not devoid of women or even children. Historically, women and children accompanied armies to battle. They acted as camp followers and performed vital logistical functions such as providing

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38   See Alma 3:22 and 4:20. It is roughly three years before Alma is mentioned as active, though it could have been sooner.

39   The cited verses refer to the large carnage that spurred him to repentance. The time away from fighting (because of his wound) likely helped him contemplate his life, and his almost personal destruction likely helped as well.

40   The Zulus, after the Battle of Rorke's Drift, crawled miles before dying from their wounds. Victor Davis Hanson, *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Power* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 298.

41   It takes only a few days for the dead to stink, and it takes at least that long for the last of the wounded to receive help. Also keep in mind that when people die, they lose control of their bowels. With thousands dying in battle, that would be a terrible amount of human excrement. Combine that with various infections and oozing wounds from the wounded, which also smell, and I think it very safe to say the wounded faced a horrible stench even fairly soon after battle.

food to the army, washing uniforms and linens, and other non-combat functions that allowed the army to function at peak efficiency. Military historians such as Ross Hassig and Alexander Engles suggest that an army had camp followers that numbered 33% to 50% of the size of their forces.[42] In addition to providing essential services, they were vital boosts to morale, as at least some soldiers could avail themselves of the company of women or their families. (This also likely included sexual services, similar to the harlot who distracted Corianton from his ministry; see Alma 39:3.)[43] Alma 56:28 references women and children accompanying the army consistent with this historical practice. These women likely acted as basic versions of medical personnel to apply medicinal herbs and restore the wounded. In some cases, such as Alma 55:17, women and children were armed, and it is implied that others served on the battlefield as Moroni explicitly threatened (Alma 54:12; see also Mormon 6:7, Ether 15:15).

When the tactical necessities such as chasing the fleeing, accepting the surrender of the defeated, and treating the wounded were finished, there were yet more post-battle activities to be done. In particular, picking the dead, disposing of the bodies, and recording the number of dead were most important.

Dead bodies would be picked of any valuables,[44] a common form of enrichment for soldiers, outside of looting. The people of Limhi went through the battlefields and had some kind of contact with dead bodies. At the least, they were "casting" their bodies into the sea (see below), but they could have been searching dead bodies for valuables. In either case, the close contact is how they found the Lamanite king among the dead (Mosiah 20:12).

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42   Donald W. Engels, *Alexander the Great and the Logistics of the Macedonian Army* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 13. Ross Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*: *Imperial Expansion and Political Control* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 64.

43   "Comfort women" or "camp-following prostitutes" are a rather common historical practice. (Even today it is not uncommon to find "red-light districts" in the towns adjacent to military bases.) If somebody is "distracted" from the ministry because of a harlot, it is safe to say that barracks soldiers (who, I can testify based on eyewitness experience, have significantly fewer moral compunctions than missionaries) would likely be distracted as well.

44.   After the massive Roman defeat at Cannae for example, Hannibal's forces collected the rings of over 80 Roman consuls, ex-consuls, quaestors, tribunes, and scores more from the equestrian class. See Hanson, *Carnage and Culture*, 105.

Particularly loathed and feared enemies were killed in especially noteworthy ways, and their dead bodies desecrated. (Possible examples include the "ignominious death" of the enemy of the state, Nehor, in Alma 1:15; the hanging of Zemnarihah in 3 Nephi 4:28; and might be what Mormon described as the "horrible scene of blood and carnage" where everybody "delighted" in bloodshed in Mormon 4:11.) In some cases, such as the dead bodies that were strewn across the land (Ether 4:21–22), it appeared as though there had been such a crush of manpower on the field, and so many people mobilized for warfare, that there was not a single grave digger available.

It is a common phrase in the Nephite records of their wars that the dead were unable to be numbered or were so great they could not be numbered (Alma 3:1, 30:2, 44:21; see also 3 Nephi 4:11 and Mormon 4:17 where the armies themselves were so large they were not numbered). This is a nice literary device and also implies that instead of individual graves for the dead, bodies were gathered into mass graves with shallow coverings or cast into the sea (Alma 16:11; 44:22; Mormon 3:8). In extreme cases, particularly towards the end of the wars, the bodies were left to rot in piles (Mormon 6:15; Ether 14:21–22).

Surviving a battle often left both long-term physical and psychological scars. Our knowledge of conditions like PTSD is rather new, but suffering from it is not a uniquely modern experience. Shakespeare suggested that victorious soldiers would reminisce every St. Crispin's day, and those who didn't participate in battle would "hold their manhood cheap" or feel less like a man for missing the battle.[45] Yet in reality, those who survived battle still suffered a great deal. Many people lost limbs, walked with a limp, or held battle scars. Captain Moroni died at the relatively young age of 43 shortly after the war (Alma 43:17; 63:3), allowing for the possibility that Moroni's life was cut short because of the rigors of the campaign, the lingering effects of his wound, and the stress of nearly 20 years of constant combat and campaigning (Alma 52:35).

Lisa Hawkins and Gordon Thomasson employed a methodology used to describe survivors of the Holocaust and found that both Almas, Amulek, Jacob, and especially Mormon and his son Moroni showed elements of being survivor witnesses to incredible carnage.[46] On a larger

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45   Henry IV, Act 4, Scene 3.

46   Lisa Bolin Hawkins and Gordon Thomasson, *I Only Am Escaped to Tell Thee: Survivor Witnesses in the Book of Mormon,* FARMS Preliminary Report (Provo: FARMS, 1984), http://publications.mi.byu.edu/publications/PreliminaryReports/ Hawkins%20and%20Thomasson,%20I%20Only%20Am%20Escaped%20

scale, war and captivity left their scar on the Nephites. The people of Limhi fought and lost so many times that King Limhi had to make special arrangements to support the remaining widows (Mosiah 21:17). Alma the Younger constantly referred to the captivity of their fathers (Alma 5:6; 29:11; 36:2, 29), and Nephite leaders repeatedly referred to standing fast in that liberty they had gained (Mosiah 23:13; Alma 58:40; 61:21). Moroni seemed particularly active and aggressive in dealing with threats to Nephite power, including militarizing his appeal to the people in Alma 46 (vv. 13 and 21 refers to putting on armor and weapons), preemptively attacking threats to liberty (Alma 46:30), and seizing Lamanite lands during a time of nominal peace (Alma 50:7). This seemed to have vast popular support, which suggests the people had similar fears.[47]

Summary

So what was battle like? As military historian Victor Davis Hanson wrote in reference to the Roman Battle of Cannae in 216 BCE:

> The terror of battle seems not the mere killing of humankind, but the awful metamorphosis that turns on a massive scale flesh to pulp, clean to foul, the courageous to the weeping and defecating, in a matter of minutes … the thousands of plumed swordsmen in perfect order [in that battle] were transformed nearly instantaneously from a majestic almost living organism into a gigantic lifeless mess of blood, entrails, crumpled bronze, bent iron, and cracked wood.[48]

The soldiers, often pulled from their occupations as farmers to fight part time, also faced boredom and guard duty. They likely participated in rituals before warfare to help bolster morale, honor tradition, and gain divine favor. Marching to war during the dry season facilitated their movement across the landscape, but the heat brought fatigue and sun stroke. After quickly marching they arrived to the battlefield and its chaotic polyphonic chorus of sounds. The infantry soldier then faced a charging enemy and the danger of limbs hacked off, armor split in two,

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Alone%20to%20Tell%20Thee,%20Survivor%20Witnesses%20in%20the%20 Book%20of%20Mormon.pdf

47   These might be somewhat controversial claims, but I explain and defend them in great depth in *Evil Gangs and Starving Widows: Reassessing the Book of Mormon* (book forthcoming)

48   Hanson, *Carnage and Culture*, 102–103.

losing a great deal of blood, and possibly death. They felt fear within battle and faced capture or chase upon retreat. The wounded faced a long period of suffering before they were treated, and many, like Moroni or Alma, carried both physical and psychic wounds with them for the rest of their shortened lives.

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ADDRESSING PRICKLY ISSUES

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Rick Anderson

Review of *A Reason for Faith: Navigating LDS Doctrine & Church History*, ed. Laura Harris Hales. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2016. 264 pp. $24.99.

Abstract: This collection of essays conveniently assembles faithful and rigorous treatments of difficult questions related to LDS history and doctrine. While two or three of the essays are sufficiently flawed to give cause for concern and while some of its arguments have been expressed differently in earlier publications, overall this book can be confidently recommended to interested and doctrinally mature Latter-day Saints.

I've always been puzzled to hear critics claim that members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are discouraged from asking questions about the Church, its history, and its more obscure or controversial areas of doctrine. I've been a member of the Church for just over half a century, and I can't think of a single time that my parents, Church leaders, or fellow members have discouraged me from asking questions about those things or have failed to answer my questions as best they could when I did ask. Let me be clear: I have no doubt that some members have experienced such discouragement from others. But I do wonder whether my experience or theirs is the more typical one. Perhaps more importantly, I can say for certain which attitude is more in harmony with Church policy and teachings. As President Dieter F. Uchtdorf states in the epigraph to the book under review, "We are a question-asking people because we know that inquiry leads to truth."[1]

The experience of inquiry is not always comfortable or easy. One has only to log on to Facebook or enter the word "Mormon" in a search engine

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1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "The Reflection in the Water," Church Educational System fireside address (Nov. 1, 2009).

to be faced immediately with derision toward every aspect of LDS belief and practice and, more troublingly for many, with what are sometimes serious and challenging questions about some aspects of our history, our doctrine, and our organizational culture and traditions. When faced with such attacks, there's no question that prayer, faith, and patience are called for. But as the beloved Primary song has it, the "things that (we) must do" include not only praying but also searching and pondering.[2] The words of both ancient and modern prophets repeatedly urge us to educate ourselves, to learn truth both by study and by faith, and to inquire when we lack wisdom — to seek and to think and to reason.[3]

What shall we search when faced with challenges to our faith? Certainly and fundamentally, the words of scripture and the teachings of living prophets. However, though scripture study will deepen testimony and strengthen our doctrinal foundations, it is not likely to resolve troubling questions we might have about, say, the Mountain Meadows Massacre, prophetic succession after Joseph Smith's martyrdom, or race-based priesthood restrictions. And careful scripture study itself may raise questions even as it answers others, such as: Why do Book of Mormon prophets use "New Testament language" hundreds of years before Christ? Why did the Church embrace plural marriage given that the Book of Mormon seems to condemn it? Also — elephants? Seriously?

While it's true that some outside the Church use these types of questions as cudgels with which to beat the faithful, and some faithless Church members may use them as excuses for abandoning their covenant obligations, there are also committed and faithful members who sincerely struggle with such questions, who ask them in good faith, and who both want and deserve genuine answers to them. Sometimes the answers are not yet available, in which case faithful patience is called for — but in very many cases, good answers are available and have been for some time. Since our Church leaders encourage us both to ask and to pursue answers to our gospel questions, there is a real need for resources that are factually reliable, cogently presented, doctrinally sound, and written from the helpful perspective of one who has wrestled with them fruitfully and remained faithful.

Gratefully, such resources have proliferated in recent years — facilitated by the same advances in communication technology as those

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2. "Search, Ponder, and Pray," *Children's Songbook.*

3. See, for example, D&C 90:15, D&C 88: 62–6 3, D&C 88:118, James 1:5, Alma 37:35, Romans 15:4, Moroni 10:3.

that have made it easier than ever to attack the faith of the Saints.[4] *A Reason for Faith* is one such recent resource. It is a collection of 17 essays on difficult gospel topics, edited by Laura Harris Hales (who, with her husband Brian, is also co-editor of an outstanding book and website on Kirtland and Nauvoo polygamy).[5] Its topics range from such obvious and frequently discussed issues as plural marriage, racial restrictions on priesthood, and Church policies on homosexuality, to controversies with which some rank-and-file members of the Church may be less familiar, such as DNA analysis and Book of Mormon population dynamics, Joseph Smith and "money digging," and authorship controversies in the Isaiah sections of the Book of Mormon.

Like all edited essay collections, *A Reason for Faith* is uneven. If we were to evaluate each essay according the four criteria previously mentioned (cogency, factual reliability, doctrinal soundness, and faithfulness of perspective), we would find some that are stronger in two or three areas, some that excel in all four, and perhaps a couple that fall down fatally with regard to one or more.

At the outset, it's important to know that all these essays are written from a faithful perspective, which should not be surprising, given that the book is published under the twin imprints of Deseret Book and Brigham Young University's Religious Studies Center. None of the authors is using his or her contribution as a Trojan horse within which to smuggle faith-corroding arguments or insinuations. At no point in reading this book did I detect anything that seemed like either intellectual or spiritual dishonesty. That may seem like a low bar to have to clear, but it is an essential one and one that is not met by every book that purports to answer gospel questions for a Latter-day Saint audience — in fact, and unfortunately, there have been (and will continue to be) books on the market that lure the faithful with promises of bread only to hit them over the head with a stone.[6]

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4. Noteworthy recent examples include Michael Ash's *Shaken Faith Syndrome*, 2nd ed. (Redding, CA: Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research, 2013); Robert L. Millet's *No Weapon Shall Prosper: New Light on Sensitive Issues* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011); the collected works of Hugh Nibley published by FARMS; and of course the many essays and reviews published in the various incarnations of the *FARMS Review* and in the *Interpreter.*.

5. http://josephsmithspolygamy.org

6. Consider, for example, *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), and *The Word of God Is Enough: The Book of Mormon As Nineteenth-century Scripture* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993). In both cases, the titles seem quite clearly designed to obscure these publications'

On the "faithfulness" criterion, then, this collection is uniformly sound. This leaves the criteria of cogency, factual reliability, and doctrinal soundness, and on these the results are more mixed — although never so much so that it fatally undermines the value and merit of the book overall.

Another of the book's strengths lies in its topical coverage. Although I can think of a few issues that could profitably have been addressed here and were not, *A Reason for Faith* does a very good job of covering much of the necessary ground, and it does so unflinchingly. Some of these topics are both politically sensitive and genuinely knotty, and in most cases the authors engage them directly and with reasonable comprehensiveness. At the same time, the constraints of space are worth noting: For the most part this volume should be regarded not as an exhaustive treatment of its topics but as a high-level introduction to the questions and a review of some possible answers. Those who want to dig deeper should follow the citations — as well as the helpful list of "additional resources" at the end of each essay.

