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Recent Reflections While Partaking of the Sacrament

Daniel C. Peterson

Abstract: *Sometimes, obedience to the principles of the Gospel and tending faithfully to our stewardships can seem — and can be — a burden. Moreover, we mortal humans are fallible and weak, and we're free. Accordingly, I'm convinced that the Father (a supremely masterful strategist and tactician) builds in redundancies so as to ensure that his purposes will be achieved even when his mortal servants falter. At the very heart of his plan, though, there could be no redundancy. Only one person could do what absolutely, desperately, needed to be done.*

I grew up in a religiously mixed home. My mother was a somewhat marginal though occasionally-attending member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who had been born and raised in southern Utah. My father was a non-communicant Lutheran, born on a farm in North Dakota to Scandinavian immigrant parents. In or just before my very early teens, however, I began to pay serious attention to the claims of the Restoration and to find them both intellectually and spiritually appealing.

I was never even remotely tempted to do drugs, and because of my growing commitment to the Church, I continued to live according to its teachings. However, this was California in the 1960s. I was very attracted to the music and to some of the other elements of the era's "counterculture."

Meanwhile, many of my friends were living lives quite different from mine, seemingly without the slightest pangs of guilt. By contrast, I began to feel remorse if I were even a few minutes late to Sunday School. And I sometimes asked myself, "How is this progress? Why do I feel regret for failing to meet high standards while at least some of my friends, having abandoned many of those standards, feel none at all?"

You might think, at this point, that I'm intending to raise the troublesome question of perfectionism and to discuss the difficult problem

of the depression and other maladies that can follow in its wake. But I'm not, and I've never been especially prone to depression, neither then nor now. Instead, I want to go a slightly different direction in this very brief essay.

Sometimes, the yoke of the gospel doesn't seem all that "easy." Sometimes, the burden doesn't seem exactly "light." And my adolescent meanderings are nothing at all compared to what some have undergone — for example, the martyrdoms, the grueling missionary journeys, the travails of the handcart pioneers — for the cause of the Lord.

It has periodically crossed my mind that, at least at certain points in his life — say, while being tarred and feathered in Hiram, Ohio; while languishing in Missouri's ironically named Liberty Jail; or while sweltering in Carthage Jail, anticipating his murder at the hands of a mob with painted faces — the Prophet Joseph Smith must have said to himself something along the lines of "All I really wanted was to know whether I should join the Methodists or the Presbyterians!"

I've occasionally speculated as to whether there might have been a backup for Joseph, somebody who would have picked up the torch had he dropped it. I have no real idea, of course. But these thoughts were triggered by thinking about my maternal ancestors Joseph Knight Sr. and Joseph Knight Jr.

Many will recognize the prophecy attributed by the Book of Mormon to the ancient biblical patriarch Joseph, which we recognize as pertaining to the modern prophet, Joseph Smith:

> Yea, Joseph truly said: Thus saith the Lord unto me: A choice seer will I raise out of the fruit of thy loins; and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy loins. And unto him will I give commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren, which shall be of great worth unto them, even to the bringing of them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers. …
>
> And he shall be great like unto Moses, whom I have said I would raise up unto you, to deliver my people, O house of Israel. …
>
> And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father. (2 Nephi 3:7, 9, 15)

Joseph Knight Sr. and Joseph Knight Jr. obviously fulfill the scriptural requirement that the future prophet and his father share the same name. And it would probably be prudent, if they really were sent as potential substitutes, to send them just a bit later than the first picks. So it's unsurprising to note that, while Joseph Smith Sr. came to the earth in

1771, Joseph Knight Sr. came in 1772, and that, whereas Joseph Smith Jr. was born in 1805, Joseph Knight Jr. was born in 1808.

At the commencement of the Restoration, the Knight family were living in Colesville, New York, about 150 miles to the southeast of the Hill Cumorah and the Sacred Grove. They were far enough away not to interfere, as it were, but close enough to be within "striking distance" should the need arise. And their home was fewer than twenty miles to the north of Harmony, Pennsylvania, where Joseph Smith eventually commenced the translation of the Book of Mormon, where the priesthood was restored, and where the first modern baptisms were performed.

Perhaps the most salient detail, however, is the fact that they were, as they have often been called, the "second family of the Restoration."[1] Outside of the Smith family itself, for example, the Knights were among the very first to hear the news of Moroni and the golden plates. Joseph Knight Jr. recalled the event later when, speaking at first of his father, he recounted that

> in 1827 [1826] he hired Joseph Smith; Joseph and I worked and slept together. My Father said Joseph was the best hand he ever hired, we found him a boy of truth, he was about 21 years of age. I think it was in November he made known to my father and I, that he had seen a vision, that a personage had appeared to him and told him where there was a gold book of ancient date buried and if he would follow the directions of the angel he would get it. We were told it in secret; I being the youngest son, my two elder brothers [Nahum and Newel] did not believe in such things; my Father and I believed what he told us.[2]

Moreover, it was Joseph Knight Sr.'s wagon that Joseph Smith used to retrieve the plates from the Hill Cumorah. Brother Knight also helped to support the Prophet and his scribes during the translation of the Book of Mormon, supplying them with food and paper. Newel Knight soon also came to believe in Joseph Smith's claims, and he was baptized in May 1830, shortly after the foundation of the Church itself. He was

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1. On them, see (among other things) Larry C. Porter, "The Colesville Branch and the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 10, no.3 (1970): 365–85; William G. Hartley, *Stand By My Servant Joseph; The Story of the Joseph Knight Family and the Restoration* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003); Michael Hubbard MacKay and William G. Hartley, eds., *The Rise of the Latter-day Saints: The Journals and Histories of Newel Knight* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2019).

2. As cited in Porter, "The Colesville Branch and the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon," 369.

also the first recipient of a miracle in the history of the Restoration; and several years later, on 24 November 1835, when Newel married Lydia Goldthwaite Bailey at Kirtland, Ohio, his was the first marriage ever performed by Joseph Smith.

In July 1830, after Newel's parents and siblings had also been baptized, the Prophet personally founded the Colesville Branch. This little branch — essentially the Knights — was one of the earliest organized units in the history of the Church, and its members were among the first company of Latter-day Saints called to settle in Zion, in Jackson County, Missouri.

On 22 August 1842, Joseph Smith penned a tribute to three members of the Knight family:

> I am now recording in the Book of the Law of the Lord, — of such as have stood by me in every hour of peril, for these fifteen long years past, — say, for instance, my aged and beloved brother, Joseph Knight, Sen., who was among the number of the first to administer to my necessities, while I was laboring in the commencement of the bringing forth of the work of the Lord, and of laying the foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For fifteen years he has been faithful and true, and even-handed and exemplary, and virtuous and kind, never deviating to the right hand or to the left. Behold he is a righteous man, may God Almighty lengthen out the old man's days; and may his trembling, tortured, and broken body be renewed, and in the vigor of health turn upon him, if it be Thy will, consistently, O God; and it shall be said of him, by the sons of Zion, while there is one of them remaining, that this man was a faithful man in Israel; therefore, his name shall never be forgotten.

> There are his sons, Newel Knight and Joseph Knight, Jun., whose names I record in the Book of the Law of the Lord with unspeakable delight, for they are my friends.

My speculations about the possible role of Joseph Knight Sr. and Joseph Knight Jr. and the other Knights as something of a prophetic "Team B" are, of course, worth no more than the electrons I'm using to write them out. Whether my hypothesis is or is not true, however, the historical fact is that they were not needed. Joseph Smith fulfilled his prophetic mission, and the Knights went on to live lives of relative but respectable obscurity in the subsequent history of the Church.

In the words of Joseph Smith's friend W. W. Phelps, written just days or weeks after Joseph's martyrdom at Carthage, Illinois,

> Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah!
> Jesus anointed that Prophet and Seer,
> Blessed to open the last dispensation,
> Kings shall extol him, and nations revere.
> Praise to his mem'ry, he died as a martyr;
> Honored and blest be his ever great name!
> Long shall his blood, which was shed by assassins,
> Plead unto heav'n while the earth lauds his fame.3

Joseph Smith was faithful to his calling. He did what he had been called to do.

I turn now, though, to the incomparable person and role of Jesus of Nazareth.

In my late teens or thereabouts, I read the controversial 1955 novel *The Last Temptation of Christ*, by Nikos Kazantzakis. (In the original Greek, which I have not read, the title of the book is simply *The Last Temptation* [*Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός, O Teleftéos Pirasmós*].) I can certainly understand why many regard it as blasphemous, and although I've tried to reread it a couple of times in recent years, I've been unable thus far to complete it.

But the novel has stuck in my mind ever since that first reading.

The "last temptation" of the book's title is a vision that comes to Christ on the cross. In it, he sees himself married, an old man surrounded by a loving family. It's a pleasant scene, a dream of domestic happiness, and — in important respects very faithful to the Hebrew ideal — is certainly in no way immoral. Still, in order to fulfill his own personal mission, to be faithful to his particular divine assignment, he must reject it and press forward with what Latter-day Saints recognize as the Atonement.

Scripturally, we know that Jesus had asked that he might be released from going through with the horrific experience that he knew lay before him. Perhaps, as in the case of Abraham and Isaac, the completely sincere willingness was sufficient?4

"O my Father," he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou

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3. "Praise to the Man," *Hymns*, no. 27.
4. See Genesis 22:1-18.

wilt" (Matthew 26:39). "Father," we sing in his voice, in a sacrament hymn by Eliza R. Snow, "from me remove this cup. Yet, if thou wilt, I'll drink it up."[5]

But, unlike the story of Abraham and Isaac, there was no ram caught in the thicket as a substitute for Jesus. There was no backup team. There was, even if my hypothesis were to be true regarding the modern Restoration, no ancient equivalent of Joseph Knight Sr. and Joseph Knight Jr.

Jesus was and is the Only Begotten Son of the Father. There was and there is no alternative, "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). He had to die. Otherwise, in the words of another hymn from W. W. Phelps, "all was lost."[6]

Everything hinged on Christ's willingness. Nothing else would serve. And since, like us, Jesus was and is free to choose, all of heaven held its breath.

"Here's love and grief beyond degree," wrote Isaac Watts, "The Lord of glory died for men."[7] "We love him," said the ancient apostle John, "because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). In the words of Charles H. Gabriel,

> I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me,
> Confused at the grace that so fully he proffers me.
> I tremble to know that for me he was crucified,
> That for me, a sinner, he suffered, he bled and died.
> Oh, it is wonderful that he should care for me
> Enough to die for me! Oh, it is wonderful, wonderful to me!
> I marvel that he would descend from his throne divine
> To rescue a soul so rebellious and proud as mine,
> That he should extend his great love unto such as I,
> Sufficient to own, to redeem, and to justify.[8]

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11). As the lyrics of Cecil Frances Alexander put it,

> There was no other good enough
> To pay the price of sin.
> He only could unlock the gate
> Of heav'n and let us in.[9]

The Prophet Joseph Smith, important though his own role was, suffered from no confusion on this point. He recognized the pivotal, indispensable part played by Jesus of Nazareth in the most important

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5. "Behold the Great Redeemer Die," *Hymns*, 191.
6. "O God, The Eternal Father," *Hymns*, 175.
7. "He Died! The Great Redeemer Died," *Hymns*, 192.
8. "I Stand All Amazed," *Hymns*, 193.
9. "There is a Green Hill Far Away," *Hymns,* 194.

event at the very turning point of human history. "The fundamental principles of our religion," he declared,

> are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.[10]

This is why "we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ" (2 Nephi 25:26). This is why the Church is and must be named after him, and him alone. This is why we can leave no doubt about the object of our loyalty, "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2).

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10. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, ed. George Albert Smith (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book Company, 1948), 3:30.

Shazer: An Etymological Proposal in Narrative Context

Matthew L. Bowen

Abstract: *In 1 Nephi 16:13–14, Nephi mentions the name* Shazer *as a toponym the Lehite clan bestowed on a site in western Arabia "four days" journey south-southeast of the valley of Laman. The Lehites used this site as a base camp for a major hunting expedition. A footnote to the first mention of the name* Shazer *in the 1981 and 2013 Latter-day Saint editions of the Book of Mormon has virtually enshrined "twisting, intertwining" as the presumed meaning of this toponym. However, the structure of Nephi's text in 1 Nephi 16:12–13 suggests that the name* Shazer *serves as the bracketing for a chiastic description of the Lehites' hunting expedition from the site. This chiasm recommends hunting as a possible starting point for seeking a more precise etymology for Shazer, one related to food supply. Consequently, I briefly argue for Shazer as a Semitic word (possibly also a loanword from an Old Arabic dialect) and a close cognate with both Hismaic* šaṣar *("young gazelle," plural* šaṣr) *and Arabic* šaṣara *(a type of "gazelle").*

The name *Shazer* represents one of only a handful of toponyms (place names) Nephi mentions in his small plates account of his family's journey through the Arabian wilderness. Nephi reports that after the family finally broke camp and left the Valley of Lemuel, "we did take our tents and departed into the wilderness across the river Laman. And it came to pass that we traveled for the space of four days nearly a south-southeast direction. And we did pitch our tents again" (1 Nephi 16:12–13).[1] At this point, Nephi notes that the Lehite clan gave the site of their camp the name "Shazer":

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1. All Book of Mormon passages cited herein follow Royal Skousen, ed. *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

A [A]nd we did call the name of **the place <u>Shazer</u>**.
> B And it came to pass that we did take our bows
> and our arrows and **go forth into the wilderness**
>> C to **slay food for our families**.
>> C′ And after that we had **slain food for
>> our families**,
> B′ we did **return again** to our families **in the
> wilderness**

A′ to **the place of <u>Shazer</u>**.[2] (1 Nephi 16:13–14; emphasis in all scriptural citations added)

Lehi's family undoubtedly relied on hunting for food, including the hunting of gazelles, during the early stages of their journey, though he does not mention such until 1 Nephi 16:13–14. In that passage, Nephi explicitly describes Shazer as a base camp for a major hunting expedition undertaken (presumably) by the adult men in the clan.[3] Nephi frames his description of this wilderness hunting expedition using the name *Shazer*, which he mentions twice. Although Nephi does not give an explicit etiological explanation for their naming of Shazer ("and we did call the name of the place Shazer," v. 13), the chiastic structure of Nephi's mention of Shazer suggests that its naming may be connected with the party's hunting activities around that location.

Once this major hunting expedition was complete, Nephi states that the Lehite clan "did go forth again in the wilderness, following the same direction [i.e., south-southeast], keeping in the most fertile parts of the wilderness which was in the borders near the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 16:14). He further mentions that they "did travel for the space of many days,

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2. Donald W. Parry, *Poetic Parallelisms in the Book of Mormon: The Complete Text Reformatted* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, 2007), 35-36.

3. The younger Lehite men — Nephi's "brethren," probably including brothers-in-law — as hunters occupy a conspicuous place within Nephi's 1 Nephi 16 narrative. In 1 Nephi 16:21, Nephi mentions that sometime after the Shazer hunting expedition, misfortune befell the Lehite group when they lost the use of several or all the bows they relied upon for hunting food: "Now it came to pass that I Nephi having been afflicted with my brethren because of the loss of my bow and their bows having lost their springs, it began to be exceeding difficult, yea, insomuch that we could obtain no food." From this comment, it seems that Laman, Lemuel, and probably Sam, Zoram, and the sons of Ishmael — all Nephi's "brethren" by blood or marriage — used bows. Nephi says they made use of slings: "we did travel for the space of many days, slaying food by the way with our bows and our arrows and our stones and our slings" (1 Nephi 16:15).

slaying food by the way with our bows and our arrows and our stones and our slings" (1 Nephi 16:15). However, Nephi's twofold mention of Shazer and the hunting of "food" that took place in the wilderness near that place raises the question: what, if anything, might the name Shazer have to do with the food they hunted? In fact, "food" is mentioned thirteen times in connection with the key events detailed in 1 Nephi 16, and it becomes a key word in the pericope. Nephi's long sequence of "food" mentions in 1 Nephi 16 begins with the naming of Shazer and the hunting done near that location.

The Meaning of Shazer

A footnote to the first mention of the name Shazer in 1 Nephi 16:13 in the 1981 and 2013 editions reads: "HEB twisting, intertwining." This footnote follows Sidney B. Sperry's suggestion that the name derives from the Hebrew root *šzr.[4] Paul Hoskisson cites the foregoing in the Book of Mormon Onomasticon as "[t]he most likely suggestion" but rightly cautions that this root "only appears in the *hophal* participle [form] in the Hebrew Bible."[5] In other words, Sperry was arguing for an active form of the root *šzr that is thus far unattested in Biblical Hebrew. Nevertheless, Sperry's suggestion is not without merit.

Another widely cited explanation for Shazer is Hugh Nibley's suggestion that it derives from Arabic *shajer*:

> The combination *shajer* is quite common in Palestinian place names; it is a collective meaning "trees," and many Arabs (especially in Egypt) pronounce it as *shazher*. It appears in *Thogret-as-sajur* (the Pass of Trees), which is the ancient *Shaghur*, written *Segor* in the sixth century. It may be confused with *Saghur* "seepage," which is held to be identical with *Shihor*, the "black river" of Joshua 19:36. This last takes, in western Palestine, the form of *Sozura*, suggesting the name of a famous waterhole in South Arabia, called *Shisur* … So we have *Shihor*, *Shaghur*, *Sajur*, *Saghir*, *Segor* (even *Zoar*), *Shajar*, *Sozura*, *Shisur*, and *Shisar*, all connected somehow or

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4. Sidney B. Sperry, *The Book of Mormon Testifies* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1952), 59.

5. Book of Mormon Onomasticon, s.v. "Shazer," last modified November 21, 2015, 17:20, https://onoma.lib.byu.edu/index.php/SHAZER.

other and denoting either seepage — a weak but reliable water supply — or a clump of trees.[6]

Although Nibley's numerous suggestions are all appropriate for a desert and Near Eastern/Arabic context in general, none closely approximates *Shazer* as a Judahite of the sixth century BCE would have pronounced it (shah-zer, shah-tzer, or shah-dzer). Moreover, Lehi and his family were traveling south-southeast through the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula rather than through modern Palestine or Egypt; they were not traveling at this particular stage of their journey through South Arabia. Because they are removed from the Lehites' journey in time and space, Nibley's suggestions are less compelling.

While the Lehites' creation of a toponym based on the presence of trees or a water supply would certainly make sense, other possibilities are equally plausible. For instance, it is possible that the Lehites created a toponym based on the supply of food at the site. In another instance of Lehite toponymy on the Arabian Peninsula, Nephi reports that the Lehites named "Bountiful" on the basis of the abundance of food that they found there:

> And we did sojourn for the space of many years, yea, even eight years in the wilderness. And we did come to **the land which we called <u>Bountiful</u> because of its <u>much</u> fruit and also wild honey**. And all these things were prepared of the Lord that we might not perish. And we beheld the sea, which we called Irreantum, which being interpreted is many waters. And it came to pass that we did pitch our tents by the seashore. And notwithstanding we had suffered **many** afflictions and **much** difficulty, yea, even **so much** that we cannot write them all, we was **exceedingly rejoiced** when we came to the seashore. And **we called the place <u>Bountiful</u>** because of its <u>much</u> fruit. (1 Nephi 17:4–6)

Here the Lehites name a particular land Bountiful because of its abundance of fruit and honey. Nephi subtly connects this abundance of food with the abundance of difficulties they faced on their journey to arrive there as well as their overwhelming joy upon arrival. The placement of the name Bountiful in this passage suggests that it may be an emphatic bracketing device (albeit bracketing a less chiastic text) describing a Lehite food gathering expedition — similar to the dual use

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6. Hugh W. Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert; The World of the Jaredites; There Were Jaredites*, Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, vol. 5 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 78-79.

of the name Shazer in 1 Nephi 16:13-14 quoted above. There is a firm basis in the text structure in 1 Nephi 16:13–14 and in the foregoing Bountiful analog (1 Nephi 17:5–6; cf. 18:6) for such a suggestion.