Among the strongest essays in this volume are Richard Bushman's brief but effective treatment of Joseph Smith's early "treasure seeking" and Brant Gardner's essay on the Book of Mormon translation process. Paul Reeves contributes a strong and carefully argued essay on the origins and history of the priesthood ban while doing an admirable job of distinguishing between his own feelings and opinions and facts that can be established or reasonably inferred from the historical record. Don Bradley and Mark Ashurst-McGee provide a very helpful apologetic account of Joseph Smith's encounter with the Kinderhook Plates, and Kerry Muhlestein's clear and concise essay entitled "The Explanation-defying Book of Abraham" is among the best treatments I have seen of that fascinating and complex topic. Hales's own introductory essay is also excellent and effectively lays out both the rationale for the book and some useful, overarching principles for dealing with challenges to faith. As an editor, Hales has served her authors well, and despite the large number of essayists with rather disparate writing styles, the book reads smoothly and well. Her decision to feature separate chapters on

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apparent intention, which is to undermine the truth claims of the LDS Church. For useful discussion of this gambit, see Louis Midgley, "The Current Battle of the Book of Mormon: Is Modernity Itself Somehow Canonical?" *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 200–5 4 and Stephen E. Robinson's review of *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture* in *RBBM* 3/1 (1991): 312–1 8.

the issues of polygamy generally and of Joseph Smith's polygamy in particular struck me as especially wise.

There are weaknesses in the book, of course, and a few of them are troubling. Steven C. Harper's essay on "Freemasonry and the LDS Temple Endowment" provides some very useful historical background but indulges too much in speculation, at times bordering on *post hoc* mindreading: At crucial points in the narrative, Harper introduces observations about what Joseph Smith "undoubtedly thought" or "likely pondered" or "perhaps thought" (148), thus weakening the structure of his argument somewhat.

Two other essays caused me particular concern. Neylan McBaine's contribution on "Latter-day Saint Women in the Twenty-first Century" addresses complex issues like gender-specific administrative roles and priesthood authority with care and clarity and suggests convincingly that the temporal correlation of the rise of the LDS Church (and the early establishment of the Relief Society) and the broadening and deepening of women's rights in the world generally are not accidents of history but rather that the restoration of the gospel was one of the contributing factors to those developments. She also argues cogently for a more nuanced concept of "gender equality" than what we normally encounter in current political and social discourse.

However, at times McBaine indulges in straw-man argumentation that undercuts the effectiveness of her essay. In repeated references to "Church rhetoric," for example, she doesn't carefully discriminate between things that Church members say to each other and things that the Church itself teaches. For example, she asserts that "discussion of gender roles inevitably leads to the assertion that men 'hold the priesthood' and therefore *are* the priesthood" (196, emphasis hers). While it's true (in my experience) that members of the Church too often refer colloquially to groups of men as "the priesthood," this formulation is not only far from inevitable but is also regularly challenged — and it is in direct opposition to what the Church teaches.[7] LDS men of all ages are regularly counseled *not* to regard themselves as the embodiment of priesthood power but rather as bearers of priesthood authority which is conferred upon them but which they will immediately lose as soon as they act in any degree

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7. Consider, for example, this very direct teaching from Elder Russell M. Ballard in a talk titled "This Is My Work and My Glory," from the April 2013 General Conference: "In our Heavenly Father's great priesthood-endowed plan, men have the unique responsibility to administer the priesthood, but they are not the priesthood."

of unrighteousness. This principle is taught constantly in the Church, particularly in priesthood quorums.

Elsewhere, McBaine refers to "some members" who "believe that women's participation in building the kingdom should be limited to being counselors and influencers rather than decision makers and leaders" (197). While some Church members may feel this way, they must feel very uncomfortable in an organization in which women are regularly called to positions of presidency and leadership. The leaders of the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary organizations are called specifically as presidents, are always women, and are among the most influential leaders and decision makers in any LDS ward — certainly more so than their male counterparts in, for example, Sunday School presidencies. In all these positions women are given authority over budgets, and those who serve as Primary presidents regularly preside over men.

The most troubling essay in this collection is "Homosexuality and the Gospel" by Ty Mansfield. Obviously, this is an emotionally charged issue, one that would have benefitted greatly from a carefully written and doctrinally informed treatment. Unfortunately, what Mansfield has provided is neither of those things. Instead, we are treated to problems such as the following:

- Unsustainably broad and categorical assersions, such as "Our sexuality is ultimately the driving force in our quest for intimacy in *all* of our relationships, including with God" (204, emphasis his).
- Uncontroversial observations that seem to be presented as if they challenged LDS cultural beliefs, such as "I can imagine God smiling upon pure expressions of love, intimacy, and affection between those of the same sex" (205).
- An insufficient ability to discriminate between what the Church teaches about same-sex relationships and what is taught by worldly philosophies of social conservatism.

As an example of this last point, Mansfield quotes *Psychology Today* essayist Sam Keen as saying that "'normal' American men are homophobic, afraid of close relationships with other men. The moment we begin to feel warmly toward another man, the 'homosexual' panic button gets pressed" (207). For the stated purposes of this book, such an observation would have provided the perfect segue to point out that the cultivation of close, warm relationships between people of the same

sex is one of the most important goals of LDS sociality, that this goal is regularly expressed explicitly by Church leaders, and that it is in direct response to repeated revelatory instruction since the opening of the Restoration. The building and maintenance of such relationships is a regular topic of instruction in our priesthood quorums, Relief Society and Young Women classes, sacrament meeting talks, and Sunday School lessons. But Mansfield mentions none of these. Instead, the reader is left to infer that Church teachings (or at least LDS culture) either reflects or contributes to this larger cultural problem and that Mormons regard such relationships as abnormal and frightening. However, no one who has closely and honestly observed Mormons for any period of time would come away believing that Mormon culture teaches either men or women to fear the development of close and warm relationships between members of the same sex.

At times, Mansfield's arguments are logically garbled and unclear, which is particularly problematic when dealing with a topic as complex and doctrinally important as this one. It's hard to know what to make of the following paragraph, for example:

> Given the diversity of experience, and the varied persistence of that experience, for whom might homosexual behavior become a sin and for whom is it simply unfair, as some would characterize, to be required to live the standards guiding sexual behavior and relationship as articulated by Church leaders? (209)

Depending on what Mansfield specifically means by "homosexual behavior," it's difficult to know how to think about the question "for whom might homosexual behavior become a sin?" And it's impossible to tell for certain where he stands on the issue of the "fairness" of requiring those dealing with same-sex attraction "to live the standards guiding sexual behavior and relationship as articulated by Church leaders." These are genuinely difficult issues, and dealing with them effectively requires care and clarity, both of which are lacking here.

Elsewhere, Mansfield promulgates doctrinal errors that should have been caught and corrected. For example, the assertion that "from an LDS perspective, the essential spiritual person within us exists independent of our mortal biology" (211) seems to fly directly in the face of clear Church teachings (which hold that "mortal biology" and spiritual identity are quite closely connected in significant ways, particularly including

gender identity).[8] And when Mansfield urges us to a "more expansive view of … the law of chastity" (213), what he proposes is a definition of chastity that effectively embraces all of our relationships with everyone and everything and thus strips the concept of any meaningful sexual specificity. While he is correct to observe that the words "chastity," "chastening," and "chastise" all share as a root the Latin word meaning "pure," he stretches that observation into an unsustainably thin rhetoric of universal morality that doesn't hold up either logically or doctrinally. Here Mansfield has made the classic mistake of confusing etymology with meaning, and he ends up proposing, for example, that sexual purity and environmental responsibility are manifestations of the same moral concept (214) and that for parents to reject a wayward child would be not only immoral but specifically "unchaste" (214). These are interesting assertions, but they are also quite tendentious and more confusing than helpful.

Overall, however, the strength of this collection greatly outweighs its weaknesses, and this is a book that can be confidently recommended to members of the Church who have sincere questions but are reasonably mature in doctrinal understanding. Most of its arguments are not groundbreaking, but one hopes that it will lead those who are unaware

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8. Perhaps the clearest modern-day exposition of this teaching can be found in "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1995). However, LDS scripture and Church leaders have also taught repeatedly that our physical bodies and our spirits are not essentially separate but are two indispensable parts of our identity following resurrection. In both Moses 3:7 and 2 Nephi 9:13, the term "living soul" is defined as a unified body and spirit. D&C 93:33–3 4 indicates that unless the "spirit" and "element" of man are "inseparably connected," man cannot enjoy "a fulness of joy." Joseph Smith taught that it is our purpose in coming to earth "that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the Celestial Kingdom" (as quoted by William Clayton, reporting an undated discourse given by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, Illinois; in L. John Nuttall, "Extracts from William Clayton's Private Book," *Journals of L. John Nuttall, 1857–1904*, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, pp. 7–8 ; copy in Church Archives). President Joseph F. Smith saw in vision that the dead experience the separation of their spirits and their bodies as "bondage" (see D&C 138:50). In a 1992 General Conference address entitled "Doors of Death," Elder Russell M. Nelson taught that at the resurrection, "the same … genetic code now embedded in each of our living cells will still be available to format new ones then. The miracle of the resurrection, wondrous as it will be, is marvelously matched by the miracle of our creation in the first place." All of this indicates that our physical bodies have, at the very least, a meaningful connection to our eternal identities.

of the scholarship produced on these and other topics over the last few decades to explore that literature and deepen their understanding.

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"This Son Shall Comfort Us": An Onomastic Tale of Two Noahs

Matthew L. Bowen

Abstract: *From an etiological perspective, the Hebrew Bible connects the name Noah with two distinct but somewhat homonymous verbal roots: nwḥ ("rest") and nḥm ("comfort," "regret" [sometimes "repent"]). Significantly, the Enoch and Noah material in the revealed text of the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis (especially Moses 7–8) also connects the name Noah in a positive sense to the earth's "rest" and the Lord's covenant with Enoch after the latter "refuse[d] to be comforted" regarding the imminent destruction of humanity in the flood. The Book of Mormon, on the other hand, connects the name Noah pejoratively to Hebrew nwḥ ("rest") and nḥm ("comfort" and "repentance" [regret]) in a negative evaluation of King Noah, the son of Zeniff. King Noah causes his people to "labor exceedingly to support iniquity" (Mosiah 11:6), gives "rest" to his wicked and corrupt priests (Mosiah 11:11), and anesthetizes his people in their sins with his winemaking. Noah and his people's refusal to "repent" and their martyring of Abinadi result in their coming into hard bondage to the Lamanites. Mormon's text further demonstrates how the Lord eventually "comforts" Noah's former subjects after their "sore repentance" and "sincere repentance" from their iniquity and abominations, providing them a typological deliverance that points forward to the atonement of Jesus Christ.*

"Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted." (Isaiah 49:13)

Part I

The "Rest" that "Comforts": The Literary Treatment of Noah's Name in Genesis

Evidence from the Book of Mormon (Ether 7:14–15; 18–21) further suggests that the biblical name *Noah*, in one form or another, antedates biblical Hebrew. However, to those for whom Biblical Hebrew became a written and spoken language, "Noah" would have connoted "[divine] rest."[1] The biblical account that tells the story of the patriarch Noah and the Flood interplays the form *nōaḥ* with forms of the related root *nwḥ* (to "rest")[2] and the partly homonymous and partly synonymous but distinct verbal root *nḥm* (to "regret" or "be sorry"; "console oneself," or "comfort" someone)[3] throughout the Flood narrative. The narrator explains that Noah (*nōaḥ* "[divine] rest") was so named because he would "comfort" (*yĕnaḥămēnû*) his forefathers concerning their work and toil (Genesis 5:29). This etiological, midrashic[4] etymology interplays with the Lord's "regretting" (*wayyinnāḥem, niḥamtî*) his having created humanity (Genesis 6:6–7). The wordplay then shifts from *nḥm* to *nwḥ* ("rest"), with the ark coming to "rest" (*wattānaḥ*, Genesis 8:4), the dove's attempting to find "rest" (*mānôaḥ*, Genesis 8:9), and the "sweet savour" (*rēaḥ hannîḥōaḥ*) of the sacrifice that appeased the Lord after the flood (Genesis 8:21).[5]

Terrence Szink has identified "wordplay" on Noah in terms of "rest" in Moses 7.[6] In this study, I aim to extend Szink's observations to show

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1. As Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 685, put it, the name Noah belongs to "a personage from pre-Israelite tradition whose name sounded to Israelite ears like the verb [*nûaḥ*]." Hereafter this work is cited as HALOT.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 688–89.

4. I use the term *midrashic etymology* — i.e., (creatively) interpretive etymology — rather than popular etymology or "folk-etymology." There is little or no evidence that the biblical etiologies which incorporate onomastic wordplay relied on or incorporated "folk-etymology." Many of these wordplays exploit the names in sometimes solemn, sometimes playful, and often ironic ways.

5. Isaac M. Kikawada, "Noah and the Ark," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freeman, *et al.* (NY: Doubleday, 1992), 1123–24. See also Moshe Garsiel, *Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns*, trans. Phyllis Hackett (Ramat Gal, Israel: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991), 203–04.

6. Terrence L. Szink, "The Vision of Enoch: Structure of a Masterpiece," *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Restoration Scripture* 17/1–2 (2008): 13-14, 18.

that the inspired restored text of the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis has an even richer and more sophisticated nexus of wordplay on the name Noah, involving both the *nḥm* and *nwḥ* roots — "comfort" and "rest." Moreover, I will expand on my own previous observations⁷ on the evidence of pejorative wordplay on the name Noah in Mosiah 11–12 to show that the narrator — Mormon or his source, Alma the Elder — used wordplay on the roots *nḥm* and *nwḥ* to create a negative inversion of the positive biblical wordplay on the name Noah to emphasize just how catastrophic his reign had been for his people.

The sophisticated nature of the proposed onomastic wordplay on the name Noah has important implications for Joseph Smith as translator. The restored text of the Enoch narrative from JST Genesis (now canonized in the Book of Moses), like the Book of Mormon itself, offers internal evidence that *both documents* are better understood as translations/restorations of — and windows on — real ancient texts rather than as mere 19th century pseudepigrapha.

"I Will Refuse to Be Comforted" (Moses 7:44)

One of the remarkable features of the Enoch material in JST Genesis (i.e., Moses 6–7) is Enoch's vision of his descendant Noah, which is given to Enoch before Noah's birth. It is here, well before an explicit etiological explanation for the name Noah is offered (as in Genesis 5:29/Moses 8:9), that the narrative's direct wordplay on the name Noah begins.

> And Enoch also saw *Noah*, and his family; that the posterity of all the sons of *Noah* should be saved with a temporal salvation; Wherefore Enoch saw that *Noah* built an ark; and that the Lord smiled upon it, and held it in his own hand; but upon the residue of the wicked the floods came and swallowed them up, And as Enoch saw this, he *had bitterness of soul*, and wept over his brethren, and said unto the heavens: *I will refuse to be comforted*; but the Lord said unto Enoch: Lift up your heart, and be glad; and look. And it came to pass that Enoch looked; and from *Noah*, he beheld all the families of the earth; and he cried unto the Lord, saying: When shall the day of the Lord come? When shall the blood of the Righteous be shed,

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7. These observations regarding pejorative wordplay on the name Noah are found in Matthew L. Bowen, "'And He Was a Young Man': The Literary Preservation of Alma's Autobiographical Wordplay," *Insights* 30 (2010): 2-3.

that all they that *mourn* may be sanctified and have eternal life? (Moses 7:42–45)

The collocation "refuse to be comforted," as used here by Enoch, is abundantly attested throughout the Hebrew Bible. The Psalmist recalls, "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: *my soul refused to be comforted* [*mēʾănâ hinnāḥēm napšî*]" (Psalms 77:2 [MT 77:3]).[8] Similarly, Jeremiah records the Babylonian destruction of Ramah in the tribal land of Benjamin, just north of Jerusalem at the time of the exile: "Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel [Rachel] weeping for her children *refused to be comforted* [*mēʾănâ lĕhinnāḥēm*] for her children, because they were not" (Jeremiah 31:15).[9] Nearer the Noah story in Genesis, at the beginning of the Joseph cycle, we note Jacob's making a similar declaration after his son Joseph's apparent demise: "And all his sons and all his daughters rose up *to comfort him* [*lĕnaḥămô*]; *but he refused to be comforted* [*wa-yĕmāʾēn lĕhitnaḥēm*]; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him" (Genesis 37:35).