There is also a strong, if not compelling, philological basis to suggest connecting Shazer with food. Surprisingly, amid all the discussion of Shazer as a derivation from a Hebrew *š-z-r* root, few if any have given consideration of the *-z-* as transliteration of the phoneme *-ṣ-* (*tz* — i.e., a *tzaddi*), which is also frequently transliterated into English and other western languages as a 'z.' Here Hismaic (or Hiṣmaic), a dialect of pre-Islamic Old Arabic spoken in the very area of the Arabian peninsula through which Lehi and his family traveled, offers a more promising possibility. Geraldine Margaret Harmsworth King points out that Hismaic inscriptions abundantly attest the term *šṣr/šaṣar* (or *s²ṣr*, pl. *šaṣr* or *ʾašṣār*), which she glosses as "young gazelle."[7] King lists the plural form of *šṣr/šaṣar* (or *s²ṣr*) as *šaṣr* or *ʾašṣ* ("young gazelles").[8] Hans Wehr glosses the Arabic cognate *šaṣara* as "a kind of gazelle."[9] If not a part of their own Hebrew lexical resources, the Lehites may have borrowed a form of *šṣr* from neighboring northern Old Arabic-speaking nomads, either before or during the early part of their journey into Arabia. Notably, *šṣr* (*s²ṣr*) is further attested as a personal name in Safaitic[10] inscriptions held in the Al-Mafraq Museum (Al-Mafraq, Jordan), inscriptions 47–48:

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7. Geraldine Margaret Harmsworth King, "Early North Arabian Hismaic: A Preliminary Description Based on a New Corpus of Inscriptions from the Ḥismā Desert of Southern Jordan and Published Material, Volume I" (PhD diss., University of London School of Oriental and African Studies, 1990), http://krc. orient.ox.ac.uk/aalc/images/documents/mcam/early_north_arabian_hismaic.pdf.

    s²ṣr See *s²ṣr*, pl. *šaṣr*, *ʾašṣār* "young gazelles": Hismaic KJA 16, KJA 53, KJA 207, KJB 151, KJB 155, KJC 248, KJC 278*, KJC 287, KJC 565, KJC 661.

    s²ṣr šaṣara "sew a garment with stitches widely spaced", *šaṣar* "young gazelle"; HIn 348 Saf.; Hismaic KJA 242, KJB 58, KJB 59, KJC 654, TIJ 82, TIJ 199 + TIJ 201, TIJ 238, TIJ 290, TIJ 452, TIJ 463. -fa. of ḥrzt TIJ 82, TIJ 290

8. Ibid.

9. Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, ed. J. Milton Cowan, 4th ed. (Urbana, IL: Spoken Language Services, 1994), 550.

10. "Safaitic" refers to a Semitic alphabet/script used by Old Arabic-speaking nomads in inscriptions attested throughout southern Syria, northeastern Jordan, and the northern part of the Arabian peninsula.

No. 47: *l s²ṣr bn qtl bn s¹ḥly bn mr bn ʾft*
"By S²ṣr son of Qtl son of S¹ḥly son of Mr son of ʾft"

No. 48: *l mty bn s²ṣr*
"By Mty son of S²ṣr."[11]

At a minimum, it is clear that Shazer as *šṣr* (*s²ṣr*) shows up as a proper noun in the near vicinity of northern Arabia.[12] Perhaps it is also worth mentioning that other possible cognates of this lexeme show up in other Semitic contexts.[13]

Additionally, note that the modern English noun "gazelle" ultimately derives from Arabic *ġazāl*. This term and its cognates have a venerable history within the family of Semitic languages. Cognate with this Arabic noun is the Akkadian noun *ḫuzālu/uzalu* ("a gazelle kid," which is also attested as a personal name).[14] The vacillation between *ḫ* and *u* (ø) in the Akkadian (Old Babylonian) lexeme suggests that Western Semitic ("Amorite") personal names "*ḫa-za-la* and *a-za-lu-um*" were pronounced "/*ġazāl-*/ 'gazelle'" and "*ḫu-za-lum* and *ú-za-lum*" were pronounced "/*ġuzālum*/ 'little gazelle.'"[15] Similarly, Ugaritic attests the personal name *ġzl(y)*,[16] a name similar or identical to the former in form and meaning to the "Amorite" manifestation of this name. Thus, both *šṣr* (*s²ṣr*) and *ġzl(y)/ġuzālum* constitute attested proper names with the probable meaning "gazelle."

If *Shazer*, *šṣr*, and *šaṣara* as "(young) gazelle" can be connected with the Hismaic verb *šaṣara*, to "sew a garment with stitches widely

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11. A.Q. Al-Housan, "A Selection of Safaitic Inscriptions from the Mafraq Antiquities Office and Museum" *Arabic Epigraphic Notes 1* (2015): 92. Transcription and translation as in the original publication.

12. While the inscriptions appear to be authentic, their ultimate provenance and place of origin are unfortunately unknown. See Al-Housan's comments (ibid., 77). They are currently housed in Al-Mafraq, Jordan.

13. For example, Wolf Leslau (*Concise Dictionary of Geʾez* [Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010], 55) lists the Ethiopic noun *śaṣr* — of uncertain, if any, relationship to *šṣr* — as referring to a "cloven hoof," deriving from the verbal root *śaṣara*, to "split (wood), cut up, tear, cleave, lacerate."

14. *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, ed. Jeremy Black, Andrew George, and Nicholas Postgate (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000), 123.

15. Gary A. Rendsburg, Aaron D. Rubin, and John A. Huehnergard, "A Proper View of Arabic, Semitic, and More," *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* 128, no. 3 (2008): 535.

16. Gregorio del Olmo Lete and Joaquín Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*, trans. and ed. Wilfred G. Watson, 3rd rev. ed. (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2015), 324.

spaced,"[17] perhaps these terms connect back on some level to Sperry's initial suggestion ("to spin, to twist")[18] from the verb *šzr, "to twist, to intertwine [threads]" (cf. Arabic šazara "to spin threads together, twist").[19] Indeed, Sperry's derivation of *Shazer* from Hebrew *šzr may have an archaic etymological relationship to Old Syrian *ɣzl (to "spin") and ɣzl ("[small] gazelle") (cf. Proto-Semitic ɣVzāl, "gazelle"). Arabic ġazāl ("gazelle")[20] and ġazāla ("female gazelle, doe")[21] both derive from the Arabic verb ġazala, "to spin"[22] (cf. Ugaritic ġzl, "spinner,"[23] and Syriac ʿzl, "to spin, weave").[24] The analogical relationship here — between the Hismaic šṣr/šaṣara (noun = "[young] gazelle") and šaṣar/šazara (verb = "sew," "spin") on the one hand, and between the Arabic ġazāl/ɣzl (noun = "[small] gazelle") and ġazala/ɣzl (verb = "spin") on the other should be clear. This relationship further raises the issue of whether gazelles — ġazāl and šṣr — were so named because of their ability to traverse or "thread" difficult wilderness terrain, such as is often found in the ancient Near East, like a "spinner" or one who "sews" and "weaves."[25] Whatever the case, there appears to be a strong philological case for identifying Shazer with a close cognate of šṣr/šaṣar and šaṣara, as well as a loanword from a local northern Old Arabian dialect. And such a name, connected with the gazelle, is appropriate for both the time and place described in Nephi's narrative.

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17.   See King, "Early North Arabian Hismaic."

18.   Sperry, *Book of Mormon Testifies*, 59.

19.   Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 1456. Hereafter cited as HALOT.

20.   Wehr, *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 788.

21.   Ibid.

22.   Ibid., 787-88.

23.   Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, *Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language*, 324.

24.   Michael Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon: A Translation from the Latin, Correction, Expansion, and Update of C. Brockelmann's Lexicon Syriacum* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), 1090.

25.   In this vein, note Jacob's interesting blessing upon Naphtali, whose name is etiologized in terms of *ptl ("twist") in Genesis 30:8. Jacob declares: "Naphtali is a hind [doe, ʾayyālâ] let loose" (Genesis 49:21). The Samaritan term šzyr ("twisted" from *šzr) is used to translate Hebrew ptyl, the presumed source of Naphtali, in at least one translation of Numbers 19:15 (see HALOT, 1456). This may hint at the connection between "sewer/spinner/twister" and "animal" contemplated here.

Gazelles as a Lehite Food Staple in Arabia

Mohammed Maraqten states that "the gazelle … was the favoured and most attested hunted animal in Central and North Arabia."[26] It is highly likely that gazelle meat constituted a main dietary staple for Lehi and his family while in the Arabian wilderness. Deuteronomy 14:5 lists one term for gazelle (*şĕbî*, KJV "roebuck"), a genus to which the *šşr* or *šaşar* ("young gazelle") would belong or share a close relationship, as among the "clean" animals permitted for food. This "Kosher" consideration, to use an anachronistic term, makes the case even more likely. Not every animal would have been fit for consumption under the dietary statutes of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, but indigenous Arabian gazelles would not have presented that problem since all species of gazelle have cloven hooves and chew the cud as indeed all ruminants[27] do (see again the *şĕbî* ["roebuck" = gazelle] as one of ten cud-chewing, cloven-hoofed "clean" animals listed in Deuteronomy 14:4-6).[28]

Types of Gazelles Near Shazer

Davida Eisenberg-Degen and Steven A. Rosen observe that "the osteological evidence points toward gazelle being the most hunted animal from the Chalcolithic/Early Bronze age"[29] (and onward) in the Negev, or southern Judean wilderness, through which the Lehites passed on the initial stage of their journey into Arabia. The practice of hunting gazelles (among other animals like the ibex and the oryx) would have continued as the journey into Arabia progressed. Maraqten further remarks that the

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26. Mohammed Maraqten, "Hunting in Pre-Islamic Arabia in Light of the Epigraphic Evidence," *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 26 (2013): 215.

27. From Latin *ruminare*, "to chew again," "to chew the cud." See, e.g., John C. Traupman, *The New College Latin and English Dictionary* (New York: Bantam, 1995), s.v. *rūminō*. Compare the derived English term *ruminate*, "to think or reflect deeply over and over about something." Cf. *ruminatio*, "chewing of the cud, (fig.) rumination, thinking over" (ibid., s.v. *rūminō*). The *Ruminantia* suborder includes all cattle (domesticated and wild), sheep, goats, deer, antelopes, gazelles (as a genus of the broader antelope group), and even giraffes. Cf., e.g., https://www.britannica.com/animal/ruminant.

28. Oded Borowski (*Every Living Thing: Daily Use of Animals in Ancient Israel* [Walnut Creek, CA: AltiMira, 1998], 189) observes that gazelle bones have been found at many sites throughout the Holy Land, including Beersheba, Lachish, Tell el-Hesi, Tel Michal, and Tell Halif. Borowski concludes, "These finds indicate that, during the biblical period, the gazelle served as a supplementary meat source at least in the central and southern parts of the country."

29. Davida Eisenberg-Degen and Steven A. Rosen, "Chronological Trends in Negev Rock Art: The Har Michia Petroglyphs as a Test Case," *Arts* 2 (2013): 245.

hunting of gazelles in the Arabian Peninsula "was practiced and remained a dominant economic activity, perhaps from Neolithic to the Bronze age and continued to be practiced until recent times."[30]

A *gazella marica* found in ancient rock art.[31]

Once Lehi's party had entered the Arabian peninsula, the most common types of gazelle they inevitably encountered, either "by the way"[32] or during more protracted hunting expeditions, would have been the *gazella marica* (the Arabian sand gazelle), the *gazella Arabica* (the Arabian gazelle, including the mountain gazelle and *gazella erlangeri* subspecies), and now-extinct native forms of the *gazella dorcas* (dorcas gazelle, including the *gazella dorcas saudiya* or *gazella saudiya*).[33] The

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30.   Maraqten, "Hunting in Pre-Islamic Arabia," 215.

31.   *Gazelle at Eagle's Nest, Jubbah*, photograph, 1200x1011 cm, Arabian Rock Art Heritage, http://saudi-archaeology.com/subjects/gazelles/. Image reprinted with permission of the Layan Cultural Foundation.

32.   1 Nephi 16:15.

33.   See, e.g., Hannes Lerp, *The Phylogeny of the Genus Gazella and the Phylogeography and Population Genetics of Arabian Species* (Dissertation; Frankfurt

noun *šṣr* (*s²ṣr*), as a "young gazelle" would plausibly describe any of these, unless it had a more specific reference.

A *gazella dorcas saudiya* found in ancient rock art.[34]

Of these, populations of *gazella marica* — based on current population patterns[35] — would have been closest to Shazer in northwest Arabia, and thus perhaps the most plentiful as a food source for the Lehites.

Conclusion

Nibley is certainly correct that "the name [Shazer] is intriguing."[36] I have briefly attempted to make the case here that *Shazer* constitutes a Semitic term, possibly borrowed from Old Arabian, and closely related to Hismaic *šṣr* or *šaṣar* (*s²ṣr*), "young gazelle" and Arabic *šaṣara*, "a kind of gazelle." Such a derivation fits an Arabian wilderness context at least as well as Nibley's *shajer* suggestion and better fits the immediate circumstances of the family as described by Nephi in his small plates record (though

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am Main: Goethe Universität, 2013), 5, figure 1.

34. *Gazelle and Dog at Jubbah*, photograph, 1000x667 cm, Arabian Rock Art Heritage, http://saudi-archaeology.com/subjects/gazelles/. Image reprinted with permission of the Layan Cultural Foundation.

35. Lerp, *The Phylogeny of the Genus Gazella and the Phylogeography and Population Genetics of Arabian Species*, 5, figure 1.

36. Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*, 178.

Sand gazelle[37]

Nibley's suggestion cannot be entirely ruled out). In any case, there is strong philological evidence to connect the Lehite toponym *Shazer* with the gazelles of the Arabian peninsula — the gazelles that would have surely constituted an important staple of the party's diet as they travelled south-southeast down that peninsula, and after they turned east at Nahom (see especially 1 Nephi 17:1–2).

*[**Author's Note:** I would like to thank the Layan Cultural Foundation for their generosity and kindness in allowing the use of their superb photography. I would also like to thank Suzy Bowen, Allen Wyatt, Daniel C. Peterson, and Victor Worth.]*

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37. Ahmed Al Awadhi7, *Sand Gazelle*, photograph, 2,073x2,073 pixels, January 12, 2018, Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sand_Gazelle_2.jpg.

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A Precious Resource with Some Gaps

Jeffrey Dean Lindsay

Review of *The Joseph Smith Papers, Revelations and Translations, Volume 4: Book of Abraham and Related Manuscripts*, eds. Robin Scott Jensen and Brian M. Hauglid (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2018), 381 pages.

Abstract: *The publication of high-resolution documents and carefully prepared transcripts related to the origins of the Book of Abraham in* The Joseph Smith Papers, Revelations and Translations, Volume 4: Book of Abraham and Related Manuscripts *is a remarkable achievement that can help students of Church history and of the Book of Abraham explore many aspects of that volume of scripture for themselves. The book, especially when coupled with the resources and advanced interface of the Joseph Smith Papers website, will provide lasting value for scholars, students, and anyone wishing to better understand the Book of Abraham and its complex origins. However, there are some gaps in the book that must be understood, including a mix of minor errors, questionable assumptions, and a few major problems that can unnecessarily lead readers to question the ancient roots and the divine inspiration behind the Book of Abraham. A future addendum could help resolve many such issues and would be a welcome addition. However, there may be a fundamental flaw in the commentary that tends to align with the way critics of the Church approach the Book of Abraham as a product of Joseph's environment rather than a text rooted in revelation and antiquity. Sadly, in spite of hundreds of footnotes with extensive references to the research and perspectives of some scholars, this volume tends to exclude a great deal of relevant research provided by some noteworthy scholars. For example, it fails to mention even once the past scholarship of Hugh Nibley on these documents and generally neglects the work of other scholars that can point to the strengths of the Book of Abraham and give tools for coping with the thorny issues. The openness about the conundrums of the*

Book of Abraham should be encouraged, but it should be balanced with at least an awareness that there are noteworthy positives that readers can weigh against the question marks, and that there are frameworks that can help faithful readers understand how a divinely revealed text can be produced by the same man who wanted to begin learning Egyptian and Hebrew after he had already provided divine translation. Such a balance is needed in a book from the Church dealing with such sensitive issues, where misunderstanding has led some people out of the Church. Sadly, in spite of its many achievements in opening the doors to the documents associated with the Book of Abraham, this book lacks the balance that is needed.

Debates on the meaning and origins of the Book of Abraham often resort to appeals to authority, with debaters frequently relying on the credentials of various sources to attack or defend the Book of Abraham. Some so-called scholars at times have been shown to have spurious or entirely fraudulent credentials, and others have used solid credentials to mask superficial scholarship and polemical agendas. With the publication of Volume 4 of *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations*[1] (hereafter JSPRT4), a great many of the most vital documents related to Book of Abraham origins are now available for detailed inspection by anybody.

Now, for example, if an alleged expert declares that a particular document shows that Joseph Smith was translating single characters into large blocks of detailed text on the fly as he dictated to a pair of scribes, one can scrutinize the document and find numerous textual clues that expose the unjustified nature of such a claim (revealing, for example, new evidence about what was happening during dictation and evidence that an already existing document was simply being copied).[2] The claims of scholars can be examined and weighed using primary sources and raw data, and new discoveries and surprises can be found. Even some of the implicit assumptions of the editors of this

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1. *The Joseph Smith Papers, Revelations and Translations*, Volume 4: *Book of Abraham and Related Manuscripts*, eds. Robin Scott Jensen and Brian M. Hauglid (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2018). Note also a different Volume 4 in the primary series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*. The *Revelations and Translations* series deals specifically with documents related to the production of scripture by Joseph Smith.

2. Jeff Lindsay, "The Twin Book of Abraham Manuscripts: Do They Reflect Live Translation Produced by Joseph Smith, or Were They Copied from an Existing Document?," *Mormanity* (blog), July 4, 2019; https://mormanity.blogspot.com/2019/07/the-twin-book-of-abraham-manuscripts-do.html.

volume can be examined and weighed by those who want to learn and see for themselves. The combination of a beautiful, high-quality print volume and an electronically searchable website with a very useful and clever interface makes the gargantuan project behind JSPRT4 a genuine multimedia treasure for our day.

The physical volume itself (a large "Facsimile Edition" with color photographs) is a treasure thanks to its high-quality materials and excellent workmanship. As someone who has spent much of his life in the paper industry, I recognize and appreciate the high-quality paper and print in this book. Numerous large color photographs of key documents grace the text, joined by helpful, almost-always accurate transcriptions. The documents are preceded with useful notes on the historical background and details about the sources.

The book begins with a 17-page introduction, "Book of Abraham and Related Manuscripts," that discusses the history and origins of the Book of Abraham. A section entitled "Editorial Method" then discusses the intelligently selected annotation system and approach to transcription. The "Note on Photographic Facsimiles" is fascinating. Each image is taken with advanced photographic techniques and equipment, and typically results in about 229 megabytes of information per photo before being converted to print or online media. The multispectral imaging technique used also allowed some very faint text to be made visible, enabling recovery of text that otherwise would have been lost. A great deal of technical work and attention to detail has gone into the preparation and publication of the many documents in this volume, and the large crew who made it possible are to be heartily congratulated.

The bulk of the volume is the section, "Book of Abraham and Related Manuscripts." This begins with a section that presents the surviving Egyptian papyri from Joseph's collection. Because of the darkness of the papyrus itself and the limitations of print, those wishing to examine details of the characters will probably be best served by using the high resolution images on the JSPP website (JosephSmithPapers.org).

After the papyri come sections with documents containing copied characters or combinations of characters and English text from 1835, including the components of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. Later manuscripts follow from the preparation of the printed Book of Abraham, including the facsimiles.

The table of contents ably conveys the magnitude of the work:

Contents

Book of Abraham and Related Manuscripts

Reference Material

One of the most valuable sections is the "Comparison of Characters" (pp. 350–80), which lists every "Egyptian" character from the various manuscripts and shows its form for each manuscript in which it is found. It also shows whether each character is found on the papyri (or specifically, on the Fragment of Breathing Permit for Horus–A). Unfortunately, the intriguing characters from the Egyptian Counting Document are not included.[3] Perhaps the fact that none of the characters on that document

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3. "Egyptian Counting, circa. Early July–early November 1835," JSPRT4, 95-99. Also see "Egyptian Counting, circa Early July–circa 26 November 1835," *Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/egyptian-counting-circa-early-july-circa-26-november-1835/1.

are Egyptian at all and none of them clearly occur on any of the papyri played a role. But many other characters on other documents also aren't real Egyptian. The decision not to include the Egyptian Counting document puzzles me, however, especially since I believe it is important for students of the Book of Abraham to understand that many of the "Egyptian" characters included are not Egyptian, and the Egyptian Counting document is one of the most direct ways for students of the Book of Abraham to recognize that something other than translating actual Egyptian was going on. As will be discussed below, at least one of the unusual characters on that document may provide an important link to the Hebrew education that Joseph and his brethren undertook, apparently at least in part to help them better prepare intellectually for unraveling the Egyptian language.

In the introduction to the "Comparison of Characters," the editors state that the decision not to include the characters of the Egyptian Counting document was because they chose to include only characters that were numbered (p. 331), but the numbering of characters refers not to numbers already present in the documents but to the numbering applied by the editors of JSPRT4. That may beg the question as to why the Egyptian Counting document was not given the same attention and numbering of characters as other components of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. No additional editorial work would have been needed, since those characters are already inherently numbered. Fortunately, the document itself was included, and readers can explore those characters on their own.

In any case, the "Comparison of Characters" section is a highly useful addition that clearly required a great deal of work, and it is one of many examples of innovative and well-designed tools provided to assist students of the Book of Abraham.

A Reflection of a Bold Era of Openness in the Church

The contents of JSPRT4, like the entire Joseph Smith Papers Project, reflect an era in which the Church shows a remarkable willingness to open doors and vaults to let the world explore and understand our history. The Joseph Smith Papers Project (hereafter JSPP) marks a daring and brilliantly executed leap forward in scholarship and information sharing.

That the Church would support and publish such a venture is remarkable, particularly when the documents being published and the interpretative commentary therein may seem to weaken orthodox views on what the Book of Abraham is and how it was produced. It is to the credit of the Church that it would hand over these documents to scholars

and allow all the warts and puzzles to be published, including commentary that frankly points out some of the problems in the Book of Abraham.

On the other hand, it may be a boldness that has gone too far — or rather, doesn't go far enough — in raising many problems without even hinting at information and perspectives that can help faithful Latter-day Saints deal with the problems. Given that one of the editors, Brian Hauglid, has "come out" after publication of this volume claiming that he rejects apologetics defending the Book of Abraham and suggesting that this published volume aligns with the views of some noted critics of Joseph Smith, there are serious reasons to be concerned about the editorial approach and some of the gaps and problems in this text.

Why Raise Concerns? A Note on the Failings of Objectivity

Expressing my concerns about such a valuable book is not meant to demean the tremendous collective effort of so many who have sought to bring the best scholarship possible to the inspired and extensive Joseph Smith Papers project. Unfortunately, all human works have flaws, and sometimes they can be serious. It is personally painful to point out some of the issues in such a work, but in light of the potential harm that might occur if the problems are not acknowledged, I believe the problems in this specific and influential volume cannot be given a pass based on the noble aspirations behind the work.

We can expect that the editors and others who prepared this volume have generally sought to be objective in their scholarship, striving to avoid any bias or personal agenda. But objectivity in any endeavor may be, to use a title from Peter Novick, a "noble dream."[4] In his introduction to *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession*, Novick recognizes that historians and other scholars cannot completely free themselves from personal views that influence their work, whether they realize it or not. Trying to be truly neutral and objective is "like nailing jelly to a wall."[5] Those who think this or any other volume simply "lets the facts speak for themselves" without any trace of bias or agenda are unprepared for the realities of scholarship. Ideally, the effect of the inevitable personal biases will not detract significantly from the value of a work. But to pretend bias is not there is an illusion. To overlook its existence and its role may leave the student and the scholar vulnerable to

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4.   Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1988), https://www.amazon.com/That-Noble-Dream-Objectivity-Historical/dp/0521357454/.

5.   Ibid., Introduction.

many errors and misunderstandings. In this case, the effect of the bias, however unintentional, may be harmful in several ways.

While all involved surely sought to be fair and objective in their work, there remain some obvious indications that this noble intent may not have been realized. While we must not make too much of any individual's potentially hasty or careless comments made on social media, it is now well known that Brian Hauglid made a surprising comment on Facebook which indicates that he rejects the defense of the Book of Abraham made by fellow BYU professors, apologists, and even himself in times past and that he now has aligned his thinking with noted critics of the Book of Abraham. What this means for Hauglid's editorial work is an issue that should not be simply ignored.

Responding to a November 9, 2018, post by long-time Book of Abraham critic Dan Vogel, Hauglid made the following public statement, which, as of 12 May 2019, is still visible in Facebook and apparently has not been followed up with a retraction or apology:

> For the record, I no longer hold the views that have been quoted from my 2010 book in these videos. I have moved on from my days as an "outrageous" apologist. In fact, I'm no longer interested or involved in apologetics in any way. I wholeheartedly agree with Dan's excellent assessment of the Abraham/Egyptian documents in these videos [videos which are critical of the Book of Abraham and Joseph Smith]. I now reject a missing Abraham manuscript. I agree that two of the Abraham manuscripts were simultaneously dictated [Vogel's point is that they were simultaneously dictated by Joseph Smith as he was "translating" characters in the margins, thus giving us a window into the translation process as it occurred]. *I agree that the Egyptian papers were used to produce the BoA.* I agree that only Abraham 1:1–2:18 were produced in 1835 and that Abraham 2:19–5:21 were produced in Nauvoo. And on and on. *I no longer agree with Gee or Muhlestein. I find their apologetic "scholarship" on the BoA abhorrent. One can find that I've changed my mind in my recent and forthcoming publications. The most recent JSP Revelations and Translation vol. 4, The Book of Abraham and Related Manuscripts (now on the shelves) is much more open to Dan's thinking on the origin of*

> *the Book of Abraham.* My friend Brent Metcalfe can attest to my transformative journey.[6]

Sadly, it seems that Hauglid has denounced his peers for having views similar to those he publicly shared in the past.[7] I hope that whatever problems or tensions are behind this puzzling statement may be resolved, and I hope that Hauglid's journey might take a new direction and bring him closer to where he once was. Unfortunately, it raises fair questions about Hauglid's approach, especially when he hints that his "transformative journey" has influenced his editorial work in JSPRT4, which is "much more open to Dan's thinking on the origin of the Book of Abraham."

Ideally, publication of documents by a careful scholar is not necessarily *open* or *closed* to any particular agenda. What can be open or closed, however, are the actions and choices of the editors: what to include and exclude from the discussion; what guidance to provide to the reader in introductory commentary, explanatory and interpretive statements; references cited; remarks in footnotes; and points of view that are accepted, acknowledged, or never mentioned, etc. The fingerprints of editorial work abound in this volume and go far beyond mere presentation of primary documents. Now that at least one of the editors has revealed that he advocates a position not just sharply but harshly at odds with those of faithful scholars at BYU, we must ask the painful question: has this harsh perspective influenced the content of JSPRT4?

Again, we must not make too much of Hauglid's statement, for he is only one of the two editors for this volume, and only one of a large team of scholars who assisted in this work and reviewed it prior to publication. But a work from a committee of scholars is not necessarily less free of bias and unwarranted assumptions than any one of its individuals. Particular paradigms spread and become established, especially among peers with similar education or whose collaboration comes because of their common viewpoints and approaches, and can lead to illusions of collective objectivity and certainty when a host of biased assumptions may impede the effort. As Laurence Veysey wrote, citing the problem of pro-Mormon bias,

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6. Brian Hauglid, November 9, 2018, comment on Dan Vogel, "Truth of the Book of Abraham (Part 6) — Joseph Smith As a Student of Hebrew," Facebook, November 9, 2018, https://www.facebook.com/dan.vogel.35/posts/1398006876998582, emphasis added.

7. Brian Hauglid, "Investigating the Kirtland Egyptian Papers," FAIRMormon Conference, Aug. 3-4, 2006; https://www.fairmormon.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/2006-Brian-Hauglid.pdf. See also John Gee, Brian Hauglid, and John Tvedtnes, *Traditions about the Early Life of Abraham* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship: 2001).

> A sociologist writing the history of sociology remains, from the historian's point of view, an amateur, no different in principle from an untrained Mormon writing the history of Mormonism. Particularistic intellectual commitments inhibit balanced clarity of vision regarding a certain time and place in the academic world as in any other.[8]

As argued below, whether intentional or not, the particular intellectual commitments and personal views of the editors may have strongly affected significant aspects of this volume and thus have given us a tool that, while monumental in the presentation of valuable documents, is seriously flawed in some aspects of its scholarship. In saying so, of course, I am far from objective and bring my own pro-Church and pro-apologetic biases to this review (and yes, I recognize the irony in citing Veysey), though I genuinely seek to be fair in my approach.

Apparent Gaps and Weaknesses

Turning to the gaps and weaknesses in JSPRT4, let us look at the following issues:

1. Lack of Acknowledgement of Past Scholarship
2. Lack of Balance in Interpretive Remarks
3. Overlooking the Role of Hebrew Study on the Book of Abraham Project
4. Errors in the Assumed Dates of Key Documents
5. Granting Improper Credibility to a Key Claim of Book of Abraham Critics Regarding the Twin Book of Abraham Manuscripts A and B
6. Improperly Downplaying Common Knowledge about Champollion and the Nature of the Egyptian Language
7. Minor but Sometimes Important Details
8. Missing "First Aid" and Ignoring the Positives

1. Lack of Acknowledgement of Past Scholarship, or Where's Nibley?

In a recent conversation with an active member who is also a student of Egyptology, I learned that he had great respect for Nibley's magnum

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8. Laurence Veysey, "Reappraising the Chicago School of Sociology," *Reviews in American History* 6, no. 1 (March 1978): 115, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2701486.

opus on the Book of Abraham, *One Eternal Round*.[9] He felt it had a great deal of value most members and perhaps most scholars have failed to consider. When my copy of JSPRT4 finally reached me in Shanghai, China, I was anxious to see how this valuable volume would treat past scholarship on the Kirtland Egyptian Papers and the Book of Abraham. I was especially interested to see how it would respond to the intricate analysis presented in *One Eternal Round* and other voluminous works of Nibley, the first scholar to dig into the Joseph Smith papyri and perhaps the most important scholarly work to have addressed numerous issues around the Kirtland Egyptian Papers (KEP), the papyri, the Facsimiles, and the text of the Book of Abraham. To my amazement, as I read JSPRT4, it seemed that every time there was an issue where I would expect a helpful reference to findings from Hugh Nibley or other scholars such as John Gee, Kerry Muhlestein, or others, there was simply silence.

Turning to the list of works cited (pp. 340–49), I was even more surprised to see that Nibley was completely missing. This volume has hundreds of footnotes: 205 in the section on the Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language (GAEL), 215 in the section for the Egyptian Alphabet documents, 128 in the Introduction, 209 in the section on the Facsimile printing plates and published Book of Abraham, etc. Some critics are cited, and critic Brent Lee Metcalfe is credited in the Acknowledgments (p. 381), but there seems to be a ban on Nibley. What's going on? This points to what may be a fundamental problem in the interpretive framework that is implicitly if not explicitly presented in JSPRT4. Much more than just Nibley may have been overlooked.

In response to my complaint, one reviewer familiar with the JSP Project argued that the failure to cite Nibley is merely a reflection of the editorial policy for the JSP Project and that there was no intent to overlook Nibley. That statement was surely made in good faith, but examination of the commentary and its many footnotes suggests this may be an example of the hidden bias and the "particular intellectual commitments that can inhibit balanced clarity of vision" among academics, as Veysey observed.

JSPRT4 turns to many sources to establish the nature of the Joseph Smith Papyri and the Kirtland Egyptian Papers and their relationship to the Book of Abraham. On such matters, many scholars would, in my opinion, recognize Hugh Nibley's extensive work on many aspects of the Book of Abraham as a vital foundation that must be acknowledged, whether one agrees or disagrees with any of his viewpoints.

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9. Hugh Nibley and Michael D. Rhodes, *One Eternal Round* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010).

After the Joseph Smith Papyri were discovered in 1967, Hugh Nibley began a lengthy series of articles in the 1968 and 1969 *Improvement Era* periodical that explored the content and meaning of the papyri and their relationship to the Book of Abraham.[10] It was an important foundation related to the materials of the new JSPRT4.

In 1971, Nibley's *BYU Studies* article "What Is the Book of Breathings?"[11] provided detailed scholarly insight into some of the most basic issues students of the Joseph Smith Papyri will have: What are these papyrus fragments about? What did they mean in ancient Egypt? Such questions surely cannot be off limits for JSPRT4, which turns to a harshly critical work of Robert K. Ritner[12] many times when discussing the fragments and the Egyptian characters.[13]

Many of these citations to Ritner could well have included a citation to relevant portions of Nibley's *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri* (2nd edition, 2005) for its detailed analysis and translation of the papyri, complete with comparison to a more complete Egyptian manuscript that does much to enhance understanding of the papyri.[14] Yet Nibley is cited zero times compared to at least 49 citations of Ritner. As one minor example, when Ritner is cited on page 20 in footnote 64 regarding the concept of a balance depicted on a papyrus fragment, the Fragment

10. Hugh Nibley, "A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price, Part 1," *Improvement Era* 71, no. 1 (January 1968): 17-25, https://archive.org/details/improvementera7101unse/page/n19. See also Nibley, "A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price, Part 1 (continued)," *Improvement Era* 71, no. 2 (February 1968): 14-18, 20-21, https://archive.org/details/improvementera7102unse/page/n15; continuing in monthly installments over nearly two years, culminating in Nibley, "A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price, Part 9 (continued): Setting the Stage — The World of Abraham," *Improvement Era* 72, no. 11 (November 1969): 116-25, https://archive.org/details/improvementera7211unse/page/n117.

11. Hugh Nibley, "What Is the Book of Breathings," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 2 (1971): 1-25, https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/what-book-breathings.

12. Robert K Ritner, *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: A Complete Edition, P. JS 1-4 and the Hypocephalus of Sheshonq* (Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2011).

13. In the Introduction, Ritner is cited three times among the 128 footnotes. On pp. 22–23, 24 of 65 footnotes cite Ritner. On pp. 40-41, 12 of the 40 footnotes for "Notebooks of Copied Egyptian Characters" include citations to Ritner. On p. 52, nine of the 20 footnotes related to the "Copies of Egyptian Characters" include citations to Ritner. Citations to outside works are much less frequent in the later portions of the book, where he is cited twice on p. 292 and once on p. 332.

14. Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*, 2nd ed., eds. John Gee and Michael D. Rhodes (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005).

of the Book of the Dead for Nefer-ir-Nebu (JS Papyrus III), Nibley's detailed discussion of that fragment and its depiction of a balance could have been cited with good effect and with little risk of charges of veiled apologetics.[15] But Nibley's foundational work and extensive scholarship gets zero recognition. This is a great mystery and an obvious defect in the book. How did this lack of balance happen?

On p. xxv of the Introduction, the editors offer their opinion (albeit a plausible one shared to some degree by Nibley) that the Kirtland Egyptian papers represent a failed effort to "unravel the mysteries of the Egyptian language" and also observe, citing Ritner again, that the material in the KEP has no value in translating Egyptian. A few sentences later they tell us "there is some evidence" (with a footnote to a critic of the Book of Abraham, discussed below) that the Book of Abraham drew upon language in the GAEL, as if its purpose were to assist in Joseph's translation (making it a failed translation, of course) rather than drawing upon the existing translation for some other purpose. If one is to cite a critic's opinion on the purpose and use of the GAEL, why not, in the spirit of scholarship and fairness, at least also point to the evidence and opinions provided by Nibley on this very issue? Further, if Ritner is cited to create the impression that the translation is utterly without merit, why not, in the spirit of scholarship and fairness, observe that Nibley and others at least claim to have found "some evidence" that Joseph got many things right? There is simply not the balance that scholarship and fairness demand. If outside views are to be cited to provide context, why must they lean only one way? Why is Nibley excluded from the conversation? This is a sign of something seriously amiss. Is it unthinkable that one editor's avowed hostility toward apologetics might surreptitiously lead him to overlook Nibley, perhaps the "father of apologetics" for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, without consciously intending to do so and that others with similar mindsets might fail to notice the flaw? Intentional or not, it is a flaw.

2. A Lack of Balance in Interpretative Remarks, or Apologetics vs. Polemics: Both Outside the Purpose of the Joseph Smith Papers?

JSPRT4 contains a variety of subjective, interpretative statements about the Book of Abraham and its debatable relationship to the KEP, such as the previously mentioned hint that at least part of the Book of

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15. Ibid., 401-7.

Abraham was produced from the GAEL. There are other interpretative and questionable statements of this kind, such as statements discussed below on the role of Egyptomania or the significance of a pair of Book of Abraham manuscripts. Another example occurs on p. 192 in the description of three Book of Abraham manuscripts that contain text up to Abraham 2:18, where it is suggested that the remainder of the text was dictated by Joseph in 1842 (as if at least part of that additional text had not already been translated in 1835, and as if the KEP came before the cosmological material in the Book of Abraham). On the same page, it is also stated that the text of Abraham 1:1–3 in Book of Abraham Manuscript C "contains the most similarities to the definitions in the Grammar and Alphabet volumes and was therefore also likely connected to JS's study of the Egyptian language." This wording in context suggests Abraham 1:1–3 was produced from the GAEL, consistent with the previously mentioned assertion on p. xxv that there is "some evidence" the GAEL was used to produce at least part of the Book of Abraham. While there is clearly a relationship between the GAEL and the Book of Abraham, why not open the door to the possibility proposed by other scholars that the GAEL was derived in part from the existing translated text? Why not suggest that the close relationship between Abraham 1:1–3 and the KEP might suggest that the work in the Egyptian Alphabet and the GAEL began with or emphasized the earliest translated text? One particular viewpoint seems to be enforced, whether the editors recognize it or not. Those who are close to the debate between critics and defenders of the Book of Abraham may recognize the pattern of bias in such interpretative remarks, regardless of how unintentional that bias was.

This review began with explorations of some Book of Abraham issues on my blog motivated by an email from someone I once helped with Book of Abraham issues but who now was ready to abandon his faith again because he felt a Maxwell Institute presentation in early January 2019 by JSPRT4 editors Brian Hauglid and Robin Jensen completely undermined any hope for Joseph Smith to be a real prophet.[16] The presentation, given to a large audience at Brigham Young University in January 2019, seemed only to highlight problems with the Book of Abraham and left out the many positives, which struck me as odd and unbalanced.[17] I hopefully

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16. Brian Hauglid and Robin Jensen, "A Window into Joseph Smith's Translation" (Neal A. Maxwell Institute seminar, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, Jan. 11, 2019), https://mi.byu.edu/news-events/01-11-jensen-hauglid/.