In the context of the narrative, Enoch's declaration "*I will refuse to be comforted*" clearly anticipates the formal etiology subsequently proffered in Genesis 5:29/Moses 8:9: "And he called his name Noah, saying: This [son] *shall comfort us* [Hebrew *yĕnaḥămēnû*] concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed" (see further below). Enoch's "refus[al] to be comforted" thus frames Noah's story in an entirely new way and helps us understand the "comfort" which Lamech foresees (and which the Lord shows Enoch) Noah will bring. Noah and his posterity — specifically his descendant Jesus Christ — will eventually bring "comfort" and "rest" to the earth in a manner that vastly transcends the idea that the patriarch Noah would merely give "comfort" as a winemaker (see below). Noah's seed would include the Messiah,[10] who would atone so that "all they that mourn may be

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8. For those who wish to draw additional connections between the figure of Ut-Napishtim and Noah, the phrase "bitterness of soul" (*mārat nāpeš, mārat nepeš*, or *mār nepeš* [etc.] 1 Samuel 1:10; Job 7:11; 10:1; 21:25; Isaiah 38:15) will make an interesting point of comparison. The Hebrew word *nepeš* ("soul," "life," "throat") is cognate with Akkadian *napištu(m)*. The name Ut-Napishtim means "he has found life."

9. Matthew cites the fulfillment of Jeremiah 31:5 with Herod's slaughter of male infants in Matthew 2:18.

10. Moses 7:53.

sanctified" (Moses 7:45) — i.e., "comforted" (Isaiah 61:2; Matthew 5:4; 3 Nephi 12:4).

"When Shall I Rest"? (Moses 7:48–49)

In response to Enoch's question "When shall the blood of the righteous [i.e., the Messiah] be shed, that *all they that mourn* may be sanctified and have eternal life?" (Moses 7:45), the Lord responded: "It shall be in the meridian of time, in the days of wickedness and vengeance" (Moses 7:46). Enoch was then shown those days: "And behold, Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, even in the flesh; and his *soul rejoiced*, saying: The Righteous is lifted up, and the Lamb is slain from the foundation of the world; and through faith I am in the bosom of the Father, and behold, Zion is with me" (Moses 7:47). Enoch's previous "bitterness of soul" is here replaced by "his soul['s] rejoic[ing]." Enoch's soul rejoiced, not at the Son of Man's atoning suffering (of course), but at what his death meant for Enoch and his people. The at-one-ment that Enoch and Zion would experience with the Father and the Son, described here as a divine embrace, would be effected by the suffering Son of Man — the Righteous, the Lamb — and his being "lifted up."

Nevertheless, Enoch's weeping swiftly returns when he hears a voice from a most unexpected source:

> And it came to pass that Enoch looked upon the earth; and he heard a voice from the bowels thereof, saying: Wo, wo is me, the mother of men; I am pained, I am weary, because of the wickedness of my children. *When shall I rest* and be cleansed from the filthiness which is gone forth out of me? *When will my Creator sanctify me, that I may rest* and righteousness for a season abide upon my face? And when Enoch heard *the earth mourn*, he wept, and cried unto the Lord, saying: O Lord, wilt thou not have compassion upon the earth? *Wilt thou not bless the children of Noah*? (Moses 7:48–49)

Enoch hears the voice of the Earth herself — the ʾădāmâ — the mother (ʾēm) of men (ʾādām). Enoch had rejoiced at the atonement, because it meant the sanctification of the righteous, including his Zion. But the earth remained unsanctified and under a curse.[11] Thus when

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11. See, e.g., Genesis 3:17 (Moses 4:23); Genesis 5:29 (Moses 8:9); Moses 5:56; 7:8a; 8:4; 2 Nephi 1:7; Jacob 2:29; Jacob 3:3; Enos 1:10; Alma 37:28, 31; 45:16; 3 Nephi 3:24; Deuteronomy 29:27; Helaman 13:17–36; Mormon 1:17–1 8; Ether 7:23; 9:28; 11:6; cf. Genesis 8:21; Ether 9:16; D&C 38:18; 61:17.

Enoch hears the earth herself declaring that she is "pained" and "weary" because of the wickedness of the human family and hears her "mourn," he weeps again. Just as Enoch had asked the Lord regarding when the atonement would be effected so that "all that they who mourned might be sanctified and have eternal life," so now the earth herself asks, "When will my Creator sanctify me, that I may rest …?" Or in other words: when will my Creator fully *atone* me[12] that I may rest?

The twofold repetition of "rest" with the name "Noah" ("rest") in Moses 7:48–49 constitutes yet another play on the meaning of the name Noah. The earth's "sanctification" and "rest" are bound-up with the destiny of the "children of Noah." The time of the earth's rest is proleptically withheld at this point in the text. However, the wordplay on "Noah" in terms of "rest" reminds us that the promises to Enoch reside and abide in Noah and "the children of Noah."

"When the Son of Man Cometh Shall the Earth Rest?"

Enoch's petitioning of the Lord does not cease with these questions but rather intensifies. Enoch adjures the Lord on behalf of his descendant Noah and Noah's posterity:

> And it came to pass that Enoch continued his cry unto the Lord, saying: *I ask thee, O Lord, in the name of thine Only Begotten, even Jesus Christ, that thou wilt have mercy upon* <u>Noah</u> *and his seed*, that the earth might never more be covered by the floods. And the Lord could not withhold; and he covenanted with Enoch, and sware unto him with an oath, that he would stay the floods; *that he would call upon the children of* <u>Noah</u>; And he sent forth an unalterable decree, that a remnant of his seed should always be found among all nations, while the earth should stand; And the Lord said: Blessed is he through whose seed Messiah shall come; for he saith — I am Messiah, the King of Zion, the Rock of Heaven, which is broad as eternity; whoso cometh in at the gate and climbeth up by me shall never fall; wherefore, blessed are they of whom I have spoken, for they shall come forth with songs of everlasting joy. And it came to pass that Enoch cried unto the Lord, saying: *When the Son of Man cometh in the flesh, shall the earth* <u>rest</u>? I pray thee, show me these things. (Moses 7:50–54)

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12. Cf. especially Deuteronomy 32:43: "[the Lord] *will be merciful unto* [*wĕkipper*, literally atone] *his land, and to his people.*"

Enoch adjures the Lord to "have mercy upon Noah and his seed [posterity]" so that — or with the result that — the earth will "never more" be flooded. Poignantly, the narrator states that "the Lord could not withhold" and thus "covenanted with Enoch, and sware unto him with an oath that he would stay the floods." The Lord also swore that he would "call upon the children of Noah" with an accompanying decree that Noah's posterity would "be found among all nations" in perpetuity. The Lord then adds the promise that the Messiah — he himself — would come into the world as the "seed" of both Enoch and later Noah.

This promise elicits the same question that the earth asked ("when shall I rest?") from Enoch which, in the context of all the foregoing, plays on the name of "Noah" ("rest") yet again: "When the Son of Man cometh in the flesh shall the earth rest?" In response, the Lord shows Enoch his own future suffering — his agony on the cross. Any forthcoming "rest" for the suffering earth will come through Noah's seed, and in particular through Messiah, his suffering descendant, but not for a very long time.

"When Shall the Earth Rest?" II (Moses 7:55–58)

Enoch's vision of the Son of Man's crucifixion is bracketed by the question "When the Son of Man cometh in the flesh shall the earth rest?" (v. 54) on the one end, and his subsequent question "when shall the earth rest?" (v. 58) on the other. The Lord's answer to the first question amounts to a "no." In fact, the earth will continue to "mourn" and "groan." Moreover, the earth's greatest suffering will be concomitant with her Creator's suffering (we recall her question, "when will my Creator sanctify me?"):

> And the Lord said unto Enoch: Look, and he looked and beheld the Son of Man lifted up on the cross, after the manner of men; And he heard a loud voice; and the heavens were veiled; and *all the creations of God mourned*; and *the earth groaned*; and the rocks were rent; and the saints arose, and were crowned at the right hand of the Son of Man, with crowns of glory; And as many of the spirits as were in prison came forth, and stood on the right hand of God; and the remainder were reserved in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day. And again Enoch wept and cried unto the Lord, saying: *When shall the earth rest*? (Moses 7:55–58)

The text previously mentions that "Enoch was high and lifted up, even in the bosom of the Father, and of the Son of Man" while "the power of Satan was upon all the face of the earth" (Moses 7:24). Now, conversely,

Enoch sees the "Son of Man *lifted up* on the cross" (Moses 7:55) after he has "come in the flesh" (Moses 7:47). Amid the Son of Man's destruction of Satan's power, the creations of God "mourn" and the earth "groan[s]," suffering just as their creator suffers.[13] Thus, the foregoing wordplay on Noah in terms of "comfort" (*nḥm*) and "rest" is further enriched by the use of the verb "groaned." The Hebrew verb *ʾnḥ* ("groan") is both homonymous with and directly related to the verb *nwḥ* ("rest").[14] The mourning of God's creations and the groaning[15] of the earth recall the earth's previous mourning and pleas for "rest."

Enoch weeps for the misery of the earth and the suffering of those spirits "reserved in chains of darkness" — misery and suffering that elicit the question "When shall the earth *rest*?" (Moses 7:58). The earth's "groan[ing]" (*ʾnḥ*) adds plaintive urgency to Enoch's repetition of his earlier entreaty, and both stress the name Noah as a symbol of the Lord's ultimate resolution of ills, which the narrative and the reader anticipate.

"And the Day Shall Come When the Earth Shall Rest" (Moses 7:59–61)

At this point Enoch sees Jesus's ascension to the Father, a sight which, rather than comforting or consoling Enoch, elicits yet additional questions, followed by the Lord's response:

> And Enoch beheld the Son of Man ascend up unto the Father; and he called unto the Lord, saying: Wilt thou not come again upon the earth? Forasmuch as thou art God, and I know thee, and thou hast sworn unto me, and commanded me that I should ask in the name of thine Only Begotten; thou hast made me, and given unto me a right to thy throne, and not of myself, but through thine own grace; wherefore, I ask thee if thou wilt not come again on the earth. And the Lord said unto Enoch: As I live, even so will I come in the last days, in

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13. According to Nephi, the prophet Zenos specifically referred to the concomitant suffering of the creator and creation: "And all these things must surely come, saith the prophet Zenos. And the rocks of the earth must rend; and because of the *groanings* [*ʾănāḥâ* = "sighing, groaning" **ʾănāḥôt* "sighings," "groanings"] of the earth, many of the kings of the isles of the sea shall be wrought upon by the Spirit of God, to exclaim: *The God of nature suffers*" (1 Nephi 19:12). On *ʾănāḥâ*, see HALOT, 71. Cf. Lamentations 1:22.

14. HALOT, 70-71.

15. Cf. Paul's statement in Romans 8:22: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

the days of wickedness and vengeance, *to fulfil the oath which I have made unto you concerning the children of* <u>Noah</u>; And *the day shall come that the earth shall* <u>rest</u>, but before that day the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth; and great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but my people will I preserve. (Moses 7:59–61)

The Lord takes an additional oath ("as I live")[16] that he will "come in the last days, the days of wickedness and vengeance" — days mirroring the "wickedness and vengeance" of Enoch's and Noah's own times — thus confirming the oath that the Lord had previously sworn to Enoch "concerning the children of Noah." The Lord finally states that after his coming, "the day shall come that the earth shall rest." The close juxtaposition of the name Noah with the word "rest" reiterates the foregoing (and ongoing) wordplay on Noah in terms of *nwḥ* and emphasizes the fulfillment of the Lord's covenant with Enoch regarding Noah and his posterity. The Lord's Second Coming would fulfill his oath to Enoch, and that oath pertained directly to Noah and his righteous posterity. The earth's "rest" will ultimately fulfill that oath and covenant.

"A Thousand Years the Earth Shall Rest" (Moses 7:62–64)

The Lord finally answers Enoch's repeated question "when shall the earth rest?" (and the earth's question "when shall I rest?"). The answer comes at the end of a compact description of the winding-up scenes of human history on earth (sometimes called the *eschaton* by theologians),[17] when Enoch's Zion returns from above and is "at-oned" with Zion from beneath:

And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, that my people may gird up their

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16. The solemn oath formula: *ḥay X* – "as I live" = *ḥay-ʾānî*. See, e.g., Numbers 14:21, 28; Isaiah 49:18; Ezekiel 5:11; 14:16, 18, 20; 16:48; 17:16, 19; 20:3, 31, 33; 33:11, 27; 34:8; 35:6, 11; Jeremiah 22:24; 46:18; Zephaniah 2:9. Nephi evidently invokes this formula 1 Nephi 4:32.

17. *Eschaton* is the neuter singular form of Greek *eschatos* = "last."

loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem. And the Lord said unto Enoch: Then shalt thou and all thy city meet them there, and we will receive them into our bosom, and they shall see us; and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other; And there shall be mine abode, and it shall be Zion, which shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made; and *for the space of a thousand years the earth shall rest*. (Moses 7:62)

The at-one-ment of the "righteousness [sent down] out of heaven" and the "truth [sent forth] out of the earth" heralds the forthcoming of the great at-one-ment of heaven and earth — of heavenly Zion and earthly Zion. All of this, the Lord declares, will inaugurate the earth's "rest" for which Enoch has been petitioning: "And for the space of a thousand years the earth shall rest." The verbal phrase "shall rest" comes at the very end of the final sentence of a very long sequence, creating another climactic play on the name Noah (*nōaḥ*, "rest"). Isaiah had reference to this eventuality when he prophesied: "The whole earth is *at rest* [*nāḥâ*], and is quiet [*šāqṭâ*]: they break forth into singing" (Isaiah 14:7; 2 Nephi 24:7).