17. Jeff Lindsay, "Friendly Fire from BYU: Opening Old Book of Abraham Wounds Without the First Aid," *Mormanity* (blog), March 14, 2019, https://

wondered if time constraints or other outside constraints might have resulted in the presumably unintentional "friendly fire" from the presentation, but in ongoing study to better understand the issues and the way they are handled in the JSP Project, I fear that personal bias, intentional or not, was strongly at play. Reading Hauglid's Facebook comment added to that concern.

In a later post, I wondered aloud why JSPRT4 failed to include a highly relevant "pure language" document from W. W. Phelps[18] (one that showed he was using six characters in the Kirtland Egyptian Papers *before* the scrolls were ever seen).[19] In response, editor Robin Jensen kindly explained that the project was of a limited, specific scope and could not include the huge number of potentially related papers. Now I better understand that the JSP Project is about promoting scholarship by providing the papers that belonged to or were associated with Joseph Smith and his work, and that JSPRT4 is intended to provide papers directly associated with Joseph and those around him in the context of the work leading to the Book of Abraham. I can appreciate that the editors may have felt the document did not meet their criteria and left it out in good faith. However, since it is primary information on the "pure language" issue that interested Joseph and Phelps, was written by an associate of Joseph who played a critical role in the Book of Abraham work, and sheds great light on the nature and source of some of the characters that Phelps would include in the JSP-relevant KEP documents he would write, then perhaps it may meet the criteria for inclusion or at least should have been given more attention in helping readers understand what this document may say about the KEP and its purpose. I admit my interest in the excluded document was driven in part by its value to Book of Abraham apologetics, and that is understandably not the purpose of the JSP Project.

The JSP Project is clearly not about apologetics but rather about sharing primary documents for future scholarly work. *But if the goal is*

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mormanity.blogspot.com/2019/03/friendly-fire-from-byu-opening-old-book.html.

18. W. W. Phelps, letter to Sally Phelps, May 26, 1835, Church History Library, as cited by Brian M. Hauglid, "The Book of Abraham and the Egyptian Project: 'A Knowledge of Hidden Languages," in *Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith and the Ancient World*, eds. Lincoln H. Blumell, Matthew J. Grey, and Andrew H. Hedges (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2015), 474-511, https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/approaching-antiquity-joseph-smith-and-ancient-world/book-abraham-and-egyptian-project. A color image of the letter is available at https://rsc.byu.edu/sites/default/files/Phelps%20Letter.jpg.

19. Jeff Lindsay, "The Pure Language Project," *Mormanity* (blog), April 18, 2019, https://mormanity.blogspot.com/2019/04/the-pure-language-project.html.

not apologetics, neither can it be polemics. If the goal is not to promote faith, neither should it unnecessarily undermine it. Subjective bias that supports positions that can undermine faith and weaken respect for the scriptures must be avoided. Cited scholarship and perspectives on the complex interpretative issues around the KEP must not actively exclude and ignore relevant scholarship that refutes or undermines key positions of critics of the Church. Acknowledging such past scholarship, when it is at least as relevant as other works being cited, should be a matter of course in a work like this and could at least remind readers that there is more than one way of understanding the issues involved with the complex and puzzling documents presented. How can actual scholarship possibly be at play when the most significant body of scholarly works on the very papers being considered — the works of Hugh Nibley — is not even mentioned? It's one thing to disagree with Nibley, but to pretend he does not exist may point to something other than openness and objective scholarship.

One reader familiar with the scope of the JSP Project has suggested that I misunderstand the purpose of the JSP, and that is true, or at least was true when I wrote my initial complaint about neglect of the 1835 Phelps "pure language" letter. *But again, JSPRT4 does much more than simply present and transcribe documents.* There is extensive commentary and over a thousand footnotes with each sentence of commentary and each choice of what to cite and what to ignore having the potential to reflect personal views of the editors. As stated on the dust cover and on the JSPP website,

> The introductory material situates Smith's efforts in the broader context of the nineteenth-century fascination with Egyptian history and culture, of his own effort to reveal truths from the ancient past, and of his other translation efforts. The annotation in this volume explores the relationships between and among the various manuscripts.[20]

That statement may already reflect the tendency to see the revealed Book of Abraham as a product of Joseph Smith's culture and environment (the KEP, on the other hand, can readily be understood as a human effort and product of the nineteenth century, but the key issue is whether it followed the translation or was the tool that produced the translation or shows the translation in progress, as some critics argue). In any case, the existence of extensive commentary and footnotes that identify (or

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20. JSPRT4, inside back dust jacket, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/articles/revelations-and-translations-volume-4-book-of-abraham.

ignore!) relationships and create a "context" for the translation effort opens very large doors for editorial bias to influence the result.

If the introductory material is to create "the broader context" for Joseph's work, why the choice to focus solely on the "nineteenth-century fascination with Egyptian history and culture"? Why not also consider the context of ancient extra-biblical traditions and manuscripts dealing with Abraham and how they relate to the Book of Abraham? Why not consider ancient Egypt's temporary and geographically limited fascination with Hebrew culture and especially with two figures in Hebrew lore, Moses and Abraham? That phenomenon was focused around 200 BC in the region of Thebes, where Egyptian priests were using biblical texts and had interest in Abraham.[21] If there were an Egyptian Book of Abraham, that would be the place to look for such a document. Is it merely coincidence that the Joseph Smith papyri belonged to an Egyptian priest from that time and place? Why is such information not part of at least a passing reference in reviewing the "broader context" to understand the origins of the Book of Abraham, including its possible connections to antiquity discussed in prior scholarship? Is it because there is already an assumption built into this volume that the Book of Abraham's origins are to be found only in the nineteenth century? The scholarship on this and other relevant matters should, in my opinion, at least be alluded to in a footnote, lest the polemical position against the Book of Abraham be the only door allowed to swing open in this book. Choosing where to look to provide "broader context" and how to

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21. Kerry Muhlestein, "The Religious and Cultural Background of Joseph Smith Papyrus I," *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 22, no. 1 (2013): 20-33, https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1510&context=jbms and Muhlestein, "Abraham, Isaac, and Osiris-Michael: The Use of Biblical Figures in Egyptian Religion, a Survey," in *Achievements and Problems of Modern Egyptology,* ed. Galina A. Belova (2011), 246-59, https://www.academia.edu/526154/_Abraham_Isaac_and_Osiris-Michael_The_Use_of_Biblical_Figures_in_Egyptian_Religion_in_the_proceedings_of_Achievements_and_Problems_of_Modern_Egyptology,_Galina_A._Belova_ed._Moscow_Russian_Academy_of_Sciences_2012_246-259. See also Gee, *Introduction to the Book of Abraham*, 61; John Gee, "Some Puzzles from the Joseph Smith Papyri," *FARMS Review* 20, no. 1 (2008): 113-37, https://publications.mi.byu.edu/pdf-control.php/publications/review/20/1/S00009-5176a4d94ae9e10Gee.pdf; and Gee, "The Ancient Owners of the Joseph Smith Papyri" (FARMS Transcript Gee-99a, Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Provo, Utah, 1999), https://publications.mi.byu.edu/publications/PreliminaryReports/Set%203/Transcritps/Gee,%20The%20Ancient%20Owners%20of%20the%20Joseph%20Smith%20Papyri,%201999.pdf.

guide readers in understanding documents is inevitably an interpretive act subject to biases and debatable assumptions. To think the choice is purely objective scholarship is an illusion.

How the documents are presented and which perspectives are acknowledged and which are ignored is a critical issue that cannot be addressed with pretended obliviousness to the debates based on the documents in question.

The personal perspectives of the editors — or at least of Brian Hauglid — regarding the Book of Abraham seem to show up immediately in the opening words of the volume. The decision about what to say and what not to say regarding the Book of Abraham and the debate over its authenticity or antiquity is evident in the introduction to volume 4, "Book of Abraham and Related Manuscripts," which seems to lay a foundation for Hauglid's more open recent narrative about the Book of Abraham shortly after publication of JSPRT4.

One reviewer of this paper suggested that I am making too much of Hauglid's influence and also pointed out that Hauglid did not write the introduction. That's a fair observation, but the issue is not who is responsible for apparent bias but rather its very existence. But certainly Hauglid, as one of the two editors for this volume, cannot have been without influence on the tone and approach taken. That others involved may share similar assumptions or views on some of the implicit or explicit issues involved should not be surprising.

The tone of the Introduction is that Joseph Smith and early Saints may have thought they were translating Egyptian but really weren't (pp. xii–xiv). We are told that the Egyptian Alphabet documents show "attempts to decipher the Egyptian writing system" (p. xiv) — which cannot be completely accurate, since many of the characters therein aren't even Egyptian but include some characters that Phelps was already discussing with respect to the "pure language" before the scrolls ever came to Kirtland.[22]

Any claims regarding the use and purpose of the KEP relative to translation of the Book of Abraham must be tempered with caution rather than accepting the narrative that "this is how the 'translation' was done." Reasons for such caution include

- the minute fraction of characters in the Egyptian Alphabet documents and GAEL that are used in the Book of Abraham manuscripts;

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22. Phelps's letter to his wife, Sally, May 26, 1835. Also see Lindsay, "The Pure Language Project," April 18, 2019.

- the small fraction of characters in the Book of Abraham manuscripts that are defined in the Egyptian Alphabet documents and the GAEL;
- the number of characters in the Book of Abraham manuscripts that are not on the scrolls; and
- the small amount of content in the Book of Abraham that has any relationship to the "translations" in the Egyptian Alphabet documents and GAEL.

Such tempering seems absent in JSPRT4. Since helping readers understand the broader context and the relationships between related documents is part of the stated purpose for the commentary provided, it is also disappointing that relationships between the GAEL and other *prior* documents of Joseph Smith are generally overlooked. For example, William Schryver has pointed out that the explanations given for some of the "Egyptian" characters (many of which are not Egyptian) relate not only to the translated Book of Abraham (which arguably came first) but also to revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants. Schryver points to Doctrine and Covenants 76 and 88:24 as sources for several KEP explanations.[23] Doctrine and Covenants 77:1 and several other portions of the Doctrine and Covenants may also have influenced the KEP.[24] This information need not be presented to drive anyone's apologetic agenda but should be of interest to scholars seeking to understand the KEP and its sources and purpose.

From an apologetic perspective, of course, it is interesting that the KEP contains a great deal of "Egyptian" not from the scrolls and explanations/definitions that are not part of the Book of Abraham but apparently from other preexisting texts. In fact, for the GAEL and the Egyptian Alphabet documents, one can examine the characters, their definitions, and the existence of any apparently related glyphs on the key existing scroll (Fragment of Breathing Permit for Horus-A), and see that, of the 62 characters assigned a meaning, only four (2.32, 2.41, 2.42, and

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23. Schryver, "The Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers," FAIRMormon Conference, Provo, Utah, 2010; presentation available in two parts on YouTube: https://youtu.be/PWMg82BM_w0 (Part 1) and https://youtu.be/T2cQb3Ng3M8 (Part 2). Material on links in the KEP to Doctrine and Covenants 76 and 88:24 occur in Part 2 around 2:00 and 3:00, respectively. For screenshots showing these connections, see Jeff Lindsay, "Friendly Fire," March 14, 2019.

24. Jeff Lindsay, "More Connections Between the Kirtland Egyptian Papers and Prior Documents," *Mormanity* (blog), May 31, 2019, https://mormanity.blogspot.com/2019/05/another-connection-between-kirtland.html.

3.11) have a clear connection to a character on the papyrus, with three more characters (2.36, 2.40, and 3.15) possibly, but with less certainty, being found on the papyrus. *At best, then, it appears that only 7 of the 62 characters given meanings in the GAEL and the Egyptian Alphabet documents come from actual Egyptian.* This raises serious questions about the purpose and use of these documents and calls into question claims that Joseph was using them to create the Book of Abraham as a translation from an existing papyrus fragment. Such factual observations should have been given emphasis in the commentary, but seem to have been overlooked in JSPRT4. Fortunately, determined readers can discover this for themselves using the published documents and the helpful "Comparison of Characters" section.

We are also told that Joseph Smith's "journal references working on some of them [the Egyptian Alphabet documents and the GAEL] on a few occasions" (p. xv) when this statement involves an *assumption* that references made in October and November 1835 to the "Egyptian alphabet" and "the Alphabet of the ancient records," respectively, necessarily refer to the same Egyptian Alphabet documents we have today — documents that may date to well after Joseph's journal entries were made. It is clear that Joseph was working on or interested in some kind of "alphabet" to better understand Egyptian, but we don't know that the surviving documents we have today were part of whatever Joseph meant in those statements. Caution is needed in making such statements. Caution is also needed in recognizing that Joseph's intellectual attempts to understand Egyptian may tell us nothing about the revelations that yielded the text or its relationship to the surviving papyri.

The introduction speaks of an Egyptomania gripping the US in Joseph's day (but not enough, apparently, to let news of the Rosetta Stone or Champollion ever hit the streets of Kirtland or Nauvoo) and reminds us of the views of Athanasius Kircher, whose seventeenth-century treatise was quickly made irrelevant by the discovery of the Rosetta Stone in 1799 and by the advances of Young and Champollion shortly thereafter. Kircher emphasized the mysterious symbolic nature of hieroglyphs, which, according to some of our critics, led Joseph Smith to think that one character could require paragraphs of text to translate. We are then given a remarkable statement from the editors:

> Even after Champollion's groundbreaking discoveries, though, some continued to assert competing theories about Egyptian hieroglyphs, whether they rejected Champollion's findings or were ignorant of them. Indeed, in *America in the*

1830s and 1840s, Champollion's findings were available to only a small group of scholars who either read them in French or gleaned them from a limited number of English translations or summaries.

There is no evidence that Joseph Smith or his associates had read contemporary works of French or English Egyptological scholarship, but nevertheless seemed to approach the papyri with many assumptions espoused by scholars who wrote before Champollion. The documents created by Smith and his associates, for example, suggest that they assumed that the Egyptian language contained a series of complex systems and symbols, each of which had multiple meanings. (JSPRT4, p. xvii)

This surprising statement will be addressed later in the section for Issue 6, "Egyptomania without Champollion?" For now, note that while the use of multiple "degrees" in the GAEL is confusing and strange, and while Joseph may have supported the work being pursued therein, any theory about Joseph's thinking that one character could be unfolded into large amounts of text needs to be calibrated with what he actually indicated about reformed Egyptian in the Book of Mormon and what he said about characters on the Facsimiles. Significant evidence, discussed below, counters the above editorial statement. Again, there is a lack of balance and a failure to provide alternative frameworks for understanding what the puzzling issues in the Book of Abraham papers really mean or might not mean.

The inside cover of the book also makes related statements that leave the door open for the Book of Abraham as derived from human decipherment work, and implies that Joseph saw Egyptian artifacts as his contemporaries did (though apparently without knowledge of Champollion):

Like many of his contemporaries, Joseph Smith viewed Egyptian artifacts with deep interest, wondering what knowledge they might contain about the ancient world, biblical narratives, and divine truths. Soon after purchasing the mummies and papyri, Smith and his associates set about attempting to decipher the Egyptian language by proposing linguistic rules and dissecting individual characters. Around the same time, Smith also dictated to his clerks a first-person account of the biblical prophet Abraham, which Smith said was a translation of the writing on the papyri in his possession.[25]

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25. JSPRT4, inside front dust jacket.

This remark helps set the stage for Joseph's work as a product of his environment but apparently an environment still ignorant of Champollion. It suggests that creating grammatical rules (*ex nihilo*, apparently) came first, followed shortly thereafter by creation of the translation possibly based on the GAEL, rather than leaving open the door for the likely scenario that the GAEL was derived from the existing translation (vastly more logical and in line with how Champollion did his work, using a known translation to decipher something about the language). It also implies that the bizarre dissection of individual Egyptian characters done by W. W. Phelps in parts of the GAEL was directed by Joseph, when that is simply an assumption. There are several bits of slanted mischief in those three short sentences.

Sadly, the editorial comments in the JSPRT4 seem to zealously avoid any hint that there may be antiquity or authenticity anywhere in Joseph's translated text or in the comments on the Facsimiles, when the neglected works of Nibley and the still heavily neglected views of Kerry Muhlestein (only two works of dozens are cited), John Gee, and others could at least have been pointed to in some academically appropriate way without being overtly apologetic.

Fortunately, the important Introduction of JSPRT4 does not fail to cite Gee and Muhlestein, treating them with better respect than it does Nibley. Gee's valuable *Introduction to the Book of Abraham* is cited on p. xviii regarding a tiny detail in the chain of events involved in the bringing of Egyptian artifacts to America. On p. xiv, three of his works are cited on the issue of how long the scrolls were, but only after citing and accepting the views of others who claim they were much shorter than Gee's calculation (that's not to say Gee's calculation was correct but rather illustrates the general neglect of many weightier matters Gee addresses). That appears to be the extent of references in the Introduction to Gee's work, and elsewhere the occasional references appear to be about minute details rather than to his overarching views and major contributions to the debate over the Book of Abraham. As for Muhlestein, he is cited in the introduction on p. xxv to the effect that the Kirtland Egyptian Papers have been found by scholars "to be of no actual value in understanding Egyptian." That is certainly true, but Muhlestein, like Gee and Nibley, has much more to say about the manuscripts, their context, and their relationship to the Book of Abraham, not to mention the value of Joseph Smith's work and how faithful readers can cope with some of the puzzles. In this and many other issues, there seems to be a lack of balance.

In response to my concerns, one reviewer implied that the citing of Nibley or raising the ancient context of the Book of Abraham would jeopardize the scholarly credibility of the Joseph Smith Papers Project. Perhaps so, but surely there is a way to find balance without losing face. If the views and theories of critics can be cited or given support with interpretative comments, why cannot the opposing views and theories of faithful scholars at least be hinted at in order to avoid bias in this work? Must we be this ashamed of scholarship within The Church of Jesus Christ and the strengths of the Book of Abraham?

Faithful Latter-day Saints, having confronted the warts of the Book of Abraham and related documents for decades, have found ways to understand and cope with the issues without losing faith in the divine nature of the Restoration. Faithful Latter-day Saints and sound scholars have also seen great treasures in the Book of Abraham that point to the ancient roots of the Book of Abraham and the sacred value of the text, however it was revealed and crafted. A publication like JSPRT4 that digs into the warts should also, in my opinion, not be afraid to hint at some of the beauty and not be ashamed to recognize the existence of scholarly perspectives like those of Hugh Nibley, if only to add balance when works of critics are cited and theories of critics are given weight. Such balance is not crude apologetics — it is scholarship.

3. Overlooking the Role of Hebrew Study

Several potential gaps and errors in this volume might have been averted if the role of Hebrew study among Joseph and his brethren had been more carefully considered. Below we'll consider several lines of evidence that point to the influence of Hebrew study on several portions of the KEP.

Unfortunately, throughout JSPRT4 is an assumption that the work on the Kirtland Egyptian Papers ceased when Hebrew study began at the end of 1835 and more earnestly in early 1836, resulting in a failure to explore an important possibility. It is true that Joseph's translation work ceased as he focused on the study of Hebrew, but it is a mistake to see the Hebrew study as unrelated to the Book of Abraham project. Indeed, it may well be that Joseph believed that understanding Hebrew would be a major step toward better intellectual understanding of the mysterious Egyptian he had somehow already translated by the power of God.

While Joseph's direct translation work may have been on hold or largely completed when Hebrew study began,[26] work on the Kirtland

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26. Kerry Muhlestein and Megan Hansen, "'The Work of Translating': The Book of Abraham's Translation Chronology," in *Let Us Reason Together: Essays in*

Egyptian Papers may have continued or come into full swing. Indeed, a casual examination of those papers reveals significant influence from at least a very basic study of Hebrew, such as an abundance of terms related to the first two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. However, by seriously considering the impact of Hebrew and considering the materials that may have influenced Joseph and his scribes, one can readily find evidence of a more extensive impact of Hebrew study on the Kirtland Egyptian Papers, even to the point of being able to pinpoint specific content in some Hebrew books as potential sources of both characters and concepts in the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. By assuming that Hebrew study marked the end of work with those papers, important relationships may have been overlooked that otherwise would have been noticed and, as discussed in Issue 4 below, dates proposed in JSPRT4 for the Kirtland Egyptian Papers may be far too early and may need to be revised to later dates more in line with the dates previously proposed by John Gee (e.g., Oct. 29, 1835 to April 1836 for documents in the handwriting of Warren Parrish),[27] though some of Gee's other proposed dates may still be too early.