The land-sabbath laws of Exodus 23:10–12, can be seen as an anticipatory type of the time when the earth and everything on it shall "rest":

And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: But the seventh year *thou shalt let it rest* [*tišmĕṭennâ*] *and lie still* [*ûnĕṭaštāh*]; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard. Six days thou shalt do thy work, and *on the seventh day thou shalt rest* [cease, *tišbōt*; cf. Sabbath]: that thine ox and thine ass *may rest* [*yānûaḥ*], and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may *be refreshed* [*wĕyinnāpēš*]. (Exodus 23:10–12)

The Lord will eventually fulfill everything that he covenanted and swore to Enoch regarding Noah and his posterity. The final fulfillment of

this covenant will be the binding of Satan[18] and the "whole earth [being] *at rest* [*nāḥâ*]" (Isaiah 14:7).[19]

"This [Son] Shall Comfort Us Concerning Our Work and Toil of Our Hands" (Genesis 5:29/Moses 8:9)

In the Book of Moses, the wordplay on "Noah" in the expanded JST Genesis Enoch narrative meshes seamlessly with the wordplay on Noah in the extant biblical narrative. In Moses 8:8 (cf. Genesis 5:29), the birth of Noah is finally reported: "And he called his name *Noah* [*nōaḥ*], saying: This [son] *shall comfort us* [*yĕnaḥămēnû*] *concerning our work* [*mimmaʿĕśēnû*] and *toil* [*mēʿiṣ*] of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed" (Moses 8:5). As Isaac Kikawada points out, this wordplay makes "Noah the bringer of comfort (*nḥm*) from labor (derived from *ʿśh*) and toil (derived from *ṣb*)."[20]

On one level, as Moshe Garsiel further points out, "the explanation of 'Noah' in terms of *n-ḥ-m* … expresses his father's expectation of consolation and an easing of the many difficulties of working ground cursed by God."[21] On still another level, the JST text greatly expands the foregoing interpretive notion of "labor" and "toil." Moses 6 presents the "labor" and "work" of Noah's ancestors as the work of evangelization in a wicked world ripening for destruction. In other words, it was the preaching of the gospel by "preachers of righteousness" who attempt to save the world. Moreover, we should note here that the explanatory phrase "this son shall comfort us" must be understood within the context of Enoch's agonized declaration "I will refuse to be comforted" (Moses 7:44).

Etymologically speaking, the etiological explanation for Noah in Genesis 5:29 and Moses 8:9 would better fit the names Naham (*naḥam*,

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18. See, e.g., Revelation 20:2; D&C 43:31; 45:55; 84:100; 88:110. See especially 1 Nephi 22:26.

19. The context of "the whole earth [being] at rest" in Isaiah 14:7 is the fall of the king of Babylon, called *hêlēl ben-šāḥar* — i.e., "Lucifer, son of the morning" or "shining one, son of dawn." The fall of the king of Babylon is "likened" (cf. the "proverb," "parable," or "likening" [*hammāšāl*] mentioned Isaiah 4:4) to the fall of the premortal being called *hêlēl ben-šāḥar*, otherwise known to Latter-day Saints as "Lucifer," now Satan. See especially 2 Nephi 2:17; 9:8; D&C 29:31–36; 76:25–29; Moses 4:3–4; Abraham 3:27–28.

20. Kikawada, "Noah and the Ark," 1123.

21. Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 204.

"comfort"),²² Nahum (*naḥûm* = "[God] comforts" or "comforter"),²³ Menachem (Menahem, *měnaḥēm* = "comforter"),²⁴ or Nehemiah ("Yahweh has comforted"),²⁵ etc.²⁶ However, scientific etymology is usually not the point of biblical Hebrew etiology, nor is it the point here in the Book of Moses/JST Genesis. The narrative endeavors to show the various ways in which the name Noah is appropriate for its bearer. The Book of Moses/JST Genesis helps us appreciate the meanings latent in the name Noah within the widest context of earthly salvation history.

"If Men Do Not Repent"

Another important dimension of the wordplay that revolves around Noah's name is the "repentance" theme. In the biblical version of the Noah story, Yahweh "repents" (*wayyinnāḥem, niḥamtî*, Genesis 6:6-7) for having made humanity. In the JST Genesis (Book of Moses) version of this account, the "repentance" motif is greatly expanded. Both Noah and humankind become the subjects of the verb "repent." First, Noah is informed that the impending flood is contingent on a general failure to "repent":

> And the Lord said unto <u>Noah</u>: My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for he shall know that all flesh shall die; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years; and *if men do not <u>repent</u>*, I will send in the floods upon them. And in those days there were giants on the earth, and *they sought <u>Noah</u> to take away his life*; but the Lord was with Noah, and the power of the Lord was upon him. (Moses 8:17)

Implicit in the statement "if men do not repent" is a final call to repentance for which Noah himself will be the Lord's mouthpiece. The giants' (*něpilîm*) seeking Noah and his life augurs a now-inevitable failure of humankind to repent. Nevertheless, the "Lord [was] with Noah," and his "power … was upon him" as he preached repentance a final time.

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22. HALOT, 689. See 1 Chronicles 14:9.

23. HALOT, 685.

24. See, e.g., Martin Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der Gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (BWANT 3/10; Stuttgart: W. Kolhammer, 1928), 222; HALOT, 601.

25. Noth, *Personennamen*, 175; HALOT, 689.

26. See also the *nḥm*-derived names *Nahamani* (*naḥămānî*) and Tanhumeth (*tanḥumet*).

"Noah Called upon the Children of Men That They Should Repent"

JST Genesis (Book of Moses) records that Noah received a priesthood ordination after his "mission call" and prior to his going forth to preach. The Lord commissions Noah to preach the gospel in the same way that "it was given unto Enoch":

> And the Lord *ordained <u>Noah</u> after his own order*, and commanded him that he should go forth and declare his Gospel unto the children of men, even as it was given unto Enoch. And it came to pass that <u>*Noah*</u> *called upon the children of men that they should <u>repent</u>*; but they hearkened not unto his words. (Moses 8:19–20)

First, the account of Noah's ordination in D&C 107 provides additional details about the ordination of Noah, as "written in the Book of Enoch":

> <u>*Noah was ten years old when he was ordained*</u> under the hand of Methuselah. Three years previous to the death of Adam, he called Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah, who were all high priests, with the residue of his posterity who were righteous, into the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and there bestowed upon them his last blessing. And the Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed Adam, and called him Michael, the prince, the archangel. And *the Lord administered <u>comfort</u>* unto Adam, and said unto him: I have set thee to be at the head; a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a prince over them forever. And Adam stood up in the midst of the congregation; and, notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, *being full of the Holy Ghost*, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation. These things were all written in the book of Enoch, and are to be testified of in due time. (D&C 107:52–57)

Significantly, this passage gives us additional insight into the meaning of Noah's birth etiology, "this [son] shall comfort us" (Genesis 5:29; Moses 8:9). Noah was the one through whom Adam's righteous "posterity" would continue (see also Moses 7:52; 8:2). In other words, the Lord's promise that "I have set thee to be at the head; a multitude of nations shall come of thee, [etc.]" was specifically fulfilled in and

through Noah, and this was the "comfort" that the Lord administered to him. Perhaps this suggests that the *nōaḥ/nwḥ/nḥm* etiology has its origins in the aforementioned "Book of Enoch," portions of which the JST Genesis/Book of Moses text restores, and is "to be testified of in due time."

The JST Genesis/Book of Moses text also makes clear in Moses 8:20 that the people rejected Noah's preaching outright: "but they hearkened not unto his words." Ironically, Noah's message of repentance would have truly "comforted" the "residue of the people" who rejected it (cf. Genesis 5:29/Moses 8:9) and would have given them "rest." As it was, the Lord would "shut them up" in "a prison" that he had "prepared for them" (Moses 7:38), and "misery [would] be their doom" (Moses 7:37).[27] Nevertheless, Noah's descendant, Jesus Christ, "suffereth for their sins" and his atonement would eventually expiate their sins "inasmuch as they [would] *repent*" (Moses 7:39).

"Believe and Repent of Your Sins and Be Baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ … and Ye Shall Receive the Holy Ghost"

Importantly, JST Genesis (Book of Moses) situates the kerygma of "repentance" within what Nephi called "the doctrine of Christ."[28] In Moses 6:23 we learn that Noah was one of several "preachers of righteousness [who] spake and prophesied, and called upon all men, everywhere, to *repent*; and *faith* was taught unto the children of men." Moses 6:27 mentions that Noah's ancestor Enoch's prophetic career began with a commission to declare: "*Repent,* for thus saith the Lord: I am angry with this people, and my fierce anger is kindled against them; for their hearts have waxed hard, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes cannot see afar off." Later, the Lord recommissioned Enoch: "And the Lord said unto me: Go to this people, and say unto them — *Repent*, lest I come out and smite them with a curse, and they die. And he gave unto me a commandment that I should *baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son,* which is full of grace and truth, *and of the Holy Ghost,* which beareth record of the Father and the Son" (Moses 7:10).

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27. See also Moses 7:41.

28. See Noel B. Reynolds, "The Gospel of Jesus Christ as Taught by the Nephite Prophets," *BYU Studies* 31 (Summer 1991): 31–50; idem, "The True Points of My Doctrine," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5/2 (1996): 26–56; see also idem, "How to Come unto Christ," *Ensign* 22 (September 1992): 7-13; and most recently, idem. "The Gospel According to Nephi: An Essay on 2 Nephi 31," *Religious Educator* 16/2 (2015): 51-75.

Noah similarly preached a kerygma that included faith and repentance, the first principles of the gospel,[29] but also baptism and reception of the Holy Ghost, the first ordinances:

> And it came to pass that _Noah continued his preaching_ unto the people, saying: Hearken, and give heed unto my words; _believe and repent of your sins and be baptized_ in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, even as our fathers, and _ye shall receive the Holy Ghost, that ye may have all things made manifest_; and if ye do not this, the floods will come in upon you; nevertheless they hearkened not. (Moses 8:23–24)

The promise that Noah affixes to their obedience ("hearken[ing] and giv[ing] heed") to these is the reception of the Holy Ghost, elsewhere named "the Comforter."[30] Noah's promise that the repentant will receive the Holy Ghost takes us back to the content of Enoch's preaching and the promise attached to his teaching:

> Therefore it is given to abide in you; the record of heaven; _the Comforter_ [Hebrew _měnaḥēm_ from _nḥm_] the peaceable things of immortal glory; the truth of all things; that which quickeneth all things, which maketh alive all things; that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment. (Moses 6:61)

We again hear echoes of Noah's name and the promise of "comfort" that his name was thought to embody (from Genesis 5:29 and Moses 8:9). We are reminded also that Enoch's soul "refused to be comforted" at the destruction of the people during Noah's time, but also that "comfort" and rest were administered to him through the promise of Noah and his seed, especially the Messiah.[31] As an additional point of irony, baptism by water would have helped the people avert the total inundation from

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29. Cf. Articles of Faith 1:4.

30. See, e.g., Moroni 8:26; Alma 17:10; John 14:26; 15:26; D&C 35:19; 36:2; 39:6; 50:14, 17; 88:3; 124:97. Cf. Acts 9:31; Philippians 2:1.

31. There is perhaps another reminiscence here of something mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 107:55–57 as belonging to the Book of Enoch: "And _the Lord administered comfort unto Adam_, and said unto him: I have set thee to be at the head; a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a prince over them forever. And Adam stood up in the midst of the congregation; and, notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, _being full of the Holy Ghost, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation_. These things were all written in the book of Enoch, and are to be testified of in due time."

which they would not be "pulled."[32] It was foreseeing this refusal to repent by the "residue of the wicked" that "the floods came and swallowed them up," which caused Enoch such "bitterness of soul," and "to weep over his brethren" and "refuse to be comforted" (Moses 7:43–44).

"It Repented Noah" (Moses 8:25–26)

As noted above, one of the interesting emendations or restorations that the JST Genesis version of the Noah story offers is a shift from the Lord as the focus of the verb *nḥm* ("repent," "regret") to Noah himself.

Genesis 6:6–7	Moses 8:25–26
And *it repented* [*wayyinnāḥem*] the Lord that *he had made* [*ʿāśâ*] man on the earth, and *it grieved him* [*wayyitʿaṣṣēb*] at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for *it repenteth me* [*niḥamtî*] that I have made them. (Genesis 6:6–7)	And *it repented Noah,* and his heart was pained that the Lord *had made* man on the earth, and *it grieved him at the heart.* And the Lord said: I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air; for *it repenteth Noah* [*niḥam nōaḥ*] that I have created them, and that I have made them; and he hath called upon me; for *they have sought his life* [*biqšû ʾet-napšô*]. (Moses 8:25–26)

As Kikawada notes, the roots *nḥm*, *ʿśh/ʿśy*, and *ʿṣb* occur here in precisely the same order as they do in the etiology for Noah's name in Genesis 5:29 (cf. Moses 8:9).[33] Moses 8:25 preserves the same word order. On one level, the Genesis text suggests that the Lord himself now sought "comfort" or "rest" from the emotional toil imposed by the wickedness of the human family.

According to the JST Genesis account, however, it was Noah, rather than the Lord, whom "it repented," or it was Noah who "regretted" that

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32. Cf. the explanation for Moses's name in Exodus 2:10 and Moses's role as "drawer" or "puller" in Israel's exodus from Egypt.

33. Kikawada, "Noah and the Ark," 1123.

the Lord had created humanity.[34] Thus, on another level Noah joins his forefathers — including Enoch, Methuselah, and his father Lamech — in seeking "comfort" and "rest." In fact, it is because of Noah's "repentance" or "regret" (*nḥm*) that the Lord finally decrees the destruction of the wicked, this coupled with the fact that the "giants … they sought Noah [*biqšû ʾet-nōaḥ*] to take away his life [*lāqaḥat ʾet-napšô*]" (Moses 8:18) and those to whom Noah has been preaching "have sought [Noah's] life [*biqšû ʾet-napšô*]"[35] — i.e., sought to kill him (compare Elijah's lament in 1 Kings 19:10, 14: "I only, am left; and *they seek my life* [*wayĕbaqĕšû ʾet-napšî*], to take it away").[36]

Part II

King "Rest," King of Labor

The narrative that deals with King Noah and his priests intends that we see a picture of monarchic excess that stands in gross violation of the "Law of the King" in Deuteronomy 17:14‒20. To that end, we find the narrative use of wordplay on the name Noah in terms of the roots *nwḥ* and *nḥm* in the lead-up to Alma's story, similar to what we find in the biblical flood narrative and its restored form in JST Genesis (see Moses 7‒8). However, the Book of Mormon narrative caricatures King Noah and his priests as the moral obverse of the biblical Noah.

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34. This emendation or restoration is theologically consistent with Numbers 23:19: "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, _that he should repent_ [*wĕyitneḥām*]: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"; and with Samuel's statement 1 Samuel 15:29: "And also the Strength of Israel will not lie _nor repent_ [*yinnāḥēm*]: for he is not a man, that he should _repent_ [*lĕhinnāḥēm*]." But compare the Lord's statement to Samuel in 1 Samuel 15:11: "*It repenteth me* [*niḥamtî*] that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night."; as well as Psalm 106:45: "And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented [*wayyinnāḥēm*] according to the multitude of his mercies."