Matthew Grey mentions some of the specific Hebrew books we know Oliver Cowdery brought to Kirtland in November 1835.[28]

> The historical records do not indicate which books he purchased, but the artifact holdings in the LDS Church History Library, Community of Christ, and Brigham Young University archives show that he brought back copies of an 1833 edition of the *Biblia Hebraica*,[29] the 1835 edition of

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Honor of the Life's Work of Robert L. Millet, eds. J. Spencer Fluhman and Brent L. Top (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2016), 139-62; https://rsc.byu.edu/es/archived/let-us-reason-together/work-translating-book-abraham-s-translation-chronology#_ednref40. The authors argue that by the end of 1835 Abraham 4-5 had already been translated. Hebrew words may have been added to the text later as a gloss to incorporate words learned during Joseph's later study of Hebrew. These arguments are not addressed in JSPRT4.

27. John Gee, *An Introduction to the Book of Abraham* (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book and BYU Religious Studies Center, 2017), 27.

28. Matthew Grey, "'The Word of the Lord in the Original,'" in *Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith and the Ancient World*, eds. Lincoln H. Blumell, Matthew J. Grey, and Andrew H. Hedges (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015), 249-302; https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/approaching-antiquity-joseph-smith-and-ancient-world/word-lord-original-joseph-smith-s.

29. Augustus Hahn, ed., *Biblia Hebraica*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Caroli Tauchnitz, 1833), as cited by Grey, "'The Word of the Lord in the Original.'" Also see the 1831 edition at *Google Books*, https://books.google.com/books?id=B88UAAAAYAAJ&pg=PP3.

Moses Stuart's *A Grammar of the Hebrew Language*,[30] and the 1832 edition of Josiah Gibbs's *A Manual Hebrew and English Lexicon*,[31] all some of the highest quality resources available at that time.[32]

Another Hebrew book theoretically available to Oliver Cowdery when he went east to bring Hebrew books back to Kirtland could be Hyman Hurwitz's *The Elements of the Hebrew Language*, first printed in 1832, with a second edition in 1835,[33] and also Hurwitz's *The Etymology and Syntax in Continuation of the Elements of the Hebrew Language* from 1831.[34] Hurwitz is not listed in Matthew Grey's list, but there is no reason to believe the list from Grey is complete. Though printed in London, there would be adequate time for it to have reached the United States by late 1835 when Oliver was in the market for Hebrew books.

Multiple clues point to prior or concurrent Hebrew study as the KEP was prepared. Perhaps the most striking single clue may be the use of an unusual symbol from Moses Stuart's *A Grammar of the Hebrew Language*. Consider the beginning of Stuart's book on p. 10, shown in Figure 1, where the Hebrew alphabet is presented with some other forms of Hebrew letters or other alphabets.

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30. Moses Stuart, *A Grammar of the Hebrew Language*, 5th ed. (Andover, MA: Gould and Newman, 1835), https://archive.org/details/32882013436202-agrammarofthehe/page/n1, also available at *Google Books*, https://books.google.com.hk/books?id=zMsvAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA10. See also the 1831 fourth edition at https://books.google.com/books?id=jtwUAAAAYAAJ, downloadable at https://archive.org/details/grammarofhebrewl04stua/page/n5.

31. Josiah W. Gibbs, *A Manual Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Hezekiah Howe, 1832); https://archive.org/details/manualhebrewengl00gibbuoft/page/n3. Also see the 1824 edition at *Google Books*, https://books.google.com.hk/books?id=He8tAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA1.

32. Grey, "'The Word of the Lord in the Original.'"

33. Hyman Hurwitz, *The Elements of the Hebrew Language*, 2nd ed. (London: John Taylor, 1832); https://books.google.com/books?id=7NsUAAAAYAAJ. Download the file at https://books.google.com/books/download/The_Elements_of_the_Hebrew_Language.pdf?id=7NsUAAAAYAAJ&output=pdf&sig=ACfU3U30u7iR-GNDF5wyOenVX89fKm1sDg.

34. Hyman Hurwitz, *The Etymology and Syntax, in Continuation of, The Elements of the Hebrew Language*, (London: John Taylor, 1831); https://books.google.com.hk/books?id=5-52-T2CY9UC. Download the file at https://books.google.com/books/download/The_Etymology_and_Syntax_in_Continuation.pdf?id=5-52-T2CY9UC&output=pdf&sig=ACfU3U2Dc39FY8eb35yjkfZxKO5Bj7U4_w. See also the 1835 2nd edition at https://archive.org/stream/grammarofhebrewl00hurwrich#page/n113/mode/2up.

No. II. **No. III.**
LATER HEBR. ALPHABET. **ORIENTAL ALPHABETS.**

Forms.	Rep. by	Sounded as	Names.	Arabic alphabet.	Syriac alphabet.	Hebrew coin-letter.	Samar. alphab.	Heb.
א	א	'	אālĕph					א
	bh	v	Bēth					
	b	b						
	gh	g	Gīmĕl					
	g	g						
	dh	th in that	Dālĕth					
	d	d						
ה	h	h	Hē					
ו	v	v	Vāv					
ז	z	z	Zăyĭn					
ח	hh	hh	Hhēth					
ט	t	t	Tēt					
	y	y	Yōdh					
ך, כ	kh	kh,'h	Kăph					
ך, כ	k	k						
ל	l	l	Lāmĕdh					
ם, מ	m	m	Mēm					
ן, נ	n	n	Nūn					
ס	s	s	Sāmĕkh					
ע	"	"	ʿăyĭn					
ף, פ	ph	ph, f	Pē					
	p	p						
ץ, צ	ts	ts	Tsādhē					
ק	q	q	Qōph					
ר	r	r	Rēsh					
ש	sh	sh	Shīn					
ש	s	s	Sīn					
ת	th	th	Tāv					
ת	t	t						

Figure 1.

Under the column "Hebrew coin-letter," we see old forms of several Hebrew letters used on coins, including a form of *aleph* similar to an upside down *A* or sideways *A* and a form of the second letter, *beth*, which looks like a circle with a horizontally flipped capital *L* descending from the right side of the circle.[35] This unusual character is not found, as far as I know, in the other Hebrew materials available to the Saints in Kirtland, nor is it found on the scrolls. It is Hebrew, not Egyptian, yet it is present in Kirtland Egyptian Papers, in a key document apparently one of the first, the Egyptian Counting document.[36]

Figure 2 shows close-ups of key portions of the Egyptian Counting document and Stuart's Hebrew "coin letters" showing the first two rows of entries.
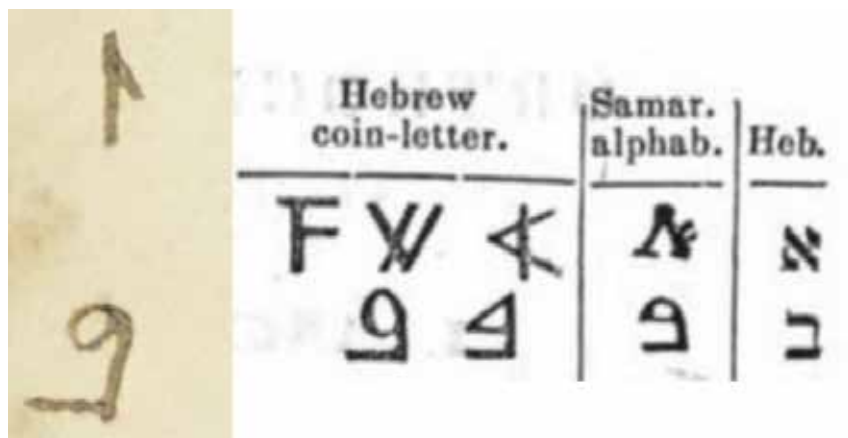
Figure 2.

The Egyptian Counting document uses a character for the number 2 that is nearly identical to the Hebrew "coin-letter" character given by Stuart for *beth*, the second letter of the alphabet, which is also used for the number 2. Of course, it is possible for coincidences in the form of a character to occur, but having a match in form and meaning (with *beth* as the number 2 in Hebrew and in the Egyptian Counting document) is highly unlikely. However, other sources besides Stuart could have

35. For more on Hebrew coin letters, see L. Kadman, "The Hebrew Coin Script: A Study in the Epigraphy of Ancient Jewish Coins," *Israel Exploration Journal* 4, no. 3/4 (1954): 150-69; https://www.jstor.org/stable/27924575.

36. "Egyptian Counting, circa Early July–early November 1835," JSPRT4, 95-99. Also see "Egyptian Counting, circa Early July–circa 26 November 1835," *Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/egyptian-counting-circa-early-july-circa-26-november-1835/1.

provided W. W. Phelps with knowledge of the same ancient Hebraic form for *beth*. My search of other Hebrew language materials for an English speaker before 1835 has not yet revealed another source, though a 1784 book on the history of writing does list a nearly identical character for *beth*, along with Greek and other alphabets that might have been of interest to Phelps, had he encountered the book. In Thomas Astle's *The Origin and Progress of Writing: As Well Hieroglyphic as Elementary*, Figure 3 shows a portion of a table that includes several archaic forms of *beth*, including the form seen in the Egyptian Counting document.[37]

Figure 3.

While I have found no evidence that Phelps saw or used this book, contrary to the clear evidence that he had access to Moses Stuart's book and began studying Hebrew shortly after that book became available, Astle's book was in the Library of Congress by 1840[38] and at Harvard by 1830,[39] and probably was in other locations in the US, although it does

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37. Thomas Astle, *The Origin and Progress of Writing: As Well Hieroglyphic as Elementary* (London: T. Payne & Son, B. White, P. Elmsly, G. Nichol, and Leigh and Sotheby, 1784), Table 1, p. 64, https://books.google.com/books?id=mI3nAAAAMAAJ&&pg=PA64 (scroll down on page to see the table).

38. *Catalog of the Library of Congress in the Capitol of the United States of America*, Dec. 1839 (Washington DC: Langtree and Sullivan, 1840), https://books.google.com/books?id=vowbAQAAIAAJ&pg=PA200.

39. *A Catalogue of the Library of Harvard University* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1830), 112, https://books.google.com/books?id=Oy0IAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA112.

not show up in nineteenth-century catalogs of several other major or relevant libraries that I have searched (e.g., the Princeton Library from Phelps's home state and libraries in New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania), which suggests it may not have been a widely available book.[40]

While Stuart's book would seem to be the most plausible source for Phelps's use of an archaic form of a Hebrew letter in the Egyptian Counting document, that could still be mere coincidence or could have arisen from other sources. However, there are further reasons to recognize the influence of early Hebrew study on the KEP and to recognize the need to reconsider some issues on the dating of some KEP documents.

On the dating of documents, the editors of JSPRT4 correctly discerned that the mysterious Egyptian Counting document "must have been created before the Grammar and Alphabet volume, … because Phelps used material from the Egyptian Counting document in some of the definitions in that volume" (p. 95). But it's not just Phelps in one volume relying on the Egyptian Counting document, it's also all three Egyptian Alphabets in the KEP as well. For example, the GAEL has several versions of the term *nitahveh* to mean "twenty-five," based on *ni* = 2, *tah* = 10, and *veh* = 5 from the Egyptian Counting document. The same word occurs in Egyptian Alphabets A and C (see character

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40. It is not listed in the 1821 catalog of the great Allegheny College Library, one of the nation's largest libraries of that day: see *Library of Allegheny College, Catalogue* (Meadville, PA: Allegheny College, 1823), https://books.google.com/books?id=K5xAAAAAYAAJ. It is not present in Wallace De Witt, *Catalogue of the Pennsylvania State Library* (Harrisburg, PA: A. Boyd Hamilton, 1859), https://books.google.com/books?id=wjQIAAAAQAAJ, nor in *A Catalogue of the Medical Library Belonging to the Pennsylvania Hospital* (Philadelphia: Bartram, 1806), https://books.google.com/books?id=YmwpAAAAYAA, nor in the Princeton Library in Phelps' home state of New Jersey; see *Subject-catalogue of the Library of the College of New Jersey, at Princeton* (New York: Charles M. Green, 1884), https://books.google.com/books?id=u2H1ZHdCMPsC&printsec=frontcover. Turning to Ohio, it is not present in William Holden, *Catalog of the Ohio State Library* (Columbus, OH: Nevins and Myers, 1875), https://books.google.com/books?id=RslCAAAAYAAJ. It is not found in the Manchester (New York) Library: see Robert Paul, "Joseph Smith and the Manchester (New York) Library," *BYU Studies* 22, no. 3 (Summer 1982): 333-56, https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/joseph-smith-and-manchester-new-york-library. Nor is it in *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. However, it was listed in the Cincinnati Pubic Library by 1884: see *Finding-List of Books in the Public Library of Cincinnati* (Cincinnati, OH: J.R. Mills, 1882-1884), 673, https://books.google.com/books?id=OG4xAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA673.

3.15 on p. 371 in the convenient "Comparison of Characters" section). Also consider character 2.41, associated with the name *Vehkliflosis*. The root *Kliflosis* (character 2.40, p. 365) is associated with the star Kolob, and since *veh* means "five" in the Egyptian Counting document, it is no surprise that the GAEL identifies Vehkliflosis as the fifth planet or fixed star (p. 344). Vehkliflosis occurs in all three Egyptian Alphabet documents, but without translation. The term *ni* occurs in several contexts with echoes of the number 2, such as *Ja ni hah* in the GAEL (part 2 degree 3, character 2.36), where it means "one who will be second in authority" (p. 364). Versions of that name occur in all three Egyptian Alphabets. The concept of a second person associated with *ni* might be found in various spellings of the word *Sue Eh ni* meaning "what other person is that or who" (character 1.16, pp. 355–56). Other phrases with *veh* (five) are associated with character 2.29 in all three Egyptian Alphabets and in the GAEL.

In the Egyptian Counting document, the symbol for the number 1, pronounced "eh," is a vertical line with a short diagonal line descending from the right side of the topmost point, like a horizontally flipped number 1. Invert it, and you have the symbol that begins all three Egyptian Alphabet documents, character 1.1, pronounced "ah" and referring to the "first being." This symbol as written in the Egyptian Alphabet documents and in its many minor variants is apparently not found on the scrolls, as is true of all the other symbols in the Egyptian Counting document (which raises a question not noticeably addressed in the comments in JSPRT4: How can we assume that the Kirtland Egyptian Papers were intended for translating actual Egyptian into English when so many of the characters thereon are not even Egyptian?).

In struggling to understand Egyptian, it is natural that the Saints might be interested in looking to Hebrew for more knowledge. Joseph Smith in 1830 had declared that the reformed Egyptian of the Book of Mormon was a "running language" like Hebrew, running from right to left,[41] and copies of characters from the gold plates suggest to many observers some kind of rough similarity to the type of characters the Saints would see on the papyri. For now, the critical issue is that Hebrew study — self-study only, at first — was made possible when Oliver Cowdery returned to Kirtland with a collection of Hebrew materials on November 20, 1835. Later, in early 1836 after self-study faced

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41. Joseph Smith, "History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1]," p. 9, *Joseph Smith Papers,* https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-october-1839-draft-1/9.

serious roadblocks, Joseph would bring Hebrew scholar Joshua Seixas to Kirtland to conduct Hebrew classes for the enthusiastic Saints. For details on the history of Joseph's quest to learn Hebrew and its impact on the Saints and the later completed versions of the Book of Abraham, see works by Michael T. Walton[42] and Matthew Grey.[43]

Glancing at the various "Egyptian" words in Kirtland Egyptian Papers, one can get the sense that Hebrew might have played some role. For example, the KEP contains an abundance of words related to some Hebrew letters, especially *aleph* and *beth* (here I will use the transliteration of Stuart). Further, the frequent use of dots within or near characters, especially non-Egyptian characters (characters apparently not found on the existing papyri), may suggest Hebrew vowel pointing and other diacritics in the Masoretic text, which can include a dot inside a letter, one or more dots below a letter, and a dot above a letter.[44] Horizontal lines above a few characters in the KEP may also be similar to the *rafe*, a small bar written above a consonant (showing that a *dagesh lene* dot had been omitted deliberately, not by scribal error).[45]

Perhaps out of awareness of such factors, John Gee criticized the Joseph Smith Papers Project for failing to consider the evidence for Hebrew influence on the KEP. But his argument was based on the use of *h* following long final vowels, which he felt had come from Seixas.[46] Gee is correct: a shift in spelling seems to occur from some apparently early work with the characters, where we see, for example, the name *Katumin* in some documents, which seems to evolve into spellings with an *h* (as in *Kah tou mun* and other similar spellings) in the apparently later Egyptian Alphabets and the GAEL. However, examination of the Hebrew manuals written by Joshua Seixas — one from 1830[47] and one

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42. Michael T. Walton, "Professor Seixas, the Hebrew Bible, and the Book of Abraham," *Sunstone*, Issue 26 (1981); https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/pdf/026-41-43.pdf.

43. Grey, "'The Word of the Lord in the Original.'"

44. "The Masoretes and the Punctuation of Biblical Hebrew," British and Foreign Bible Society, May 2, 2002; http://lc.bfbs.org.uk/e107_files/downloads/masoretes.pdf.

45. Ibid.

46. John Gee, "Joseph Smith and Ancient Egypt," in *Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith and the Ancient World*, eds. Lincoln H. Blumell, Matthew J. Grey, and Andrew H. Hedges (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2015), 427-48; https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/approaching-antiquity-joseph-smith-and-ancient-world/joseph-smith-and-ancient-egypt.

47. James [sic] Seixas, *Manual Hebrew Grammar* (Philadelphia: L. Johnson and Co., 1830), https://archive.org/details/manualhebrewgram03seix.

from 1834[48] — does not show evidence of a transliteration system that would readily account for the abundant use of *h* after vowels in the KEP (though it is true that the Hebrew letter *he* related to our *h* does occur at the end of many words after a vowel, and Seixas does use, for example, *zah'in* as the transliteration of the seventh letter, given by Stuart as *zayin*). This raises the question: Could some of the other sources studied by the Saints provide detectable influence in the KEP?

Of the books listed by Matthew Grey that Oliver is known to have brought to Kirtland (though there may be others, such as Hurwitz's book), Gibb's book (based on the German work of Wilhelm Gesenius) generally lacks transliteration, as does *Biblia Hebraica*. But Moses Stuart's *A Grammar of the Hebrew Language* and Hurwitz's *The Elements of the Hebrew Language* could have played a role in influencing the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. In contrast to Seixas's *auleph* for the transliteration of the first Hebrew letter, both Stuart and Hurwitz use *aleph* and *beth*, similar to the KEP, while other transliterations for the first two letters may be found in various sources. Stuart has a number of words heavy in *h*, such as *bah-hel* and *ruhh-hhats*, and Hurwitz offers many examples with *h* following a vowel, such as *l'ba-bah* and *ya-ra-ah*, both meaning "moon," and *ham-mah* for the "sun."[49] Both Stuart and Hurwitz provide transliterations that sometimes are broken up with hyphens between syllables, an especially prominent feature of Hurwitz, similar to the hyphens or dashes between many syllables in the "Egyptian" words of the KEP.

There may be other connections to some of the Hebrew coin-letters presented by Moses Stuart, though these are more speculative and less striking than the above-mentioned use of the unusual Hebrew coin-letter for *beth*, and may simply be due to chance.[50] For example, in

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48. J. Seixas, *A Manual Hebrew Grammar for the Use of Beginners* (Andover, MA: Gould and Newman, 1834), https://books.google.com.hk/ books?id=wkRAAQAAIAAJ&pg=PA1. Download the file at https://books. google.com.hk/books/download/A_Manual_Hebrew_Grammar_for_the_ Use_of_B.pdf?id=wkRAAQAAIAAJ&output=pdf&sig=ACfU3U3bUsLwMaA0 foX-aXfOB8Poiv2PSQ.

49. Hurwitz, *Etymology and Syntax*, 10.

50. One of the strange things that struck me in looking at Stuart, perhaps just a coincidence, is that Stuart's listing of *O* as the Hebrew coin character symbol is on the same line as the *k* sound (see the upper right portion of the second image from Stuart's page 10 above), which could lead one (as it did me initially) to think that *O* was associated with a the *k* sound, though it's really associated with *ayin,* shown at the right of that column. A similar *O* symbol is also the sign associated with the name *Katumin* in Phelps's "Notebook of Copied Characters, circa Early July

the Book of Abraham manuscripts with characters in the margins, there are several concocted characters apparently not found on any papyrus. Some of these may have a relationship to characters among Moses Stuart's Hebrew coin-letters. JSPRT4's character no. 2 from the Book of Abraham manuscripts, which appears to be a sideways *F* with a dot to the right, strongly resembles the capital *F* form of a Hebrew coin letter for *aleph* in Stuart.

Another capital *F* also appears on the left of composite character no. 2 from the Book of Abraham manuscripts, with the version in Book of Abraham Manuscript A shown in Figure 4. Here we see the *aleph*-related *F* and a dot on the left joined by a straight line to a *Y* on the right; but the *Y* portion also resembles Stuart's Hebrew coin-letter form for *daleth*, though here the descending line on the right is at a slant, like that of the *F* on the left, rather than being vertical, as in Stuart's depiction. In between these two end portions is an *O* with two internal lines and a dagesh-like dot, perhaps emulating a capital Greek theta, or perhaps a modified *O* from Stuart's Hebrew coin-letter for *ayin*. A total of four dots (like Hebrew points) adorn this character. Is this a composite character inspired by one or more of Stuart's Hebrew coin-letters with Hebrew-like diacritical marks?
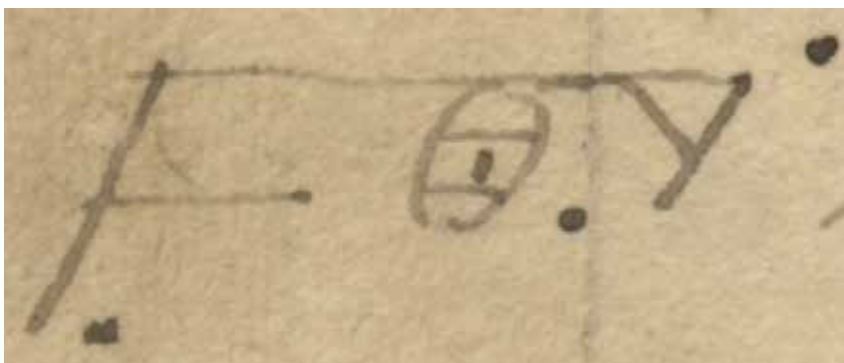
Figure 4.

Further general content from Stuart and similar Hebrew texts may have influenced the Egyptian Alphabets and the GAEL. The Egyptian Alphabets all have sections with *aleph* (the first letter of Hebrew) near

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1835," JSPRT4, pp. 34-35, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/notebook-of-copied-characters-circa-early-july-1835/5, which lists some Egyptian and a "translation." Someone trying to study Stuart carefully would quickly realize that the *O* is not linked to a *k* sound after all, but there may be a remote possibility of sloppy work leading to that association.

the beginning of the section, followed by words that seem to combine *aleph* and *beth* (the second letter of Hebrew) and then *beth* and forms of *beth* thereafter. For example, the following table lists words from pages 1 and 2 of Egyptian Alphabet C (JSPRT4, pp. 86–87; text taken from JSPP website), some of which may be related to some of the first few Hebrew letters shown by Stuart on p. 10, namely, *aleph*, *beth*, *gimel*, *daleth*, *he*, and later *yodh* (like Greek *iota*), and possibly *ayin*. The components believed to be tied to Hebrew letters are in bold:

Ah me os	God without beginning or end
Aleph	In the beginning with God the Son or first born
Albeth	Angels or disembodied spirits or Saints.
Alka**beth**	Angels in an unalterable state, men after they are raised \<from the dead\>
Alche**beth**	Ministers of God, high priests, kings
Alchi**beth**	Ministers of God, and less than high priests —
Alko**beth**	Ministers not ordained of God, sinful
Alku**beth**	Ministers who are less sinful for want of power
Ba=eth	The name of all mankind — man or men
Ba=eth=ka	Adam or the first man, or first king
Ba-eth kee	The next from Adam, one ordained under him.
Ba-eth ki	The third ordained under Adam
Ba-eth ko	The fourth from Adam
Baeth ku	The fifth high priest from Adam
Beth	Man's[51] first residence, a fruitful garden, a great valley

51. Here the JSPP website has the puzzling *Man\<:\>s,* which I believe is a misreading of the handwriting for *Man's,* where a heavy termination of the letter *s* is confused for an overlapping dot inserted with the upper dot (actually an original

Beth ka	Another place of residence, 5 times as great and more spacious, & larger than the firsts
Beth ke	The third place of residence, 5 times as great as the last and still greater
Beth ki	The fourth place, 5 times that of the last.
Beth=ko	The fifth place, 5 times greater than the last
Beth ku	The sixth place 5 times
ku=**Ain**, tri=eth	The whole earth, pure, with all-glory grains[?]
E**beth**<=>ku<=>**ain** tri=eth	All the heavenly bodies = Eternity
E**beth**=ka	The heaven of heavens, <wh[e]re god resides Ce[lestial]. K[ingdom].> the greatest place of hap
Kah tu **ain** tri eth	
Kah tu **ain**	
Dah tu ~~Hahdess~~ Hah**dees**	
Hah **dees**	
De=eh	
Zip zi **Iota** Veh	
Lish=zi=ho e=oop **Iota**	
Gahmel	
Ho=hah=oop	
Io=**ho-hah**=oop	
Io **ho hah** oop Zip Zi	
Jah-**ho e** oop	
Jah=~~**ho**~~- <ni hah>	

apostrophe) to form a meaningless colon. See "Egyptian Alphabet, circa Early July circa November 1835–C," *Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.josephsmithpapers. org/paper-summary/egyptian-alphabet-circa-early-july-circa-november-1835-c/3.

Jah-**oh=eh**	
~~Moh nit tish~~ <Flo=ees>	
Flos=isis	
Kli-flos isis	
Veh kli flos-isis	
Kolob	

In this list, we have echoes of letters of the Hebrew alphabet, such as *aleph* (unlike *auleph* from Seixas), *beth*, *gimel* ("Gahmel"), *daleth* ("Dah"/"dees"/"de=eh"), *he* ("Ho=hah," "Ho e," "oh=eh"), *yodh* ("iota"), and possibly *ayin* ("ain").

Interestingly, while Moses Stuart and Hyman Hurwitz have *beth* as the transliteration for the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, Seixas uses *baith* (and *auleph* for *aleph*). Both *beth* and *ba-eth*/*ba=eth* are present in this list. Perhaps those working on the KEP began with influence from the transliteration of Stuart and possibly Hurwitz during the Saints' self-directed Hebrew study in early 1836 before Seixas came as an instructor, and then learned of and applied Seixas' *baith* in the form of *ba-eth*. For the letters alone, though, the KJV could have served as a source, since Psalm 119 names sections with letters of the Hebrew alphabet with a transliteration system compatible with the KEP (*aleph*, *beth*, etc., and *ain*). Gibbs' book (Gesenius), by the way, gives *aleph* for the first letter, *beth* for the second letter[52] and spells the third letter *gimel*.[53] For the third letter, Seixas uses a double *m* in *gimmel* unlike the single *m* in the related KEP word. Stuart like Gibbs has *gimel*, while Hurwitz introduces it as "Gimel, or rather Gamal,"[54] with the second spelling more suggestive of the KEP's "Gahmel." Gibbs writes *ain*[55] (a form seen in the KEP), as does the KJV for Psalm 119, instead of Stuart's *ayin*.

Also of significance may be the meaning assigned to *beth* and some of its variants based on the word *residence*. In Hebrew, *beth* means "house," a point naturally made by Stuart and Hurwitz, like Seixas.

The relationships evident in the list above occur in all the Egyptian Alphabet documents and also in the GAEL. For example, on page 33 of the GAEL, the transcription from JSPRT4 (pp. 180–81) reads:

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52. Gibbs, *A Manual Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 69.
53. Ibid., 107.
54. Hurwitz, *Etymology and Syntax*, 10.
55. Gibbs, *A Manual Hebrew and English Lexicon*, vi.

Ahme=os=	God without beginning or end
Alki**beth**	minister of God under or the less
Baethkee	The first next from Adam, one one ordained under him, a patriarch or the right of the first born
~~**Beth**ka~~	~~another place of residence, made so by extension so by appointment~~
Bethka	Another & larger place of residence, made so by appointment. By extension of power; more pleasing, more beautiful: a place of more complete happiness, peace and rest for man
Bethku=**ain**-tri=eth	The whole earth, or the largest place, the greatest enjoyment an earth the garden of the earth
Dah tu Hah dees	~~Hell~~ another Kingdom; the least kingdom, or kingdom without glory; the whole kingdom and domin[ion] of darkness, with all its degrees and parts. governed by ~~the Doagrass~~, him who is an enemy to G<o>od
Gahmel[56]	~~a fair prospect of anything.~~ Landscape; a place or country: the face of the country; beautiful situated; a country under a promontory=a promising situation for man
Jah=~~ho~~ ni hah	One delegated with redeeming power; a swift messenger; one that goes before another; one having redeeming power, a second person in authority
Jah=o**heh**	The earth, including its affinity with the other planets, with their governing powers; which are fifteen: the earth; the sun, and …

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56. JSPRT4 and the JSPP website provide *Gahmel* in the transcription for page 33 of the Grammar and Alphabet document, but a closer look suggests that this is a minor error in the transcription. I think it should be *Gahmol*. Comparing other examples of *el* and *ol* on the same page using the high-resolution images on the JSPP website suggests to me that *Gahmol* is the better fit. In either case, the word written is clearly similar to and possibly cognate with Stuart's *Gimel* and especially with Hurwitz's *Gamal*.

The first word seems to draw upon the term *Ahman*, which Joseph Smith had previously given[57] and which W. W. Phelps used in his "pure language" letter of early 1835[58] with six strange characters, written before Joseph ever saw the scrolls, and all are found in the Egyptian Counting document and elsewhere in the KEP.[59] (The inclusion of such non-Egyptian characters in the "Egyptian" of the KEP is a critical issue discussed by Schryver but not adequately addressed in JSPRT4.[60]) *Ahme=os=* as God (similar to *Ahman*, discussed above) could fit the concept of *aleph*, "the first." *Aleph* also may be hinted at in the *Alkibeth* name, which seems to link man to God, or *beth* to *aleph*. Then we have a series of *beth*-related names, some of which imply a "secondary" nature (like beth itself as the second letter), such as "The first next from Adam, one one [sic] ordained under him" or "another place of residence, made so by extension." "Another place of residence" seems to combine the concept of second/secondary with *house*, both related to Hebrew *beth*.

Next come two names arguably related to *daleth* and *gimel*: *Dah tu Hah dees* (*dah* for *daleth*) and notably *Gahmel*, seemingly a giveaway for Hebrew influence. Then we have two names that may draw upon *he*.

Thus on one page, we see links to *aleph*, *beth*, *gimel*, *daleth*, and *he* in almost the same order as the Hebrew. This page, in the handwriting

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57. *Ahman* first appears in a revelation given March 1, 1832, now in Doctrine and Covenants 78:15-16; see "Adam-ondi-Ahman," *Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/topic/adam-ondi-ahman/. The similar term *Awmen*" a reference to the Savior, appears in another 1832 document, "Sample of Pure Language, between circa 4 and circa 20 March 1832," *Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/sample-of-pure-language-between-circa-4-and-circa-20-march-1832/1.

58. Phelps, letter to Sally Phelps, May 26, 1835.

59. Lindsay, "The Pure Language Project." An image of the letter is not included in the JSPP, unfortunately, but can be seen at https://rsc.byu.edu/sites/default/files/Phelps%20Letter.jpg.

60. Another important source of earlier work on the possible meaning of the KEP is William Schryver, "The Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers" (FAIRMormon Conference, Provo, Utah, 2010), https://youtu.be/PWMg82BM_w0 (Part 1) and https://youtu.be/T2cQb3Ng3M8 (Part 2). Schryver points to the many non-Egyptian characters in the KEP and also links some of the definitions in the KEP to the Doctrine and Covenants, both issues which show that translating the Book of Abraham from Egyptian scrolls probably was not the intent of the work. Rather, he sees some of the documents as an effort to create a reverse cipher for converting English into code. Whether the reverse cipher theory has merit or not, the observations about the nature of the "Egyptian" and relationships between various documents merit further scholarly attention. Schryver, however, is not cited in JSPRT4, though he previously worked with Hauglid in studying the KEP.

of W. W. Phelps, may be drawing upon his study of Hebrew using one or more Hebrew books that came to Kirtland in late November1835. Joseph and his brethren began studying Hebrew on their own at this point, and the translation of the scrolls was quickly dropped. Soon realizing they needed help, in early 1836 they hired Joshua Seixas to teach them. There may be traces of Seixas in some of the transliterations (especially "ba-eth" and related spellings), but perhaps the details of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers may have already been influenced by the Hebrew of Moses Stuart and others, possibly including Hyman Hurwitz, before they learned from Seixas.

While Phelps never uses Seixas's *auleph* in the KEP nor his *dauleth* (or other "Egyptian" words beginning with *dau*), he does use these forms later in a short science-fiction story that he published in 1845, "Paracletes," as discussed by Samuel Brown.[61] A number of characters are given names based on *Mil* plus a Hebrew letter, including *Milauleph*, *Milbeth*, *Milgimal*, *Mildauleth*, *Milhah*, *Milvah* and *Milzah,* the latter apparently being derived from *he*, *vav*, and *zayin*.

Having noted the relationship between the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet and the number 2 in the Egyptian Counting document via an unusual character provided by Moses Stuart, we might wonder if other characters he provides are also tied to characters in the KEP. No other clear correspondence exists with the Egyptian Counting document. However, there might be a connection between *aleph*-related words in the KEP with one of Stuart's Hebrew coin-letters for *aleph* that is essentially our letter *V* with a line through it, like an inverted letter *A*. That coin-letter has something in common with the first character listed by Phelps on page 1 of the GAEL (p. 116 of JSPRT4), character 5.27, shown in Figure 5.

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61. Samuel Brown, "William Phelps's Paracletes, An Early Witness To Joseph Smith's Divine Anthropology," *International Journal of Mormon Studies* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 62-82, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1402664.
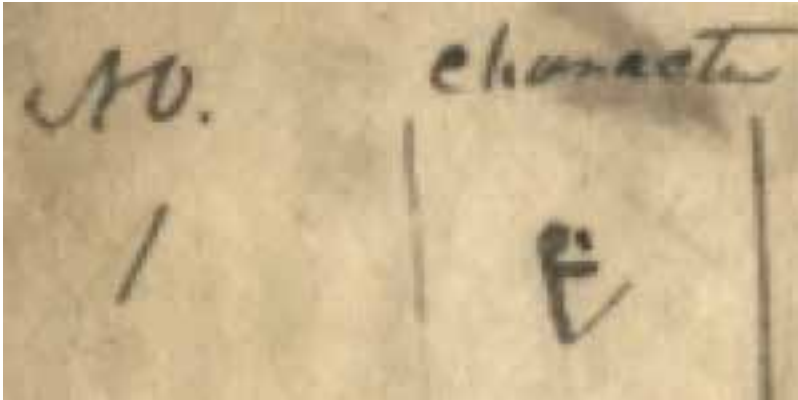
Figure 5.

This character is not really defined there, but on page three of the GAEL (p. 120 of JSPRT4), character 1.1, a character similar to character 5.27 minus the horizontal stroke and dot, similar to an inverted Egyptian Counting document character for the number 1, is said to be

> Ah lish The first Being — supreme intelligence; supreme power; supreme glory= supreme Justice; supreme mercy without beginning of life or end of life comprehending all things, seeing all things: the invisible and eter[n]al[62] godhead. (p. 121)

Ah lish could be inspired by *aleph* and has a meaning to match. Whether it has any relationship to a Hebrew coin-letter or not, the Egyptian Counting document's number for 1 could be related to a GAEL character whose sound and assigned meaning relate to *aleph*. Most of the other Egyptian Counting numbers seem to be variations of our Arabic numerals, as can also be said of the Egyptian Counting 1. The symbol for 2 is a standout in having a symbol closely related to a Hebrew coin-letter version of the corresponding Hebrew numeral, the letter *beth*, which also occurs near the beginning of the GAEL, where on page 2 we learn that *beth* is a place of happiness, which also fits nicely with the Hebrew meaning of the letter *beth*, "house."

After *beth*, we then have a mysterious character on page 2 of the GAEL (p. 118 of JSPRT4), character 5.28, which is generally said to be *Ah brah-oam*

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62. In the high resolution image of the JSPP website, there's enough of a squiggle after the *r* in *eternal* that I think the author, W. W. Phelps, for this part of the document, should be credited with *eternal* rather than a typo that requires an editorial addition of [*n*], but that's a minor issue.

but reported here as *Ah brah-aam*.[63] That character looks much like the Arabic alphabet letter corresponding to Hebrew *daleth*, as shown in the image above of p. 10 of Stuart (see Figure 6). Could this derive from Stuart?
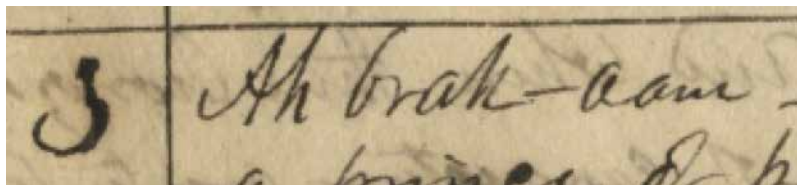
Figure 6.

Further, the mysterious *iota*, character 1.14 in JSPRT4, presented as just a round dot in the KEP, may be related to the almost dot-like Syriac alphabet version of the Hebrew letter *yodh* presented by Stuart above. which can function as a *y* sound or as the vowel *i,* though a relationship with Hebrew pointing for the vowel *i* (discussed below) seems more likely.

Turning to possible relationships between the KEP and Hebrew diacritics, Stuart and Hurwitz, like Seixas, naturally explain the use of various marks, though Hurwitz may have an edge over Stuart and Seixas in possibly serving as a source for some of the KEP's content related to JSPRT4's character 1.14, *iota.*

Could the *iota* of the KEP, seemingly based on the Greek letter *iota* corresponding to the letter *I* be related to *yodh* of the Hebrew alphabet? Some clues suggest a connection to the Hebrew letter, and a Hebrew textbook might have served as inspiration for the KEP.

The pointing to add the *i* vowel sound is a dot under a letter, shown in Figure 7 from Hurwitz's tables for long and short vowels, respectively.[64]

Figure 7.

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63. On several occasions, cursive *o* appears to be confused for *a* in the transcriptions. The two letters often look very similar, but in this case the leading character in the apparent *aam* has a final stroke making a hint of the loop that is typical for *o* in Phelps' writing, suggesting that it the word may be the expected *Ah brah-aam* after all.