35. Cf. *biqšû napšû* ("[They] seek after my soul," KJV; i.e., "they seek my life") in Psalm 54:3.

36. Nephi's language in 1 Nephi 1:20 reflects the Hebrew idiom [*biqqēš ʾet-nepeš X*] when he states: "And when the Jews heard these things they were angry with him; yea, even as with the prophets of old, whom they had cast out, and stoned, and slain; and they also sought his life, that they might take it away. But behold, I, Nephi, will show unto you that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance" (1 Nephi 1:20).

Far from "comforting" his people or giving them "rest," as his father Zeniff had surely hoped, King Noah immediately began to "burden" his people with sin and taxes:

> And now it came to pass that Zeniff conferred the kingdom upon *Noah*, one of his sons; therefore *Noah* began to reign in his stead; and he did not walk in the ways of his father. For behold, he did not keep the commandments of God, but he did walk after the desires of his own heart. And he had many wives and concubines. And he did cause his people to commit sin, and do that which was abominable in the sight of the Lord. Yea, and they did commit whoredoms and all manner of wickedness. And he *laid a tax of one-fifth part of all they possessed*, a fifth part of their gold and of their silver, and a fifth part of their ziff, and of their copper, and of their brass and their iron; and a fifth part of their fatlings; and also a fifth part of all their grain. And *all this did he take to support himself, and his wives and his concubines; and also his priests, and their wives and their concubines*; thus he had changed the affairs of the kingdom. (Mosiah 11:1–4)

The Deuteronomic "law of the king" or "law of the kingship" specifically warned against kings multiplying wives and multiplying gold: "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold" (Deuteronomy 17:17). King Noah "had many wives and concubines," which practice, in Abinadi's words, "cause[d] [King Noah's] people to commit sin" (Mosiah 12:29; cf. Mosiah 29:9, 30).

The narrator (Mormon) further suggests that Noah and his priests were guilty of idolatry, a capital offense in Deuteronomy (see Deuteronomy 13): "Yea, and thus they were supported in their *laziness*, and in their idolatry, and in their whoredoms, by the taxes which king Noah had put upon his people; *thus did the people labor exceedingly to support iniquity*" (Mosiah 11:16; see also Mosiah 29:35). Whereas in the Hebrew Bible "Noah [was] the bringer of comfort (*nḥm*) from labor (derived from *'śh*) and toil (derived from *'ṣb*),"[37] King Noah in the Book of Mormon is the bringer of toil, the bondage of sin, and eventually physical bondage. Thus, the juxtaposition of the name Noah ("rest") with the phrase "the people [did] labor exceedingly to support iniquity" constitutes an emphatic, pejorative play on the meaning of King Noah's

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37. Kikawada, "Noah and the Ark," 1123.

name. Rather than "comfort[ing]" his people "concerning the work and toil of [their] hands" (Genesis 5:29; Moses 8:9), Noah had given them more work and caused them to sin.

Mormon wishes his audience to see a distinct contrast between Noah's kingship and the earlier kingship of King Benjamin, who summed up his reign thus: "And even I, myself, have labored with mine own hands that I might serve you, and that ye should not be laden with taxes, and that there should nothing come upon you which was grievous to be borne — and of all these things which I have spoken, ye yourselves are witnesses this day" (Mosiah 2:14).

Mormon continues with a description of King "Rest's" massive, Solomon-like building projects, including a "great-and-spacious-building"-like palace/temple:

> And it came to pass that king *Noah* ("rest") built many elegant and spacious buildings; and he ornamented them with fine work of wood, and of all manner of precious things, of gold, and of silver, and of iron, and of brass, and of ziff, and of copper; And he also built him a spacious palace, and a throne in the midst thereof, all of which was of fine wood and was ornamented with gold and silver and with precious things. *And he also caused that his workmen should work all manner of fine work* within the walls of the temple, of fine wood, and of copper, and of brass. (Mosiah 11:8–10)

This palace/temple was evidently dedicated to himself ("he … built *him* a spacious palace"). The statement that Noah "caused that his workmen should work all manner of fine work" dramatically reemphasizes what kind of "rest" that King Noah was providing his subjects: he was the bringer of toil (like Amulon will be later in the narrative, see below). However, he offered his priests an entirely different kind of "rest."

A Breastwork for "Rest"

In stark contrast to the image of "workmen … work[ing] all manner of … work," Mormon's narrative juxtaposes the image of King Noah's "enthroned" priests — not priests who are content to sit and pontificate on religious matters in the royal court, but priest's whose bodies are given "rest" by a breastwork constructed for that purpose:

> And the seats which were set apart for the high priests, which were above all the other seats, he did ornament with pure gold;

and he caused a breastwork to be built before them, that they might <u>rest *their bodies*</u> and their arms upon while they should speak lying and vain words to his people. (Mosiah 11:11)

The image of King Noah's priests lazing about on the ornate breastwork that he had built so "*that they might rest* [cf. Hebrew *<u>wayyannîhû</u>*] their bodies and their arms upon [it] while they should speak lying and vain words to his people" (11:11) borders on satire. The narrative thus indicates that the only physical "rest" that King Noah gave to anyone was to decadent priests who, beyond cultic functionaries, were loyalist court bureaucrats and propagandists who taught "vain words" rather than the law of Moses. He gave physical "comfort" to his people in the form of winemaking (see below). In terms of spiritual "rest" and "comfort," King Noah was leading his people into bondage[38] — "hard bondage" ([*ha*]*ʿăbōdâ* [*haq*]*qāšâ*, Exodus 1:14; Deuteronomy 26:6; Isaiah 14:3).[39]

"Except They Repent in Sackcloth and Ashes"

Abinadi's prophetic messages to King Noah and his people revolve around the theme of "repentance." According to Mormon's abridged record of these events, Abinadi's first message includes the phrase "except they repent" (or a variation thereon) four times, with the warning of specific judgments to follow if the conditions of repentance are not met:

And it came to pass that there was a man among them whose name was Abinadi; and he went forth among them, and began to prophesy, saying: Behold, thus saith the Lord, and thus hath he commanded me, saying, Go forth, and say unto this people, thus saith the Lord — Wo be unto this people, for I have seen their abominations, and their wickedness, and their whoredoms; and *except they <u>repent</u>* I will visit them in mine anger. And *except they <u>repent</u> and turn* to the Lord their God, behold, I will deliver them into the hands of their enemies; yea, and *they shall be brought into bondage*; and they shall be afflicted by the hand of their enemies. And it shall come to pass that they shall know that I am the Lord their God, and am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of my people. And it

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38. See Mosiah 7:11, 20; 22‒23 (esp. v. 22, 28, 33); 11:20‒22.

39. The allusion to "hard bondage" in Isaiah 14:3 is partly an allusion to the "hard bondage" that was a part of Israel's experience in Egypt (Exodus 1:14; Deuteronomy 26:6).

shall come to pass *that except this people <u>repent</u> and turn unto the Lord their God*, they shall be brought into bondage; and none shall deliver them, except it be the Lord the Almighty God. Yea, and it shall come to pass that when they shall cry unto me I will be slow to hear their cries; yea, and I will suffer them that they be smitten by their enemies. And *except they <u>repent</u> in sackcloth and ashes, and cry mightily to the Lord their God,* I will not hear their prayers, neither will I deliver them out of their afflictions; and thus saith the Lord, and thus hath he commanded me. (Mosiah 11:20–25)

Abinadi's use of the collocation "repent in sackcloth and ashes," used only here (Mosiah 11:25) and in Matthew 11:12 and Luke 10:13 (which reflect a common source), seems to be related to the phrase "and [I] repent [*wĕniḥamtî*] in dust and ashes" in Job 42:6. The term for *repent* there is *niḥamtî*. This suggests that that same term (*niḥam*) stands behind or represents *repent* at least in some instances in this passage, since the collocation is one of mourning and self-abasement. In other words, one does not "turn" into dust and ashes. If so, the motif of repentance (or lack thereof) in this account revolves around the name Noah as a play on *nōaḥ/niḥam*, just as the story itself revolves around the word *repent*.

It should be the KJV collocation "repent and turn yourselves [*šûbû wĕhăšîbû*]" — literally, "turn and cause (yourselves) to turn" — which occurs twice as a polyptoton on *šûb* in Ezekiel 14:16; 18:30. While this expression or something similar perhaps stands behind "repent and turn [to/unto the Lord]" here in Mosiah 11, the phrase "except they repent in sackcloth and ashes" suggest that *niḥam* is the underlying verb in at least one case, and perhaps all. In Jonah 3:9, *niḥam* and *šûb* also occur together: "Who can tell if God *will turn* [*yāšûb*] *<u>and repent</u>* [*wĕniḥam*], and *turn away* [*wĕšāb*] from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" Or, as JST Jonah 3:9 emends it: "Who can tell if <u>we will repent</u>, and *turn* unto God, but *he will turn away* from us his fierce anger, that we perish not?" Just as Moses 8 (JST Genesis) makes Noah rather than God the focal point of the verb "repent" in Moses 8:25–26, JST Jonah 3:9 changes the subject of the verb *niḥam* and one instance of the verb *šûb* from God to the Ninevites.

Indeed, the juxtaposition of *niḥam* ("repent," "be sorry") and *šûb* ("turn") is not uncommon in scripture (see, e.g., Exodus 32:12 [12, 14]; Jeremiah 4:28; 18:8; 26:3; 31:19; Jonah 3:9–10). A good example of the use of both verbs to describe personal repentance can be found in Jeremiah 31:19 [MT 31:18]: "Surely after that *I was turned* [*šûbî*], *<u>I repented</u>*

[*niḥamtî*]; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." Similarly, Jeremiah elsewhere laments the lack of personal *niḥam* in Judah during his days: "I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man *repented him of* [*niḥam*] his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one *turned* [*šāb*] to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle" (Jeremiah 8:6).

All of the above suggests that the narrative's emphasis on "repentance" in Abinadi's prophesying as a play on the name (or meaning of the name) Noah in terms of *nḥm* is a strong possibility. We will see further evidence for this idea as this motif resurfaces later in the narrative cycle.

"And King Noah Hardened His Heart … and Did Not Repent of His Evil Doings"

Mormon wishes us to see that King Noah was a complete failure both in terms of his personal righteousness/worthiness, but also in terms of "repentance":

> Now when *king Noah* had heard of the words which Abinadi had spoken unto the people, he was also wroth; and he said: Who is Abinadi, that I and my people should be judged of him, or who is the Lord, that shall bring upon my people such great affliction? I command you to bring Abinadi hither, that I may slay him, for he has said these things that he might stir up my people to anger one with another, and to raise contentions among my people; therefore I will slay him. Now the eyes of the people were blinded; therefore *they hardened their hearts against the words of Abinadi*, and they sought from that time forward to take him. And *king Noah hardened his heart against* the word of the Lord, and *he did not repent* of his evil doings. (Mosiah 11:26–29)

Here, Mormon emphasizes the similarity between King Noah and the pharaoh of Isrsael's exodus (with whom the idolatrous, wealth-and-wife-multiplying King Solomon is also compared). Like the pharaoh of the exodus (Exodus 5:22), King Noah asks the dismissive and disrespectful question "Who is the Lord?"[40] And just as the text of Exodus states that Pharaoh hardened his heart (see, e.g., Exodus 8:15,

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40. Cain also asks the same dismissive question: "And Adam and Eve, his wife, ceased not to call upon God. And Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain, and said: I have gotten a man from the Lord; wherefore he may not reject

19, 32; see also 1 Samuel 6:6),[41] so Pharaoh's hardness of heart brought extreme negative consequences upon himself and his people during the Lord's deliverance of Israel from bondage; King Noah's hardness of heart would bring extreme negative consequences upon himself and his people, including bringing them into bondage from which only the Lord could deliver them. The costs of refusing to "repent" would be steep.

"They Have Repented Not"

Hardness of heart and a lack of repentance in King Noah, of course, exacerbates the hardness of heart and a lack of repentance in his people (cf. Mosiah's later allusions to Noah, "behold, how much iniquity doth one wicked king cause to be committed, yea, and what great destruction," Mosiah 29:17; "he has his friends in iniquity," Mosiah 29:21).[42] Consequently, the Lord sends Abinadi again to the people of King Noah:

> And it came to pass that after the space of two years that Abinadi came among them in disguise, that they knew him not, and began to prophesy among them, saying: Thus has the Lord commanded me, saying — Abinadi, go and prophesy unto this my people, for *they have hardened their hearts against my words; they have repented not of their evil doings*; therefore, I will visit them in my anger, yea, in my fierce anger will I visit them in their iniquities and abominations. (Mosiah 12:1)

Divine judgment would, of necessity, come upon King Noah's people in direct consequence of their unabated "hard[ness] of heart" and continuous failure to "repent." They felt no regret for their evil doings, and thus did not turn from them.

"Except They Repent" II

Abinadi's second prophetic tour-of-duty among King Noah's people once more includes the language "except they repent" with the promise of divine judgment attached:

> And it shall come to pass that *except they repent* I will utterly destroy them from off the face of the earth; yet they shall

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his words. But behold, Cain hearkened not, saying: *Who is the Lord that I should know him*?" (Moses 5:16).

41. See also JST Exodus 4:21; 7:3, 13–14, 22; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10 14:4, 8, 17.

42. Mosiah 29:16–24 constitutes a telling commentary on how King Noah's reign was viewed by King Mosiah and widely in Zarahemla after the return of Alma's and Limhi's groups.

> leave a record behind them, and I will preserve them for other nations which shall possess the land; yea, even this will I do that I may discover the abominations of this people to other nations. And many things did Abinadi prophesy against this people. (Mosiah 12:8)

In this instance, however, the temporal scope of Abinadi's prophesy goes well beyond the lifespans of King Noah and his people — his immediate audience. Mormon, who is keen to show the fulfillment of earlier prophecy when such fulfillment occurred, recognized the clear fulfillment of Abinadi's prophecy during his own time.

Mormon begins his description of the fulfillment of this prophecy in Mormon 2:8: "notwithstanding the great destruction which hung over my people, they did not repent of their evil doings; therefore there was blood and carnage spread throughout all the face of the land." When the Nephites finally "began to repent of their iniquity" (Mormon 2:10), "there began to be *a mourning and a lamentation* in all the land … more especially among the Nephites" (Mormon 2:11). Mormon, for his part, "saw their lamentation and *their mourning* and their *sorrow* before the Lord, [and his] heart did begin to rejoice within [him]" (Mormon 2:12), but he soon recognizes that *"their sorrowing <u>was not unto repentance</u>*, because of the goodness of God; but it was rather *the sorrowing of the damned*, because the Lord would not always suffer them to take happiness in sin" (Mormon 2:13). Moreover, "they did not come unto Jesus with broken hearts and contrite spirits, but they did curse God, and wish to die" (Mormon 2:14). Thus, Mormon states, "*my sorrow did return unto me again*, and I saw that the day of grace was passed with them, both temporally and spiritually" (Mormon 2:15). Indeed, he laments, "*my heart has been filled with sorrow* because of their wickedness, all my days; nevertheless, I know that I shall be lifted up at the last day" (Mormon 2:19).