64. Hurwitz, *Etymology and Syntax*, 15.

Interestingly, one of the more common "Egyptian" characters that may not be Egyptian at all is designated as character 3.15 in JSPRT4 and is depicted as a horizontal line centered over a single dot, exactly like Hurwitz's depiction for *hirik* above, though he was showing placement of the *hirik* relative to a long vowel, not suggesting that the line above a dot was a unique character, though it may have served as inspiration for part of the KEP. This character, said to be *iota nitahveh ah que*, occurs in all three Egyptian Alphabet documents and occurs six times in the GAEL (see summary at p. 371). It is said to mean "I saw twenty-five persons." Occurrences of the allegedly "Egyptian" character are in the form of a dot that is placed under a horizontal line, exactly like the depiction for the *hirik* (see Figure 8).

Figure 8.

The dot, *iota,* character 1.14, is said to mean "eye" or "to see." Is it a coincidence that *eye* = *iota* = *i*? Perhaps so.

The case for the influence of Hebrew on the KEP should be strong, based on the presence of multiple words that are related to letters of the Hebrew alphabet, along with assigned meanings that often correlate with two of the associated numerals (first/primary for *aleph* and secondary for *beth*) and, in the case of *beth*, its meaning of "house." One could argue that this could come from general familiarity with Bible study materials rather than Hebrew study per se. Perhaps more than casual familiarity with Hebrew letters may be needed to account for other parallels involving Hebrew diacritics and particularly the vowel *i* and *iota*. But the case for the influence of a specific Hebrew book brought to Kirtland on November 20, 1835, is enhanced by noting that the "Egyptian" number for 2 in the Egyptian Counting document appears to be taken from Moses Stuart and is not likely to be due to random chance, since it's an unusual character, used without any significant modification like inversion, and the associated Hebrew name of *beth* is used in "Egyptian" words in the KEP with a reasonably related assigned meaning in the KEP pertaining to "secondary" concepts appropriate for the number 2. I don't think chance alone can plausibly explain these parallels.

Further investigation should also consider the possible influence of other Hebrew materials and explore the possibility that Hurwitz's materials were on hand to influence the KEP. In addition to Hurwitz's

KEP-compatible transliteration system, heavy use of hyphens to separate symbols, and many transliterated words with *h* following a vowel akin to the KEP,[65] Hurwitz also emphasizes the Hebrew word for *moon* and gives multiple cognates.[66] This word is clearly related to the name *Libnah* in the 1842 Book of Abraham, though the earlier extant manuscripts have *Zibnah*. It is unknown if the change was made around 1842 or much earlier, or whether *Zibnah* was the originally intended or dictated word (the similarity in nineteenth-century cursive between capital *Z* and *L* would seem to facilitate a scribal error that could result in an initial *Libnah* becoming *Zibnah* in many Book of Abraham documents). The relationship between *Libnah* and the color "white" may be a fitting link to Duamutef, the son of Horus named *Libnah* by Joseph Smith.[67]

Hurwitz's *Etymology and Syntax* may also help solve one of the many puzzling statements of W. W. Phelps in the GAEL, the discussion of the "parts of speech" at the beginning of the document which shares some strange theories about how characters need to connect to the different parts of speech. But in discussing parts of speech, Phelps does not mention nouns. The word *pronoun* occurs once in the GAEL, but *noun* does not, while verbs are discussed a couple of times and mentioned as one of the "parts of speech." Here are two excerpts from the GAEL

65. See, for example, Hyman Hurwitz, *Etymology and Syntax,* 7, which lists *a-loh*, *o-leh*, *o-lah*, *a-lah*, *a-leh*, *al*, *el-yon*, *ma-aleh*, *ma-alah*, *na-alah*, eli, and *th'-a-lah*.

66. On pages 10‒11 of *Etymology and Syntax*, Hurwitz gives examples of etymology involving words related to *l'ba-nah*, meaning "the moon," or literally "the white one." Related words shown include *lib'neh*, *l'bo-nah*, *l'banon* (the name of the land Lebanon), *l'ba-nah*, and *hel-b'nah*. This example illustrates the tendency of Hurwitz to separate syllables with hyphens, as is common in the KEP. It also points to the apparent Hebrew origins of the word *Libnah* in the Book of Abraham, one of the Egyptian gods mentioned by Abraham. However, the name used throughout the KEP is *Zibnah*, not *Libnah*.

The earliest record of *Libnah* in a Book of Abraham manuscript is a copy of the Book of Abraham text in Willard Richards's handwriting in 1842, possibly a document used to prepare the published version of the Book of Abraham. In that manuscript, *Zibnah* was written originally and then the *Z* is overwritten with an *L*. The cursive *Z* in *Zibnah* in the KEP and in Richards's handwriting as well looks much like a *Z* with an extra arc in the beginning of the letter. This could result in a copying error, writing *Z* when *L* was intended. Was there an original nonextant document with dictated *Libnah* that was copied as *Zibnah* into a document used for the KEP, or, probably more likely, did Joseph make the correction initially in 1842?

67. Rick Moser, "Facsimile 1 Figure 6 – Eastern Sunrise," *Conflict of Justice* (blog), Feb. 27, 2019, http://www.conflictofjustice.com/facsimile-1-figure-6-eastern-sunrise/.

transcript at the Joseph Smith Papers Project website,[68] nearly the same as the transcript in JSPRT4:[69]

> By counting the numbers of st[r]aight lines ~~and preseving them~~, or considering them as qualifying adjectives we have the degrees of comparison There are five connecting *parts of speech* in the above character, called Za-ki an hish. These five connecting *parts of speech*, for *verbs, participles — prepositions, conjunctions,* and *adverbs*. In ~~translation~~ translating this chara[c]ter, this subject must be continued until there are as many of these connecting *parts of speech* used as there are connections or connecting parts found in the character. (p. 1 of GAEL)

> For instance, the first connection should be called Jugos, which signifies *verb* or action: and the second connection should be called Ka=Jugos, which is a variation, according to the signification of the second degree: Kah Jugos should <be> preserved in the second degree. It signifies an action passed: The third connection is called Kah pr=ga=os, which signifies an action to be received or <to> come to pass. The fourth connection is called Ka=os-Ju which signifies connection and the fifth is called Ka-os=Juga=os and is used to qualify according to the signification of the fifth degree. whether for *prepositions, verbs, adve[r]bs* &c. (p. 15 of GAEL)

When I first read Phelps's comments in the painful-to-read GAEL, I was puzzled about his *apparent omission of nouns as a part of speech*, when they clearly are present in the GAEL. A possible explanation might come from Phelps's study of Hebrew. Perhaps Phelps was influenced by the discussion of the relationship of nouns and verbs in some of the Hebrew books he may have encountered when the Saints began delving into Hebrew, particularly Hurwitz's *The Etymology and Syntax*.

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68. Transcript of the Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language, *Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/grammar-and-alphabet-of-the-egyptian-language-circa-july-circa-november-1835/181#full-transcript and JSPRT4, 117-83.

69. For the transcript of page 1 of the GAEL, see JSPRT4, 117. For page 15 of the GAEL, see JSPRT4, 145. Differences relative to the JSPP website are in details regarding the emendations made to the text, where the printed volume generally gives more precise technical information.

Hurwitz makes an argument over several pages (pp. 8–14) that nouns tend to come from verbs and that verbs should take priority:

> [I]t follows that these two species of words [verbs and nouns] must have formed the very rudiments of language. But, as if both could not have been invented at the same time, it has been made a question which of the two has a right to claim the priority. Most of the Oriental Grammarians have decided in favor of the Verb.[70]

> [T]he class of words which grammarians denominate *nouns* must originally have been *verbal* (somewhat like the words called participles), expressive of some property of circumstance by which the named object was characterized. And indeed, such is still the character of the far greater portion of Hebrew nouns, even of those which designate natural objects [here a list of examples is given including *ra-ki-a*, the firmament, and *l'ba-nah*, the moon, like *Libnah* in the Book of Abraham].[71]

> This being the case, we can easily comprehend how the same word would frequently be used both as a noun and as a verb. …[72]

> In all these examples it is evident that there is no distinction whatever between the noun and the verb; but even in those where a distinction exists, it is so slight, as clearly to show the common origin of the words. …[73]

> *Both theory and fact lead me, therefore, to conclude that the Hebrew nouns were originally verbalia; and that verbs ought to be considered as the elements of speech*, not on account of their priority of invention, but because they generally contain the primary signification of words.[74]

Hurwitz also uses the phrase *parts of speech* eight times in his text, with *part of speech* occurring four times. This may seem like a common phrase, but a search in Google Books for "parts of speech" between 1700 and 1835 yields only 14 hits. The singular *part of speech* over that time period yielded 12 hits. These are miniscule numbers. *Parts of speech* may not be a very common phrase at all, yet Phelps uses it nine times in the

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70. Hurwitz, *Etymology and Syntax*, 8.
71. Ibid., 10.
72. Ibid., 12.
73. Ibid., 13.
74. Ibid., 14, emphasis added.

GAEL (six times on the first page), and Hurwitz uses it almost as much in his book. Hurwitz's first use is in pointing out that verbs will be the starting place for treating the different parts of speech:

> In treating of the different *parts of speech*, Orientalists generally begin with the verb.[75]

> The early Hebrew Grammarians reckoned only three *parts of speech* : 1) the name, in which they included nouns and adjectives : 2) the verb : 3) the particle in which they included the other classes.[76] [*emphasis added, Hebrew omitted*]

Could Phelps's emphasis on verbs and omission of nouns as "parts of speech" derive from study of Hurwitz?

Another characteristic of the GAEL is the frequent use of the term *signification* to describe various aspects of the words being examined. There are 25 occurrences of this term in the relatively brief text. Hurwitz also uses that word dozens of times. Surprisingly, the word *signification* does not occur frequently before 1835. On Google Books there are only 19 hits between 1700 and 1835. Perhaps this could be considered as another possible link between Hurwitz and Phelps. Not too much can be made of using a known but not highly common word, but in combination with the even less common *parts of speech* and the unusual teaching of the priority of verbs over nouns, there may be a basis for believing that Hurwitz's book either directly or indirectly shaped Phelps during the early 1836 period of intense Hebrew study among the Latter-day Saints.

The possible relationships between Phelps's writings in the GAEL and a book on Hebrew by Hyman Hurwitz could be one more indication that the Kirtland Egyptian Papers cannot be understood without recognizing the impact of Hebrew study on their content.

Summarizing, we see hints of Hebrew-study influence on the KEP not only from (1) the many terms in the Kirtland Egyptian Papers related to Hebrew letters including *aleph*, *beth*, *daleth*, *gimel*, *he*, and possibly *ayin*; (2) awareness of the meaning and numerical value of *beth* and the numerical value of *aleph*; (3) apparent awareness of diacritical marks, such as the lone dot to represent the vowel sound *i* ("iota"), and dots placed in various positions relative to characters similar to Hebrew pointing, though this issue may be due to coincidence; (4) use of at least one and possibly several Hebrew coin-letters from Moses Stuart, including the surprisingly appropriate use of the unusual coin-letter form of *beth* for the number 2 in

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75. Ibid., vii.
76. Ibid., 6.

the Egyptian Counting document; and now (5) incorporation of Hurwitz's teachings on the lack of distinction of verbs and nouns, with priority given to verbs, expressed in language referring to the "parts of speech" in a text that makes heavy use of the word *signification*.

Could Phelps have studied Hebrew on his own before he participated with the Saints in studying Hebrew in 1836? When Hebrew study began in Kirtland, Phelps was not able to participate initially due to interference from many other duties. On January 5, 1836, he wrote, "I want to study Hebrew, and I have not as yet been able to begin."[77] He would excel when he later began studying, but his statement seems to suggest that he did not already have serious Hebrew study in his background.

It seems to me that the role of Hebrew study on the Kirtland Egyptian Papers needs more attention and research. It is true that Joseph ceased translating the Book of Abraham (or had already finished most of the translation) a few days after Oliver returned to Kirtland on November 20, 1835. However, work on the Kirtland Egyptian Papers may have continued or been stimulated by the Hebrew discoveries being made, leading to several ways in which Hebrew study would influence the KEP.

Unfortunately, in JSPRT4, it seems to be assumed that the work with the KEP was pretty much completed by the time serious Hebrew study started. There seems to be essentially no recognition of the impact of Hebrew study on the project or on the documents. This may have resulted in a missed opportunity to more accurately date the undated documents and to more fully understand the influences that shaped the study and speculations of early Latter-day Saints, however fallacious those purely human intellectual efforts were.

4. Errors in the Assumed Dates of Key Documents

Warren Parrish was hired as a scribe on October 29, 1835, as JSPRT4 recognizes, yet documents he wrote as a scribe are given the improperly early date range of June 1835 to November 1835. For example, both Book of Abraham Manuscript B (in the handwriting of Parrish alone) and Book of Abraham Manuscript C (in the handwriting of Phelps for vv. 1–3, thereafter Parrish) are given a date of July–circa November 1835

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77.   W. W. Phelps, Jan. 5, 1836, as cited by Bruce Van Orden, *We'll Sing and We'll Shout* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, and Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2018), 165. However, it is possible that Phelps had been exposed to some aspects of Hebrew earlier. Years earlier he had mentioned some Hebrew words in other publications and had a general interest in languages. See Grey, "'The Word of the Lord in the Original.'"

(p. 217). Content from Parrish should clearly be labeled with a date no earlier than October 1835 (though it's possible Manuscript C was begun by Phelps much earlier). Here John Gee's assessment is more reasonable: he lists both documents as from October 29, 1835 to April 1836,[78] a range that leaves open the possibility of Hebrew study influence. However, some of Gee's proposed dates for other documents may still be too early.

In response to the above statement, one reviewer kindly pointed out that Parrish was working as a volunteer scribe for Joseph Smith before October 29, 1835, noting that Parrish was acting as a clerk, for example, for the Kirtland High Council and served as a scribe for Joseph in writing letters.

Parrish's work can be explored using the JSPP website's biography,[79] which includes a list of associated documents that either mention Parrish or are in his handwriting. One document showing his role in the High Council is "Minutes, 17 August 1835," where Parrish is listed as one of three clerks.[80] In the source note provided, footnote 18 informs us that "Parrish had been preaching in Tennessee and had just reached Kirtland a few days before."[81] Parrish's summer mission would have kept him from being involved in the early work with the Book of Abraham. He clearly was involved with the High Council as a clerk by mid-August, but does that translate into personal scribal work for Joseph?

Looking for support for Parrish's volunteer work of writing letters for Joseph earlier in 1835, the only relevant document I could find on the JSPP website is a document in Parrish's handwriting labeled "Revelation, [Kirtland Township, Geauga Co., Ohio], 27 Oct. 1835."[82] This was just two days before Joseph wrote of hiring Parrish as a scribe and may not adequately allay my concern about ascribing unnecessarily early dates to the KEP documents that Parrish prepared.

While it is possible that Parrish was involved with the Book of Abraham project in August, September, or early October, his handwriting on the extant documents of the KEP is likely to date to after his being hired as a scribe, and possibly beginning mid-November, 1835, according

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78. Gee, *Introduction to the Book of Abraham*, 27.

79. "Parrish, Warren Farr," *Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.josephsmithpapers. org/person/warren-farr-parrish.

80. "Minutes, 17 August 1835," *Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.josephsmithpapers. org/paper-summary/minutes-17-august-1835/1#full-transcript.

81. ("From the Letters of the Elders Abroad," *LDS Messenger and Advocate*, Aug. 1835, 1:167-68.)

82. Revelation (Kirtland Township, Geauga Co., OH), 27 Oct. 1835, *Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/ revelation-27-october-1835/1#source-note.

to Bruce Van Orden in his biography of W. W. Phelps, *We'll Sing and We'll Shout*:

> One solution to Joseph's pressing administration needs was to hire a new scribe in addition to Cowdery and Phelps. On Thursday, October 29, Joseph's record stated that the Prophet hired Warren Parrish for fifteen dollars per month. …
>
> Parrish became acquainted about this time with the Egyptian papyri in order to take over as the main scribe on that project. Phelps was assigned in early November to work almost full-time at the printing office to produce the reprint of *The Evening and the Morning Star*, complete the hymnbook, help John Whitmer get caught up on the backlogged *Messenger and Advocate*, ensure the *Northern Times* was up to date, and assist in distributing the Doctrine and Covenants.
>
> Parrish became Smith's assistant in further work on the Book of Abraham and related Egyptian projects. The handwriting on the Book of Abraham manuscript, the Egyptian alphabet and grammar documents, and Joseph Smith's diary changes from that of Phelps or Cowdery to that of Parrish. This took place in mid-November 1835.[83]

Further, based on the above discussion of the influence of Hebrew study on the KEP, it seems that the Saints' study of Hebrew after November 20, 1835, may have influenced the Egyptian Counting manuscript, the Egyptian Alphabet documents, and the Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language. This would seem to require a date well after the July 1835 to November 1835 dates given by the editors of JSPRT4 for these documents. The latest listed possibility of November 26, 1835, on the JSPP website for the Egyptian Counting document[84] theoretically could work if the Hebrew study materials brought on November 20 were digested immediately and then applied to create the Egyptian Counting document, but much more time is needed for the other documents to evolve and draw upon the Egyptian Counting document. If the apparent influences of Hebrew study in the KEP discussed in Issue 3 above are real, by the time the existing Egyptian Alphabet documents and the

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83. Van Orden, *We'll Sing and We'll Shout*, 192.
84. "Egyptian Counting, circa Early July–circa 26 November 1835," *Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/egyptian-counting-circa-early-july-circa-26-november-1835/1#facts.

GAEL were prepared or even started, Hebrew study had already begun, and the translation of the Book of Abraham had already stopped.

The GAEL and the earlier Egyptian Alphabet documents from the Kirtland Egyptian Papers are said by critics to show Joseph Smith's translation process. It is frequently assumed, especially by our critics, that these documents preceded the translation of the Book of Abraham or show it in progress. However, the documents in question generally lack dates, and the vague statements from those who produced them do not identify when these specific documents were produced, nor do they explain *why* they were produced. Caution is needed in assigning dates. Unfortunately, the editors of JSPRT4 have assumed these documents were produced in the same time frame as the Kirtland-era translation of the Book of Abraham, which occurred from July to November 1835. This generous date range would enable the Kirtland Egyptian Papers to serve as sources for the production of the Book of Abraham, a theory favored either intentionally or unintentionally in the treatment of these documents in JSPRT4, consistent with the personal views at least one of the editors but not consistent with the unreferenced analysis of other scholars.

If these documents arose after November 1835, then that would strengthen the argument of apologists that the Kirtland Egyptian Papers are derived from the revealed translation and not the other way around. The dates matter, at least to some people and for some issues. Unfortunately, textual clues indicate the assumed dates presented in JSPRT4 are in serious error (see Issue 3, above, on the implications of Hebrew study on the dates of documents).

5. Granting Improper Credibility to a Key Claim of Book of Abraham Critics Regarding the Twin Book of Abraham Manuscripts A and B

A popular and seemingly potent claim of some critics is that we can see evidence of Joseph "translating" on the fly from the characters in the margins of the Book of Abraham Manuscript A and Manuscript B, which show evidence of two scribes simultaneously copying down text that someone was reading. (Manuscript C is in the handwriting of W. W. Phelps for the first 20 lines giving Abraham 1:1–3, and then it switches to that of Warren Parrish, and shows signs of coming after the first two documents, A and B.)

Manuscript A and Manuscript B both begin with the very same mistakes and corrections, as if the speaker were catching the errors and correcting them on the fly. As we look on the first page of both

manuscripts, there is clearly an oral process going on, especially when we see different spellings for unusual names. So this is said to give us a window into Joseph's *translation* showing what is happening as he dictates, showing us how he used a few characters to create large blocks of text. We see the original Book of Abraham text being created from mystic Egyptian — and it's just embarrassing.

These documents are then used in making some of the most widely disseminated arguments against the Book of Abraham, and it is crucial that the editorial comments be made with caution and care, and with an awareness of the potential impact these documents can have when used to undermine testimonies of the Restoration.