King Noah's priests, whose lifestyle Abinadi's preaching directly criticized and thus threatened, lead the effort to discredit and destroy Abinadi. They record[43] and repeat Abinadi's denunciations of the people and of King Noah in particular. They recognize the sum and substance of Abinadi's prophecies, as evident in this preserved statement to King Noah: "And he saith all this shall come upon thee *except thou <u>repent</u>*,

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43. Zeniff's court apparently had a well-developed scribal system and royal archive, both of which continued under his son Noah and grandson Limhi. For some evidence of these practices, see, e.g., John Gee, "Limhi in the Library," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1/1 (1992): 54–66.

and this because of thine iniquities" (Mosiah 12:12). Conceivably, the phrase "except thou repent" is specifically recalled during Abinadi's arraignment because the priests recognized an onomastic reference to the name "Noah" in terms of the verb *nḥm*. Noah's priests, of course, assert their own and the king's innocence (see Mosiah 12:13-15). Notably, it is at this point that King Noah's priests raise the issue of the identity of the messenger of "peace" in Isaiah 52:7-10; it's the implied question "what is a prophet?"; and their belief that the "the Lord ha[d] comforted Zion" (Isaiah 52:9).

"The Lord Hath Comforted His People" (Mosiah 12:23; 15:30)

When one of King Noah's priests — possibly Alma the Elder[44] — quotes Isaiah 52:7-10 and interrogates Abinadi as part of a dramatic exchange in King Noah's courtyard, he would have inevitably used the "Noah"-associated verb *nḥm* from Isaiah 52:9: "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord *hath comforted* his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem" (quoted in Mosiah 12:23).[45] The irony seems not to have been lost on Abinadi, who recognized that Noah and his priests were bringing Noah's people into bondage.

Neither Noah nor his priests understood their role in achieving Isaiah's prophetic promise "*the Lord hath comforted* [*niḥam*] his people" (Isaiah 52:9), an idea integral to the midrashic meaning of Noah's name: ("This same *shall comfort us* [*yĕnaḥămēnû*] concerning our work and toil of our hands," Genesis 5:29) and to Zeniff's hopes for his son and his people (cf. Mosiah 10:22).

Near the end of his long exchange with Noah's priests, having identified Jesus Christ himself narrowly and the prophets and saints more broadly as the messenger(s) of salvation of whom Isaiah testified, Abinadi prophesied that "the time shall come that the salvation of the Lord shall be declared to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people" (Mosiah 15:28). He then quotes the original scripture: "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for *the Lord hath comforted* [*niḥam*] his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem" (Mosiah 15:30). Abinadi's return to these words at this moment in the exchange between Noah's priests and himself is poignant. Abinadi knows that Noah, who has already brought his people into spiritual bondage, is bringing them into temporal bondage as well: he has *not* comforted them. But Abinadi's

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44. See Aaron P. Schade and Matthew L. Bowen, "'To Whom Is the Arm of the Lord Revealed?' Part 1," *Religious Educator* 16/2 (2015): 91-112.

45. The unnamed priest quotes Isaiah 52:7-10 in Mosiah 12:20-24.

testimony — testimony that Alma remembered and preserved — was that the Lord had comforted and would comfort and redeem Israel, both temporally and spiritually.

All this helps us to appreciate the staggering degree to which King Noah (King "Rest") failed to live up to the obligations latent in the meaning of his name. He had not only refused Abinadi's call to personal repentance but also had caused his people to harden their hearts and to not repent. The "comfort" wherewith King Noah would "comfort" his people was the apparent "comfort," "rest," and ease of sin — sin that would eventuate in bondage.

"Comfort"? Two Noahs and Their Winemaking

In the short term, however, Noah was able to "comfort" — or anesthetize — his people in their sins with "wine in abundance" (Mosiah 11:25). The narrator sardonically mentions King Noah's winemaking activities, which recall the single major (recorded) blemish in Noah the patriarch's life: the winemaking and drunkenness that leads to problems within his family (see Genesis 9:20-27). The name Noah is connected with winemaking in Genesis 9 and again here in Mosiah 11.

As noted previously, the name Noah (*nōaḥ*) is etiologized in terms of the semantically rich verb *nḥm*: "And he called his name *Noah* [*nōaḥ*], saying, This same *shall comfort us* [*yĕnaḥămēnû*] concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed (Genesis 5:29). Biblical exegetes frequently connect this etiological explanation with the later narrative statement regarding Noah's postdiluvian occupation: "And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken" (Genesis 9:20–21). As also mentioned previously, the interpretation of the name Noah in terms of *nḥm* "expresses [Noah's] father's expectation of consolation and an easing of the many difficulties of working ground cursed by God and the later phrase 'Noah was a man of the ground (=farmer, [*ʾîš hāʾădāmâ*]) eventually finds a convenient solution; he plants a vineyard and becomes drunk on the results" (Genesis 9:20–21).[46]

To help the reader fully appreciate the deficiencies of the "rest" and "comfort" that King Noah administered, the narrator mentions his winemaking activities, which at once recall the patriarch Noah's winemaking activities: "And it came to pass that he [King Noah] planted vineyards round about in the land; and he built wine-presses, and made

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46. Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 204.

wine in abundance; and therefore he became a winebibber [cf. Hebrew *sōbēʾ yāyin*],[47] and also his people" (Mosiah 11:15). The winemaking and winebibbing served as a kind of spiritual anesthesia for King Noah and his people, who grew increasingly proud, self-sufficient, and overconfident, this in addition to delighting in the shedding of blood (see Mosiah 11:16–19). All these sins would be required at their hands.

Later in the narrative cycle, Mormon revisits Noah's winemaking theme in an ironic way following the latter's death and during the reign of his son Limhi. The Lord enables Limhi and his people to convert their winemaking bane into a boon for their temporal salvation: "And king Limhi caused that his people should gather their flocks together; and he sent the tribute of wine to the Lamanites; and he also sent more wine, as a *present* [cf. Hebrew *minḥâ*] unto them; and they did drink freely of the wine which king Limhi did send unto them" (Mosiah 22:10). Here we detect an additional wordplay on the name Noah in terms of "rest." The word "present" in this contexts suggests the Hebrew noun *minḥâ* = "gift, present"[48] which takes on the sense of "tribute."[49] The noun *minḥâ* derives from the verbal root *nwḥ* ("rest") — i.e., as in something that "appeases" or propitiates wrath (cf. Genesis 33:10).[50] The wordplay here perhaps underscores the point that Noah could only give his priests "rest" and his people "comfort" in the most negative senses, and the Lord was able to turn one of Noah's distinct negatives into a positive for his people once they began to repent.

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47. See Proverbs 23:20–21.

48. HALOT, 601.

49. Ibid. See, e.g., Judges 3:15, 17–18; 2 Kings 17:3–; Hosea 10:6; and 2 Chronicles 17:11 where the KJV translators render Hebrew *minḥâ* (*nwḥ*) into English with the word "present"/"presents." In 2 Samuel 8:2, 6 (1 Chronicles 18:2, 6) and 2 Chronicles 26:8 the KJV translators use the word "gifts."

50. Genesis 33:10: "And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive *my present* [*minḥātî*] at my hand: for therefore *I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.*" We can compare this to Enos's concluding statement: "And I soon go to *the place of my rest*, which is with my Redeemer; for I know that *in him I shall rest*. And I rejoice in the day when my mortal shall put on immortality, and *shall stand before him; then shall I see his face with pleasure*, and he will say unto me: Come unto me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father. Amen." (Enos 1:27; cf. 1:17).

The Iniquity That "Caused Me Sore Repentance": Alma's Deep Regret

After Alma and his people's escaped from King Noah and his armies, Alma gave an important speech in their newly established settlement in the land of Helam, in which he acknowledged and explained his life of sin previous to his conversion. Wordplay on the name "Noah" in terms of "repentance" — i.e., regret — is evident:

> But remember the iniquity of *king Noah* [*nōaḥ*] and his priests; and I myself was caught in a snare, and did many things which were abominable in the sight of the Lord, which caused me *sore repentance* [i.e., sore regret, sorrow; cf. Hebrew *nḥm*, *nōḥam* = "sorrow, repentance";[51]* *niḥûmîm*, "repentings"[52]]. Nevertheless, *after much tribulation* [distress],[53] the Lord did hear my cries, and did answer my prayers, and has made me an instrument in his hands in bringing so many of you to a knowledge of his truth. (Mosiah 23:9–10)

Alma and Noah's other lazy priests "resting" their bodies on the ornate breastwork in the court of King Noah's palace-temple subsequently becomes "sore repentance" — i.e., the deepest regret — for Alma. The only other attestation of the phrase "sore repentance" occurs in Alma 27:23, which states that Ammon's Lamanite converts "fear[ed] to take up arms against their brethren lest they should commit sin; and this their great fear came because of their *sore repentance* which they had, on account of their many murders and their awful wickedness." These converts felt the deep regret for their sins that Alma had experienced a full generation earlier.

Alma's autobiographical statement in Mosiah 23:9–10 regarding the personal sins and abominations which "caused [him] sore repentance"

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51. The noun *nōḥam* is a *hapax legomenon* ("spoken once") attested once in Hosea 13:14. Some lexica [e.g., Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), hereafter BDB] and translations gloss this term as "repentance" (KJV); others (e.g., HALOT) gloss it as "compassion." However, the latter seems to be a context-based glossing, and it is not clear on what philological basis this rendering can be made. The etymological evidence suggests "sorrow" or "repentance."

52. Like Hosea 13:14, Hosea 11:8 uses a plural form of a *nḥm* derived noun "my repentings [*niḥûmāy*] are kindled together." To render this expression adequately in English is exceptionally difficult.

53. Cf. Deuteronomy 4:30; Judges 10:14; 1 Samuel 10:19; 26:24.

apparently serves as the source for Mormon's earlier biographical statement regarding Alma: "And now, it came to pass that Alma, who had fled from the servants of king *Noah, repented* of his sins and iniquities, and went about privately among the people, and began to teach the words of Abinadi" (Mosiah 18:1). Alma himself would later face having to deal with members of his church who would "not repent of their iniquities" (Mosiah 26:11). His divine commission was to "baptize unto repentance" (Mosiah 26:22); and it was his responsibility to forgive the one who "repenteth in the sincerity of his heart" (Mosiah 26:29). It was Alma, significantly, who received the revelation: "Yea, *and as often as my people repent* will I forgive them their trespasses against me" (Mosiah 26:30). And it was Alma who was tasked with discerning true repentance among the Lord's people and numbering the repentant or blotting out the unrepentant on that basis (see Mosiah 26:31–36). Alma's role as declarer of, baptizer unto, and ecclesiastical judge regarding repentance is particularly poignant against the backdrop of King Noah and his people's failure to repent and Alma's history in King Noah's court.

"To Comfort Those Who Stand in Need of Comfort"

Alma's baptismal covenant speech at the waters of Mormon contains language that pertained not only to their past under King Noah's oppressions but also to their future toiling under Amulon. King "Rest" (cf. Mosiah 11:11) had caused them "to labor exceedingly to support iniquity" (Mosiah 11:6), and Amulon would impose "burdens" upon them (Mosiah 24:14–15, 21) in fulfillment of Abinadi's prophecy ("Yea, and I will cause that they shall have *burdens* lashed upon their backs; and they shall be driven before like a dumb ass," Mosiah 12:5).[54] Alma declared:

> [Ye] are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light. Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, *and comfort those that stand in need of comfort*, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life.

54. On how this prophecy was fulfilled in the lives of Limhi's people, see Mosiah 21:3, 13, and 15.

Alma and his people's baptismal covenant echoes the messianic declaration of Isaiah 61:1–4, in particular the concern "*to comfort* [*lĕnaḥēm*] all that mourn" (Isaiah 61:2). Alma and his people were, in effect, covenanting to do something that King Noah and his priests had failed to do, and to do something that they themselves had failed to do as his subjects: to administer true "comfort."

However, in order for Alma's people "to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things and in all places," the people would themselves have to experience burdens regarding which only the Lord himself could "comfort" them and from which only the Lord himself could redeem them. The Lord's "easing [their] burdens" would enable them to fulfill the covenant "to stand as witnesses" (Mosiah 18:9) and to "stand as witnesses for [the Lord] hereafter" (Mosiah 24:14).

"Lift Up Your Heads and Be of Good Comfort"

Alma and his people had repented of their sinful living under King Noah. Notwithstanding this repentance, they remained subject to Abinadi's prophecies regarding King Noah and his people,[55] though not without mitigation. The reality of Abinadi's prophecies regarding Noah's people being brought into bondage sets in on Alma's people in Mosiah 24, when the Lamanites occupy the land of Helam and Noah's ex-priest "Amulon began to exercise authority over Alma and his brethren, and began to persecute him, and cause that his children should persecute their children" (Mosiah 24:8). This, Mormon informs us, happened in part because "Amulon knew Alma, that he had been one of the king's priests, and that it was he that believed the words of Abinadi and was driven out before the king, and therefore he was wroth with him; for he was subject to king Laman, *yet he exercised authority over them, and put tasks upon them, and put task-masters* [cf. Hebrew *śārê missîm*[56] and *nōgĕśîm*[57]] over them" (Mosiah 24:9–10).

By using the terms "tasks" and "task masters," the narrator compares Amulon to the Pharaoh of the exodus.[58] Moreover, the narrator seems to

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55. Although Alma had repented at the preaching of Abinadi, those who later joined Alma's church had not. Thus, they were of necessity subject to the decreed consequences of Abinadi's prophecies, the latter having "sealed" his testimony — i.e., "the truth of his words" — "by his death" or with his own blood (compare Mosiah 17:20 with Limhi's statement in Mosiah 7:28; cf. also D&C 135:3; 136:39).

56. *śārê missîm* = literally, "masters of burdens." See, e.g., Exodus 1:11.

57. *nōgĕśîm* = literally, "drivers." See, e.g., Exodus 3:7 (once); 5:6–14 (4 x).

58. See, e.g., Alan Goff, "Historical Narrative, Literary Narrative — Expelling Poetics from the Republic of History," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5/1

create a midrashic meaning for the name Amulon in terms of *ʿāmāl/ ʿāmēl*, "toil," "trouble," or "travail," i.e., "man of toil," "man of trouble" (*ʿāmāl* + appellative – *ôn* "man/person of, see especially Mosiah 24:8-11).[59] Amulon thus created a situation in which the Lord could and would act on behalf of Alma's repentant community to "comfort" them, because they were now keeping the covenant.

Isaiah's prophetic declaration that "the Lord hath comforted his people" (Isaiah 52:9), quoted by one of Noah's priests (perhaps Alma himself) to Abinadi (Mosiah 12:23), which was accomplished only in the worst sense under King Noah before his erstwhile subjects were brought into bondage, is finally fulfilled in the lives of Alma's repentant people:

> And it came to pass that the voice of the Lord came to them in their afflictions, saying: *Lift up your heads and be of good comfort*, for I know of the covenant which ye have made unto me; and I will covenant with my people and deliver them out of bondage. And I will also *ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders,* that even you cannot feel them upon your backs, even while you are in bondage; and this will I do that ye may stand as witnesses for me hereafter, and that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions. And now it came to pass that the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his *brethren were made light*; yea, *the Lord did strengthen*[60] *them that they could bear up their burdens with ease*, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord. And it came to pass that so great was their faith and their patience that the voice of the Lord came unto them again, saying: *Be of good comfort*, for on the morrow I will deliver you out of bondage. (Mosiah 24:13-16)

The Lord finally "comforts" in legitimate fulfillment of Isaiah 52:9, in ironic fulfillment of Mosiah 12:23; and in confirmation of Abinadi's reiteration of this prophecy in Mosiah 15:30-31. This "comfort" came in the form of an easing of the burdens that came in consequence of their

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(1996): 97-99.

59. Cf. the entries for *ʿāmāl* and *ʿāmēl* in HALOT, 845. See also BDB, 765-66. See Matthew L. Bowen, "'They Were Moved with Compassion' (Alma 27:4; 53:13): Toponymic Wordplay on Zarahemla and Jershon," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 18 (2016): 242.

60. Cf. comfort < Late Latin *confortare* = "to strengthen" – *cum/com/con* (intensifying preposition) + *fortis* ("strength").

refusal to hear Abinadi's message. Eventually, their "burdens were made light" until they could not "feel them upon [their] backs" with the result that they could "submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord. Finally the word of "comfort" came again: "Be of good comfort, for on the morrow I will deliver you out of bondage."

"Lift Up Your Heads and Be Comforted"

Mormon's inclusion of a speech given by Limhi at the temple in the city of Lehi-Nephi, uses a subtle play on the name Noah — a pun that is fully apparent not only in view of what *has* transpired in terms of the timeline of events, but also in what *will* happen in terms of the ordering and progression of the text:

> And it came to pass that when they had gathered themselves together that he spake unto them in this wise, saying: O ye, my people, lift up your heads and *be comforted*; for behold, the time is at hand, or is not far distant, when we shall no longer be in subjection to our enemies, notwithstanding our many strugglings, which have been in vain; yet I trust there remaineth an effectual struggle to be made. (Mosiah 7:18)

King Limhi attempted to administer to his people the divine "comfort" that his father, Noah, was responsible to administer, but had failed to administer. Moreover, it is especially important to recall Limhi's statement "lift up your heads and be comforted" in terms of the exchange between King Noah's priests and Abinadi over the meaning of Isaiah 52:7–10, including the phrase "the Lord *hath comforted* [*niḥam*] his people" (quoted in Mosiah 12:21–24).

At the end of the narrative that describes the fate of Limhi's people, we see the form of the "comfort" which the Lord administers begin to take shape:

> And now the Lord was slow to hear their cry because of their iniquities; nevertheless the Lord did hear their cries, and began to soften the hearts of the Lamanites that they began to *ease their burdens*; yet the Lord did not see fit to deliver them out of bondage. (Mosiah 21:15)

Just like Alma's people (their former co-patriots), King Limhi's people became subject to Abinadi's prophecy regarding King Noah's people: "Yea, and I will cause that they shall have *burdens* lashed upon their backs; and they shall be driven before like a dumb ass" (Mosiah 12:5). This prophecy was fulfilled in Mosiah 21:3, 13, and 15. Like Alma's

people, they would experience the contrast between Noah's false "rest" and "comfort" and the Lord's "rest"[61] and "comfort."

"Because of Their Sincere Repentance": The Regret of King Noah's Former People

Just as Alma the Elder experienced "sore repentance" and "tribulation" because of his participation in "the iniquities of King Noah and his priests" (Mosiah 23:9) which led him to "do many things which were abominable in the sight of the Lord" or, in other words, to commit many "sins and iniquities" (Mosiah 18:1), both Alma's people and Limhi's people as Noah's former subjects had to experience "godly" sorrow before they could be fully comforted and then saved and redeemed from bondage:

> Yea, remember king *Noah*, his wickedness and his abominations, and also the wickedness and abominations of his people. Behold what great destruction did come upon them; and also because of their iniquities they were brought into bondage. And were it not for the interposition of their all-wise Creator, and *this because of their sincere repentance*, they must unavoidably remain in bondage until now. (Mosiah 29:18–19; cf. 27:28)

For those who had lived under King Noah's reign, the consequences of that reign ultimately produced "sincere repentance" (cf. *nḥm*) — that is, sincere sorrow and regret that produced "a mighty change of heart" (Alma 5:12–14). Mormon here places emphasis on the emotional response to their sins ("sincere repentance"), not just the important act of "turning" from their sins. In other words, "repentance" in the text here appears to represent the condition of *nḥm* rather than simply the act of *šûb*, although the necessity of the latter is inevitably implied.

"The Waters of Noah unto Me": Pragmatics and Conclusion

In JST Genesis (the Book of Moses) we find positive treatment of the name Noah in terms of the Hebrew roots *nwḥ* ("rest") and *nḥm* ("comfort,"

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61. Cf. especially Matthew 11:28–30: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." On some of the symbolism evident in Christ's "yoke," see Jeff Lindsay, "The Yoke of Christ: A Light Burden Heavy with Meaning," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 18 (2016): 171–217.

"regret," "repent") and a pejorative treatment of the name Noah in Mosiah 11–29 in terms of the very same roots. In the Enoch material in the Book of Moses, we see that the wordplay revolves around Enoch's refusal to be "comforted," the earth's "groaning," the Lord's promise concerning the eventual "rest" because of Noah and his seed and the "comfort" that this brought to Noah's forebears, including Enoch himself. In the Noah cycle in the Book of Mormon, the name Noah stands as a sign of the false "comfort" and "rest" and the hard bondage that sin brings. The Lord does eventually "comfort" King Noah's former subjects — Alma and Limhi and their peoples — but only after their "sore repentance" (Mosiah 23:9; 29:19). The failure to "repent in sackcloth and ashes" (Mosiah 11:25) inexorably leads to the "hard bondage" of sin (cf. Exodus 1:14; Deuteronomy 26:6; Isaiah 14:3).

The Lord's promise regarding the earth's eventual "rest" that would come because of and through Noah's posterity — specifically Jesus Christ, but also *us* — should still "comfort" all of us. It is worth noting the Lord's placing Adam in the paradisiacal sacred space (temple)[62] of the Garden of Eden is described in terms of giving him "rest": "And the Lord God took the man, and *put him* [*wayyanniḥēhû*, literally, "rested him" or "gave him rest"] into [or, in] the garden –of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Genesis 2:15; Moses 3:15). Our destiny and the earth's destiny is to be "given rest" again: "And it shall come to pass in the day that *the Lord shall give thee rest* [*hānîaḥ*] from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve" (Isaiah 14:3); "*the whole earth is at rest* [*nāḥâ*] and is quiet: they break forth into singing" (Isaiah 14:7).

However, we cannot not be spiritually anesthetized by the thought — as were King Noah, his priests, and his people — that the Lord will "comfort" Zion in her sins.[63] That road leads unavoidably to painful regret;[64] and, if we are as fortunate as the people of Alma and Limhi, to "sore repentance." Rather than inviting us to "lift up [our] heads in wickedness," the Lord Jesus Christ exhorts us to "lift up [our] heads

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62. Donald W. Parry, "Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary," in *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 126–151.

63. The principle that the Lord's people cannot be "saved" while "in their sins" is taught powerfully in Alma 11:34-37; Helaman 5:10; and in Mosiah 11-29.

64. See, e.g., D&C 1:3: "And the rebellious shall be pierced with much sorrow; for their iniquities shall be spoken upon the housetops, and their secret acts shall be revealed."

and [to] be of good comfort" (Mosiah 24:3),[65] "for *the Lord shall comfort* [*niḥam*] *Zion: he will comfort* [*niḥam*] all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody" (Isaiah 51:3; 2 Nephi 8:3).

Last, the Nephites who had experienced the cataclysmic disasters concomitant with the death of Christ (cf. the Flood), and whose ancestors had lived under oppressions of King Noah and had been delivered from subsequent hard bondage, would have especially appreciated Jesus's quotation of Isaiah 54:8–13:

> In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this, *the waters of Noah* [*mê-nōaḥ*] *unto me.*[66] For *as I have sworn* that *the waters of Noah* [*mê-nōaḥ*] should no more go over the earth, so *have I sworn* that I would not be wroth with thee. For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall *the covenant of my peace* be removed, saith *the Lord that hath mercy on thee.* O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and *not comforted* [*lō' nuḥāmâ*]! Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children. (3 Nephi 22:8–13; cf. Isaiah 54:8–13)

Arguably, Isaiah's words from the mouth of the Savior himself at the temple in Bountiful, contain the ultimate promise of "comfort" and consolation to Zion. Isaiah's text contains a wordplay on Noah in terms of *nḥm*[67] which would not have been missed by this (or perhaps any) ancient Israelite audience. This wordplay not only recalls the Flood epic and the wordplay on *nḥm* and *nwḥ* there, but also specifically invokes the covenant the Lord made with Noah and his posterity then (see Genesis 9).

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65. Cf. Jacob's similarly worded admonition in Jacob 3:2: "O all ye that are pure in heart, lift up your heads and receive the pleasing word of God, and feast upon his love; for ye may, if your minds are firm, forever."

66. Following Royal Skousen, ed. *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 2009), 626.

67. Kikawada, "Noah and the Ark," 1127.

The Lord has always "comforted Zion."[68] He will always "comfort Zion"[69] through the Comforter — and even through the second Comforter[70] — but he does so only to the degree that Zion's inhabitants are willing to repent, even "repent in sackcloth and ashes" if necessary, and only to the degree that they (we) come out of the bondage of sin (see especially Isaiah 52:9-12). Our most pressing work, therefore, is to repent.[71]

[*This article is dedicated with love to the memory of Paul Martinson and to his wife Valerie, and to their family, in anticipation of that time when we will sing songs of everlasting joy with him again.*]

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68. Cf. Jesus's twofold citation of Isaiah 52:9 in 3 Nephi 16:19; 20:34.
69. Zechariah 1:7; D&C 101:16. See also Isaiah 40:2; 66:13; Ezekiel 14:22.
70. See, e.g., Moses 7:16, 62-64; D&C 88:3-4.
71. See especially Alma 24:10-11; D&C 11:9, 20.

The Title of Liberty and Ancient Prophecy

RoseAnn Benson

Abstract: *Captain Moroni cites a prophecy regarding Joseph of Egypt and his posterity that is not recorded in the Bible. He accompanies the prophecy with a symbolic action to motivate his warriors to covenant to be faithful to their prophet Helaman and to keep the commandments lest God would not preserve them as he had Joseph.*

An illustration of how Old Testament prophecy expands our appreciation of Book of Mormon teachings is found in the epic war section of the book of Alma. Interestingly, an army captain used ancient prophecy regarding God's preservation of a righteous remnant to motivate his people to declare their dedication to fight for the most precious parts of Nephite culture: God, religion, family, and free government (Alma 46:35).[1] An important Nephite practice was that of appointing as chief captain one who recognized the spirit of revelation because every conflict was to be prosecuted under the divine direction of God (see Alma 16:5; 3 Nephi 3:19).[2] Moroni's spiritual gifts not only

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1. Some individuals have asserted that the term "liberty" is a nineteenth-century American ideal and not part of the ancient world. Although long post-Lehi's departure, findings in the caves at Qumran have yielded important documents from the second century AD. The Bar Kokhba (alternate spelling Kochba) people reissued Roman coins with the following slogans: "Redemption of Israel" and "Freedom of Israel" or "Freedom of Jerusalem" in an effort to inspire the people of their day to fight for liberty. Hugh Nibley, "Bar-Kochba and Book of Mormon Backgrounds," The Prophetic Book of Mormon (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and Provo, UT: FARMS, 1988), 279–280.

2. Stephen D. Ricks, "'Holy War' in the Book of Mormon and the Ancient Near East," in Reexploring the Book of Mormon, John W. Welch, ed. (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1992), 202.

spurred his people to greater obedience and fervor in their fight for righteous principles, but he recorded a new and significant prophecy not found in our Old Testament.

Historical Background

At the disappearance of the prophet Alma (see Alma 45:18–19), his son Helaman, who had previously received the sacred relics that symbolized his calling as prophet and ecclesiastical leader (see Alma 37), set about to reorganize the leadership of the churches in the Nephite land by appointing new priests and teachers (see Alma 45:20–22). Because of the wars, there had been dissension and disorder in the Church (see Alma 45:20–21).[3]

In response to Helaman's reorganization and regulations, some Nephites were angry, and a wealthy group of Nephites refused to acknowledge him as their Chief Priest and prophet (see Alma 45:23–24; 46:6). Amalickiah, the leader of this dissident group, was described as "a large and a strong man" (Alma 46:3) and "a man of cunning device and a man of many flattering words" (Alma 46:10). He promised those angry with Helaman a return to kingship and greater power for "lower judges" (Alma 46:4) as "rulers over the people" (Alma 46:5), if they supported him to be king.

Perhaps Helaman's regulations were direction to the membership of the church clarifying that the change from kingship to judgeship promoting greater liberty and personal responsibility had originated, at least in part, from revelation (see Mosiah 29:25–38). Therefore, judgeship should be the type of government the Nephites supported politically.[4]

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3. LDS Scholar Lynn Wardle found that compared to the Bible and other books of scripture the Book of Mormon has the most scriptural references to the word "dissent." This term is often combined with contention, iniquity, or wickedness. Dissent, however, "is not applied to personal searching, doubting, groping, or struggling to know the truth or come to Christ that so often are crucial to the conversion process. Apparently the writers of the Book of Mormon distinguished between honest, personal inquiry and yearning for righteousness and the kinds of activities they characterized as dissent." Wardle, "Dissent: Perspectives from the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 3 (1994): 1, 56.

4. Initially, King Mosiah stated that kingship is the best form of government if there were a guarantee that just kings would rule; however, the experience of some of the Nephites with King Noah and the Jaredites with their kings demonstrated the difficulty with keeping leaders who based their judgments on the commandments of God (Mosiah 29:13). Later, Chief Judge Pahoran would declare that the "spirit of freedom" is also the "Spirit of God" (Alma 61:15); therefore, God desired judgeship, with its promotion of personal liberty and responsibility, not kingship. Nephi, son of

Whatever principles or doctrines Helaman taught, the dissension of Amalickiah and his followers constituted both ecclesiastical apostasy and political sedition (see Alma 46:10). Just after a victory led by Captain Moroni over the Zoramites and Lamanites that included great loss of Nephite lives (see Alma 43–44), Amalickiah and his followers fomented civil war attempting to overturn a government of judges as set forth by King Mosiah and Alma and approved by the voice of the people almost 20 years earlier (see Mosiah 29 and Alma 2).

Captain Moroni uttered a heartfelt prayer for his people — the persecuted Christians, "all those who were true believers in Christ" and who had gladly taken "the name of Christ," and who supported Helaman and liberty under God's laws (Alma 46:15). Perhaps his pleading with the Lord inspired him to remember his ancestors and led him to rend his coat, following an Old Testament pattern as a sign of mourning (see Alma 46:10–12).[5] For the Nephite nation to survive another war, this one inflamed by internal division, a pledge of loyalty was essential for a military victory.[6]

Rending of Clothing

What was the historical significance of Moroni's rending his clothing? There are many accounts in the Bible and the Book of Mormon describing the rending of clothing, the soul, the veil of the temple, the veil of darkness, heaven, etc. In this passage, however, Moroni had a very distinct meaning in mind. He linked his actions directly to Joseph who was sold into Egypt, their ancestral tie to the house of Israel (see 1 Nephi 5:14; Alma 46:23). The story of their ancient clan leader Joseph and his coat of "many colors" is found in Genesis 37.[7] When Jacob, son

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Helaman, or else Mormon in an editorial note commented that the reestablishment of kingship was in defiance of the law and rights of the country and would mean that liberty would be lost in the land (see 3 Nephi 6:30).

5. The order of Moroni's ritual actions is unclear: the rending of coat, putting on armor, and prayer. Although prayer is mentioned last, it may have occurred first because of this phrase: "And therefore, at this time, Moroni prayed that the cause of the Christians, and the freedom of the land might be favored" (Alma 46:16).

6. Terrence Szink, "An Oath of Allegiance in the Book of Mormon," in *Warfare in the Book of Mormon*, Stephen D. Ricks and William J. Hamblin, eds. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and Provo, UT: FARMS, 1990), 35.

7. Jewish legend proposes that Joseph, of all Jacob's sons, looked the most like his father. Part of Joseph's special relationship may have been that Jacob shared with him sacred knowledge about the Messiah that he had received from Shem and Eber and bequeathed Adam's special garment to him. Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends*

of Isaac, received Joseph's coat that had been dipped in goat's blood by his other sons, he rent his clothing and mourned because he believed Joseph's body had been torn by wild animals (see Genesis 37:33–34).[8]

Captain Moroni and the Nephites would have known the miraculous outcome of the story from the brass plates. Joseph, "who was preserved by the hand of the Lord, that he might preserve his father, Jacob, and all his household from perishing with famine" (1 Nephi 5: 14), rescued his family by providing all they needed during their sojourn in Egypt. God sent Joseph ahead to prepare, preserve, and deliver the family of Jacob. In the process he became like a "savior" to them (see Genesis 45:6–11).

It is difficult, however, to link the story of wicked brothers rending Joseph's coat to cover their sin with the story of Captain Moroni, who rent his coat not just as a sign of mourning for spiritual dissension among his people but as token of a covenant with Christ. He created a war banner by inscribing on the torn remnant a call to the Nephites to remember "our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives, and our children" (Alma 46:12). By citing an ancient ancestor, he set the precedent for the ceremony and legitimized in the eyes of the people his call to battle a civil war.[9] He rallied the Nephites under this "title of liberty" (Alma 46:13) by putting on his shield and fastening on his armor, symbolizing his willingness to fight for these principles (Alma 46:13).[10] His message was both a call to obedience and a prophecy: He then "went among

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of the Jews, trans. Henrietta Szold (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1948), 2:4, 139.

8. There are several Jewish legends regarding the lies that Jacob's sons told him about Joseph's coat. One legend claims to be the conversation between Jacob and his sons: "'When we were driving our herds homeward, we found this garment covered with blood and dust on the highway, a little beyond Shechem. Know now whether it be thy son's coat or not.'" Jacob recognized Joseph's coat, and, overwhelmed by grief, he fell prostrate, and long lay on the ground motionless, like a stone. Then he arose, and set up a loud cry, and wept, saying, "It is my son's coat." Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 2:25.

9. Kerry Hull, "War Banners: A Mesoamerican Context for the Title of Liberty," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 24 (2015), 86.

10. "Many scriptures that refer to 'the name of Jesus Christ' are obviously references to the authority of the Savior." Dallin H. Oaks, "Taking Upon Us the Name of Jesus Christ," *Ensign*, (May 1985): 81. Thus, an additional insight would be that by rejecting Helaman and his prophetic authority, the apostate Nephites were also rejecting their baptismal covenant under the Law of Moses as well as Jesus Christ and his authority to direct his people through his prophet.

the people waving the rent part of his garment in the air," that all might see the writing which he had written upon the torn cloth (Alma 46:19)[11] and shouted, "Behold, we are a remnant of the seed of Jacob; yea, we are a remnant of the seed of Joseph, whose coat was rent by his brethren into many pieces; yea, and now behold, let us remember to keep the commandments of God, or our garments shall be rent by our brethren, and we be cast into prison, or be sold, or be slain" (Alma 46:23).[12] The phrase *whose coat was rent by his brethren into many pieces* is the direct link between the two stories. The dramatic warning and action is a type of symbolic-enacted-prophecy also found in the Old Testament.[13] Donald Parry identifies five general characteristics of this type of enacted prophecy in the Old Testament: 1) a prophet played a major role in the symbolic actions as prophecy and often dramatized the prophecy himself; 2) the prophetic symbolic action originated from God as direct revelation from God with formulaic phrases indicating this; 3) the prophetic symbolic actions include either a ritualistic gesture, a movement, a posture, or as in Captain Moroni's demonstration, a dramatized act; 4) the dramatized action is symbolic representing more than what is visible to onlookers or participants; and 5) the prophetic symbolic actions often required the participation of two or more individuals, or in this case, many warriors. Captain Moroni warned his people that unless they were obedient, all the evil that happened to Joseph because of his brothers' wickedness would happen to them but without the eventual positive outcome.

The Nephite warriors who were supporters of the prophet Helaman and the chief commander of the armies, Captain Moroni, accepted

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11. The earliest rendition of the text reads that Moroni "went forth among the people waving the rent of his garment." Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 441.

12. Don Parry makes the case that the rending of Captain Moroni's coat was a symbolic action that implied a prophetic curse. Donald W. Parry, "Symbolic Action as Prophetic Curse," *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (SLC: Deseret Book and Provo, UT: FARMS, 1992), 207.

13. Examples in the Old Testament of this type of prophecy are found in the actions of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Donald W. Parry, "Symbolic Action as Prophecy in the Old Testament," in *Sperry Symposium Classics: The Old Testament*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson (SLC and Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, and Deseret Book 2005), 337–355.

this call to action by covenant. Part of ancient Israelite culture was an appreciation for covenant making and keeping. Like his Israelite ancestors, Moroni would have viewed his world through Old Testament covenant theology, meaning "the formation of all social, political, and religious" communities was based on covenant making.[14] Terry Szink discovered similarities between Nephite oaths and ancient Near Eastern oaths: 1) the parties entering into the oath take upon themselves a conditional curse, and 2) the oath taking is accompanied by rituals that symbolize the punishment to be inflicted upon oath breakers. "Simile oath" or "simile curse" describes this type of covenant making. Thus, covenant, curse, and ritual are bound together and in this instance with prophecy.[15] The Nephite oath takers also dressed in full armor for battle and rent their garments. As a sign of their covenant with God, they cast their torn garment remnants at the feet of their chief captain and declared: "We covenant with our God, that we shall be destroyed, even as our brethren in the land northward, if we shall fall into transgression; yea, he may cast us at the feet of our enemies, even as we have cast our garments at thy feet to be trodden under foot, if we shall fall into transgression" (Alma 46:21–22).[16] Clothing, for example, is an indication of the character of an individual and may be inseparably

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14.   Thomas R., Valleta "The Captain and the Covenant," in *The Book of Mormon: Alma, The Testimony of the Word*, Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., eds. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 1992), 228.

15.   Szink, "An Oath of Allegiance in the Book of Mormon," 36. Morisse used the term "simile curse" rather than "simile oath." He explained that "simile curses" have two parts: 1) "an event," and 2) "an application of that event to the subject of the curse." Mark J. Morisse, "Simile Curses in the Ancient Near East, Old Testament, and Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, 2/1 (1993): 125, 127–128, 134–135.

16.   Regarding the passages in Alma 46:21–24, John Tvedtnes declares, "Because Jewish tradition indicates that Joseph's garment was the high priestly garment of Adam, this passage may have more meaning than previously supposed. In this passage, the desecration of the garment symbolizes being 'ashamed to take upon them the name of Christ,'" John A. Tvedtnes, "Priestly Clothing in Bible Times," in *Temples of the Ancient World*, ed. Donald Parry (SLC and Provo, UT: Deseret Book; FARMS:1994), 698 fn. 50. The Book of Jasher also relates that after Joseph's brothers tore the coat and dipped it in blood, they "trampled it in the dust and sent it to their father." While this detail is not found in the Bible, it may be reflected in the additional part of the Nephite oath phrase that they would be "trodden underfoot," which may have been a tradition familiar to Moroni. Matthew Roper, "Joseph's Coat and Moroni's Covenant of Liberty" *Insights* 22/10 (2002), http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1295&index=1.

connected to it. Hugh Nibley wrote, "To the modern and the western mind all this over-obvious dwelling on types and shadows seems a bit overdone, but not to the ancient or Oriental mind. … So foreign to us but so characteristic of people who speak synthetic languages, that if things are *alike* they are the *same*."[17]

Captain Moroni then linked the ritual of the rent coat to Joseph and a promise given by God to Jacob shortly before his death, and unknown to us except by Moroni's quotation of it:

> Even as this remnant of garment of my son hath been preserved, so shall a remnant of the seed of my son be preserved by the hand of God, and be taken unto himself, while the remainder of the seed of Joseph shall perish, even as the remnant of his garment. Now behold, this giveth my soul sorrow; nevertheless, my soul hath joy in my son, because of that part of his seed which shall be taken unto God (Alma 46: 24–25).[18]

Likely this promise was recorded on the brass plates because the Nephite Christians making the covenant knew the story. By reciting this information about Joseph's coat, Moroni linked his rent coat to the heavenly promise of preservation. Surely to Jacob, who was shown "proof" that Joseph was dead, this prophecy from God demonstrated God's ability to overcome seemingly impossible obstacles. In Jacob's day, Ephraim and Manasseh were tangible testimony of God's promise that Joseph's coat had not completely decayed (Alma 46:24; see also Genesis 48). This was the first of several fulfillments of the prophecy.

Moroni pointed his people to their Israelite ancestors and ancient clan leaders, father Jacob and his son Joseph, to boost the Christian Nephites' courage in the battle against the apostate Nephites. The situation of the Nephites loyal to Helaman is described as "exceedingly precarious" (Alma 46:7). Captain Moroni had to unite the faithful

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17. Hugh Nibley, "A Strange Order of Battle," *An Approach to the Book of Mormon* (SLC: Deseret Book, 1988), 212. The descriptor "synthetic language" is a linguistic term meaning that a single word or symbol could contain as much information as an English phrase or sentence.

18. Joseph told his brothers, "God *sent* me before you to *preserve you a posterity* in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance" (Genesis 45:7, emphasis added). The Hebrew term rendered "posterity" in the KJV means "remnant" which is the word used throughout the Book of Mormon passages in Alma 46:23–24, 27. John A. Tvedtnes, "The Remnant of Joseph," *Insights* 20, no. 8 (2002), http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1271&index=3.

Nephites to 1) thwart an all-out civil war led by a minority group of disobedient Nephites, and 2) avoid weakening the Nephites' ability to protect themselves against further Lamanite attacks. He adapted and expanded Jacob's words directly to the Nephite situation declaring: "And now who knoweth but what the remnant of the seed of Joseph, which shall perish as his garment, are those who have dissented from us? Yea, and even it shall be ourselves if we do not stand fast in the faith of Christ" (Alma 46:27). Captain Moroni believed that the apostate Nephites led by Amalickiah would be destroyed as had a portion of Joseph's coat and that those who had covenanted to be faithful to the principles on the title of liberty would be preserved as was the remnant of Joseph's coat. Moroni also implied that the faithful Nephite Christians could be "saviors" to their people if they would be as perfectly obedient to their covenants as Joseph had been (see Alma 46:18, 23); God would preserve a faithful remnant.

Promise of a Remnant: Historical Beginnings

The promise that a remnant of Joseph would be saved began with the above prophecy by Father Jacob (Israel) first reiterated in the Book of Mormon by patriarch and prophet Lehi as he recounted the covenants and prophecies of ancient clan leader Joseph.

> And great were the covenants of the Lord which he made unto Joseph. Wherefore, Joseph truly saw our day. And he obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of his loins the Lord God would raise up a righteous branch unto the house of Israel; not the Messiah, but a branch which was to be broken off, nevertheless, to be remembered in the covenants of the Lord that the Messiah should be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the spirit of power, unto the bringing of them out of darkness unto light — yea, out of hidden darkness and out of captivity unto freedom (2 Nephi 3:4–5).

From a remnant of Joseph of Egypt's posterity, God would raise up a righteous branch by separating out a special group of righteous individuals. Lehi saw his family as that righteous branch broken off from the main body of the house of Israel (see 2 Nephi 3:4–5).

Lehi and Captain Moroni each saw their people, the Nephites, as fulfillment of Jacob's prophecy (see Alma 46:24–26), "a branch which was to be broken off, nevertheless, to be remembered in the covenants of the Lord" (2 Nephi 3:5) or "as a remnant of the seed of Jacob; yea,

we are a remnant of the seed of Joseph" (Alma 46:23). Captain Moroni saw Nephite survival tied to being faithful to Christ; the title of liberty covenant Christians were likened to the remnant of Joseph's coat that was preserved as was Joseph (see Alma 46: 27). Captain Moroni could motivate his people to action because he understood the cultural and spiritual power of these themes from Father Jacob (Israel) and Joseph of Egypt as well as their own Nephite prophet and patriarch, Lehi. Captain Moroni used ritualistic symbols and prophetic promises to encourage his people and remind them of the blessings that awaited their faithfulness and prophetic warnings to counsel his people regarding the dire consequences that would befall them if they rejected their covenants with the Lord (see Alma 46:11–28).[19]

Conclusion

Many prophets have been told that the Lord would preserve a righteous remnant of the tribe of Joseph for his own purposes — anciently, in their day, and in the latter days. Lehi saw his posterity as the righteous remnant that had been separated from the land of Jerusalem. Captain Moroni applied this prophecy in a very specific situation in order for his people to be a remnant who would survive, reflecting his testimony of this ancient promise. The visual reminder, a war banner of torn clothing with a powerful message written on it, was flown in all the cities that followed the prophet Helaman and God and desired religious freedom. Nibley declared that Moroni's recitation of Jacob's prophecy "was not merely a resemblance or a type but the very event foreseen by the patriarch of old."[20]

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19. Parry, "Symbolic Action as Prophetic Curse," 206.
20. Nibley, "A Strange Order of Battle," 213.