Yes, there certainly appears to be an oral process occurring with simultaneous copying, at least at the beginning of Manuscripts A and B. But was it really Joseph dictating? How do we know? This is simply an assumption made by our critics. And was this dictation of text being revealed/fabricated on the fly, or was it dictation from an existing manuscript to help two scribes make a copy? The editors of JSPRT4 express their interpretations of these documents as follows (part of which was mentioned in Issue 2, above):

> Discrepancies in the spelling of several words in the two manuscripts suggest that the manuscripts were not visually compared against one another or against a single, earlier version. Given the similarities between the texts of the two manuscripts and the revision process for both, *JS may have dictated some or most of the text to both scribes at the same time. In that case, these two manuscripts would likely be the earliest dictated copies of the Book of Abraham.* Some scribal errors in the later portion of the manuscript made by Williams, however, indicate that he copied some of his text from another manuscript. *JS may have read aloud to Williams and Parrish from an earlier, nonextant text, making corrections as he went*; he followed a similar process in his work in the Bible revision project.

> The third version, inscribed by Phelps and Parrish, silently incorporates most of the changes made in the earlier Williams and Parrish versions. The most complete of any of the extant versions created in Kirtland, the manuscript inscribed by Phelps and Parrish was originally copied into a bound volume, which suggests that it was viewed as *a more permanent text, rather than a work in progress.* This manuscript also contains

prefatory material that does not appear in the other two Kirtland-era manuscripts. *This prefatory material contains the most similarities to the definitions in the Grammar and Alphabet volume and was therefore also likely connected to JS's study of the Egyptian language.* Many themes appear both in the Book of Abraham manuscript inscribed by Phelps and Parrish in the Grammar and Alphabet volume, and three characters that are analyzed in the fifth degree of the first part of the Grammar and Alphabet volume are found in the margin of this manuscript.

JS may have planned to translate more of the Book of Abraham when he moved to Missouri, but the conflict that ensued there, as well as JS's arrest and incarceration in 1838–39, prevented additional work. *JS dictated later portions of the Book of Abraham in Nauvoo in 1842.* (JSPRT4, p. 192)

Do these manuscripts represent translation work in progress and give us a window into how Joseph created the Book of Abraham? Could these really be the earliest dictated manuscripts of the Book of Abraham? Do they derive from definitions in the GAEL and reflect Joseph's misguided personal study of Egyptian? Those are all key talking points for critics of the Book of Abraham, part of the basic fabric for the case against Joseph as a prophet. But a more careful examination of these documents reveals the questionable scholarship behind such arguments.

A careful look at the twin texts A and B shows that what was being dictated was an already existing text, not one being created. Fortunately, the editors of another volume in the JSP series, *Documents: Volume 5, January 1835–October 1838*, recognize this: "Textual evidence suggests that these Book of Abraham texts were based on an earlier manuscript that no longer exists."[85] The supporting footnote explains:

Documents dictated directly by JS typically had few paragraph breaks, punctuation marks, or contemporaneous alterations to the text. All the extant copies, including the featured text, have regular paragraphing and punctuation included at the time of transcription as well as several cancellations and insertions.[86]

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85. Brent M. Rogers, et al., eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents: Volume 5, January 1835–October 1838* (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press, 2017), 74-75.

86. Rogers et al., *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents: Volume 5,* 74-75n323.

This point should have been made in JSPRT4, not out of a shameless desire to support apologetics, but to point out something distinctive and obvious about the manuscripts that, incidentally, weakens a common argument from Book of Abraham critics. The apologetic argument need not be explicitly raised, but the evidence pointing to the existence of an earlier manuscript is relevant and important and should not be brushed aside in favor of anyone's personal theory that these documents show a "window" into the live translation process of Joseph Smith.

Further, the evidence suggests the most likely source of dictation was *not* Joseph Smith but one of the two scribes who was initially reading aloud for the benefit of the other. The most plausible scenario to account for these documents is that Warren Parrish was dictating for the benefit of his fellow scribe Frederick Williams as they both made copies of an existing text, but when Parrish left at one point, Williams began copying visually from the existing manuscript and then made a classic blunder typical of visual copying, not taking oral dictation.

Why would Parrish stop writing while Williams continued? If these manuscripts were being prepared after self-directed or tutored Hebrew study had commenced in December of 1835 or January of 1836, then one possibility for Parrish running out of breath in the scribal work for Book of Abraham Manuscript B could be his respiratory illness, which began in December 1835 and continued to afflict him in January 1836, so much so that he wrote the following to Joseph as he temporarily backed down from his writing work: "I have a violent cough and writing has a particular tendency to injure my lungs. I therefore with reluctance send your journal to you until my health improves."[87] Parrish would return to his scribal duties on February 8, 1836.[88] The reason for leaving early is only of secondary interest, however. More important is what we learn from the manuscripts.

Parrish, working on Manuscript B, stopped early after writing "who was the daughter of Haran" from Abraham 2:2. However, Williams kept on writing in Manuscript A. *It was at this point where something changed*, as is visible in the image and transcription in JSPRT4 (pp. 200–01) and on the website.[89] Initially I thought it was Williams who may have been

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87. Warren Parrish letter to Joseph Smith, as cited in Dean C. Jessee, "The Writing of Joseph Smith's History," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (1971): 448, https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol11/iss4/8.

88. Ibid.

89. Book of Abraham Manuscript A, p. 4, *Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/book-of-abraham-manuscript-circa-july-circa-november-1835-a-abraham-14-26/4.

reading, but examination of the spelling of names shows that Parrish was probably looking at the manuscript and was able to spell unusual names consistently, while Williams shows great variability, making the kind of mistakes natural in taking dictation. Thus it seems that dictation was occurring and continued as long as both scribes were writing, but when Parrish stopped after Abraham 2:2, it seems he left or otherwise ceased dictating because after this change, Williams's manuscript shows a classic copying blunder that does not fit a scenario of taking dictation from Joseph Smith: he accidentally jumped back in the text he was looking at and began copying a large block of text a second time, repeating the three verses of Abraham 2:3–5 essentially word for word (an error known as *dittography*).[90] The change also includes writing all the way to the left margin of the page instead of respecting the column that held occasional Egyptian characters.

The common mistakes and corrections in the beginning of the documents are hard to explain if Joseph were dictating and already had a sentence in his head, but make sense if a scribe is reading aloud from an existing manuscript a few words at a time as both scribes then write what has been spoken. Consider the opening lines, here taken from the transcript of Manuscript A on the JSPP website:

> I sought for <mine> ~~the~~ appointment ~~whereunto~~ unto the priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the fathers concerning the seed…[91]

How does "mine appointment" get turned into "the appointment"? Note that the final sentence in question has both "mine appointment" and "the appointment" right after it. When copying by hand from an existing text or reading aloud from an existing text, skipping ahead (or looking back) to a similar phrase and momentarily confusing the two is an easy and common mistake to make. Switching a nearby "the appointment" for the immediate "mine appointment" would be completely understandable if one were working from an existing text. It's also possible that if the reader were not used to putting *mine* in front of a noun, one could also subconsciously make it more natural by reading *the* for *mine*. The fact that *mine* ends with *ne*, which can look like *he* in *the* might have contributed to the error. But in any case, looking at an

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90. Lindsay, "The Twin Book of Abraham Manuscripts."

91. "Book of Abraham Manuscript A," *Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/book-of-abraham-manuscript-circa-july-circa-november-1835-a-abraham-14-26/1.

existing text and copying or reading could readily result in this error, whereas if one had decided to speak of "my appointment" (if Joseph were making up scripture on the fly) but in old fashioned language, it's unlikely that one would slip and just say *the* instead, when the context of the sentence demands a possessive. This is an error that most likely is due to working with an existing text.

Next, how could "appointment unto" become "appointment whereunto" if one is dictating one's own words and ideas? This mistake, however, could again be very natural if someone were reading out loud from an existing text in hand. The conversion of *unto* into *whereunto* makes sense as a scribal or reading error given that *whereunto* was just used in a similar context earlier in Abraham 1:2, assuming that it was present on the hypothesized preexisting, more complete manuscript. In that verse, *whereunto* is also in the context of receiving the Priesthood:

> And, finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right *whereunto* I should be ordained to administer the same.

If the person reading the text to our two scribes had the complete text of Abraham 1 in hand, helping them to make copies for their own use or study, perhaps, then if that person had previously read verse 2 or were familiar with it, then memory (or visual memory) of that previous *whereunto* regarding Priesthood rights could easily cause one to stumble and say *whereunto* instead of *unto*. The same could happen for someone making a copy by hand, but since two manuscripts from two scribes have the same error, it would seem they are either taking notes from dictation or deliberately preserving scribal errors from a previous text, which would seem unlikely.

Evidence that it is Parrish who is reading and not Joseph Smith comes from analysis of the spelling errors made. If one of the scribes were the speaker and had the text before him, he would have had the benefit of seeing how unusual names were spelled, and thus would be less likely to introduce misspellings that needed correction when it came to proper names. So let's look at the typos in proper names in these two manuscripts and see how they compare. Below are the proper names in each manuscript, excluding the common or relatively easy names Egypt and Egyptian, Ham, Adam, and Noah. They are shown in order and grouped by name in order of occurrence and showing corrections. First we consider the transcript of Manuscript A by Frederick G. Williams:

- *Elk=Kener, Elk=Kener, Elk=Keenah, Elk-keenah, Elk Keenah, Elk-Keenah, Elkkeenah*
- *Zibnah, Zibnah, Zibnah*
- *Mah-mackrah, Mah-Mach-rah, Mah-Mach-rah*
- *Pharoah, Pharaoh, Pharaoh, pharaoh, Pharaoh, Pharaoh, Pharaoh, Pharaoh, Pharaohs*
- *Chaldea, Chaldea, Chaldeea, Chaldea, Chaldea, chaldees, chaldees, chaldees*
- *Chaldeans, Chaldians, Chaldea* ["in the Chaldea signifies Egypt" — Chaldean is meant]
- *Shag=reel, Shag-reel*
- *Potipher<s> hill, Potiphers hill*
- *Olishem*
- *O̶n̶i̶t̶u̶s̶ Onitah*
- *Kah-lee-nos* [note that the canonized text has Rahleenos]
- *Abram, Abram̶, A̶b̶r̶a̶h̶a̶m̶ <Abram>, Abram, Abram, Abram*
- *Ur, Ur, Ur, Ur, Ur*
- *Cananitess, cannites*
- *Zep-tah*
- *Egyptes*
- *Haran, Haron, Haran, Haran, Haran, Haran, Haran*
- *Terah*
- *Sarai, Sarai, sarah*
- *Nahor*
- *Milcah*
- *canaan, canaan*
- *Lot*

Manuscript B by Warren Parrish has these proper names with corrections shown:

- *Elkkener, Elkken[er]* [here the edge of the paper is damaged obscuring the final *r*, but it appears he wrote the full word, *Elkkener*], *Elkkener, Elkkener, Elkkener, Elkkener*
- *Zibnah, Zibnah, Zibnah*
- *mahmachrah, Mahmachrah, Mahmachrah*
- *Pharoah, Pharao[h], Pharaoh, Pharaoh, Pharaoh, Pharaoh, Pharaoh, Pharaoh, Pharaoh, Pharaoh*
- *Chaldea, Chaldea, Chaldea, Chaldea, Chaldea, Chaldeas*
- *Chaldeans, Chaldeans, Chaldea* ["in the Chaldea signifies

Egypt" — Chaldean is meant, same error here as in Manuscript A],

- *Shagreel, Shagreel*
- *Potiphers hill, Potiphers hill*
- *Olishem*
- *Onitah*
- *Kahleenos* [The canonized text has *Rahleenos*. Since a cursive capital *R* often looks much like a *K*, it would be easy to read *Rahleeno*s on an existing text as *Kahleenos*. Williams also wrote *Kahleenos*. Perhaps the original text had *Kahleenos*, or it may have had *Rahleenos*, which Parrish or someone else misread.]
- *Abram, Abram, Abram*
- *ur, Ur, Ur*
- *canaanites, Canaanites*
- *Zeptah*
- *Egyptes*
- *Haran, Haran*
- *Terah*
- *Sarai*
- *Nahor*
- *Milcah*

Parrish is not a great speller, giving us *preist, sacrafice, fassion* (fashion), *patraarch, govermnent, pople* (people), *Idolitry, deliniate, runing,* and *smiten* in Manuscript B, but he spells names consistently, with the exception of capitalization and typos for *Pharaoh*. Williams, on the other hand, has significant variation in his spelling of unusual words, suggesting that for the most part, he was writing down what he heard, while Parrish might have been looking at what he was writing or was able to see it when needed if someone else were dictating, so his unusual words are spelled accurately and consistently.

Based on the data, it seems unlikely that Williams was reading the text, but much more likely that Parrish was, or that he could at least see the text when needed to see how unusual names were spelled. And it seems highly unlikely that a third party was reading to both Parrish and Williams.

In sum, textual analysis reveals that it is very unlikely that this text represents Joseph dictating text to his scribes but much more likely that it represents Parrish dictating to Williams as both made copies, until Parrish stopped and Williams then began visually copying the preexisting manuscript (no longer extant) and created a huge dittography

at that very point. Much points to the existence of a prior manuscript, initially read aloud by Parrish, then visually copied by Williams. Other errors in these documents are also consistent with this scenario.

Rather than leaving readers with the impression that these two documents may have been the original source of Book of Abraham material, it is important to explain why they reflect copying from an existing manuscript, both during the dictated portion and the final visually copied portion. At a minimum, JSPRT4 should have noted the implications about the format and punctuation of the documents that were properly observed in another volume of the Joseph Smith Papers. It is important to recognize that Joseph was not creating or revising his translation on the fly here, that these manuscripts cannot represent the earliest texts created by Joseph Smith for the Book of Abraham, and that they do not give us a window into how Joseph created and dictated his translated text. That gap is part of a prevalent pattern of overlooking perspectives and references to other scholarship that could lessen the impact of arguments against the authenticity of the Book of Abraham.

Unfortunately, editor Brian Hauglid in a public lecture at BYU recently argued that these manuscripts give us a *window* into Joseph's translation process,[92] and this viewpoint might have influenced the commentary if not the choice of what to exclude from the commentary (as in a complete neglect of Nibley).

Note also the closing sentence in the excerpt above of editorial comments on the documents in question here: "JS dictated later portions of the Book of Abraham in Nauvoo in 1842" (JSPRT4, p. 192). The footnote for that statement directs readers to p. 245, where we learn that the editors believe that dictation from Joseph Smith was at play in the 1842 Book of Abraham manuscript from Willard Richards because "significant misspellings and rushed letter formation in the entire manuscript suggest that someone — presumably JS — read from the Kirtland-era manuscripts, making occasional changes, while Richards inscribed the text" (p. 245). Many difficult names are actually spelled correctly without revision, and the impression of *rushed* letter formation may be a weak tool for discriminating dictation from visual copying, though I think dictation is plausible in this case. Whether the handwriting and spelling necessitates dictation may be debatable, but there is no evidence that any dictation related to that 1842 document was *from Joseph Smith*. It's an assumption.

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92. Hauglid and Jensen, "A Window into Joseph Smith's Translation," 2019. For a discussion of the impact of this presentation and its gaps, see Lindsay, "Friendly Fire from BYU."

It is possible that most of the Book of Abraham we now have was already completed in 1835, and some scholars argue for that position.[93] One clue to consider comes from George W. Robinson's record of a discourse by Joseph Smith on May 6, 1838, in which Joseph "instructed the Church, in the mistories [mysteries] of the Kingdom of God; giving them a history of the Plannets &c. and of Abrahams writings upon the Plannettary System &c."[94] If Joseph were teaching others about Abraham's cosmological writings, it would seem likely that he had already translated Abraham 3 and provided comments related to Facsimile 2. That would be consistent with the October 1, 1835, journal entry for Joseph Smith:

> This afternoon I labored on the Egyptian alphabet, in company with brothers O[liver] Cowdery and W[illiam] W. Phelps, and during the research the principles of Astronomy as understood by Father Abraham and the ancients, unfolded to our understanding; the particulars of which will appear hereafter.[95]

Statements in JSPRT4 like "JS dictated later portions of the Book of Abraham in Nauvoo in 1842" may create the impression that dictation means creation of the new text, when the possible dictation of that document may have been, as it was in the case of Manuscripts A and B discussed above, dictation of an existing text in order to make a copy rather than create new material, although it may have involved revisions of the existing text as well. *Translation* may include refining and editing in its broad usage among the early Saints, so caution is needed in interpreting occasional references to translation in journals or other sources.

Commentary that overlooks the possibility of a preexisting document also occurs with the later Manuscript C. In the introduction to Manuscript C, we read:

> It is unclear if Phelps copied from an earlier version of the Book of Abraham or if the portion of this manuscript that is in Phelps' handwriting is *the first iteration of that text*. The prefatory material inscribed by Phelps is closely related to the

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93. Muhlestein and Hansen, "'The Work of Translating.'"

94. "Discourse, 6 May 1838," *Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/discourse-6-may-1838/1#source-note.

95. Joseph Smith History, Oct. 1, 1835, in "History, 1838-1856, volume B-1 [1 September 1834-2 November 1838]," *Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-b-1-1-september-1834-2-november-1838/76.

English explanations of characters found in the Grammar and Alphabet volume. (JSPRT4, p. 217)

Here the editors suggest that Abraham 1:1–3, in the handwriting of Phelps, may be the "first iteration of the text." They imply it was freshly translated by using bits and pieces pulled from the GAEL. In fact, the corrections in Abraham 1:1–3 are consistent with visual copying of a manuscript and do not fit a scenario of live translation being dictated by Joseph Smith. Here is the transcript of Abraham 1:1–3 in W. W. Phelps's handwriting from Manuscript C:

> Translation of the Book of Abraham written by his own hand upon papyrus and found in the CataCombs of Egypts
>
> In the land of the Chaldeans, at the residince of my fathers, I, Abraham, saw, that it was needful for me to obtain another place of residence, and seeing there was greater happiness and peace and rest, for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same: Having been a follower of righteousness; desiring ~~one~~ <to be> one who possessed great Knowledge; a greater follower of righteousness; <a possessor of greater Knowledge;> a father of many nations; a prince of peace; one who keeps the commandments of God; a righful heir; a high priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers, from the begining of time; even from the begining, or before the foundation of the earth, down to the present time; even the right of the first born, or the first man, who is Adam, or first father, through <the> fathers, unto me.[96]

The first error occurs when "desiring to be one" was written as "desiring one." This is not likely to reflect an error in dictation but is more readily understood as a scribal error caused by skipping a couple of words. The correction was made by scraping off the ink of "one" and writing "to be" over that spot, a process that strikes me as more leisurely than simply striking out the error and continuing to better keep up with dictation.

The next correction is the insertion between existing lines of the phrase "a possessor of greater Knowledge." Since a related phrase had just been written, "one who possessed great Knowledge," it would be easy for a scribe making a visual copy to assume that the overlooked phrase was

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96. "Book of Abraham Manuscript C," *Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/book-of-abraham-manuscript-circa-july-circa-november-1835-c-abraham-11-218/1.

one that had just been written, and to look to the following new phrase to continue copying, only later noticing that a common scribal error (skipping text) had been made. This could also occur during dictation if the speaker changed his mind and decided to add one more phrase, but a scribal copying error is the more natural possibility here.

Both of the corrections made in this portion of the manuscript point to a scribe copying visually from an existing text. There is absolutely no basis for inferring that this might be "the first iteration" of the text.

The editors here also infer that this text may have been derived from the GAEL. The possibility that the phrases in the GAEL have been influenced by an existing translation does not receive attention in JSPRT4, as far as I can tell. But they are right that there are connections to the GAEL. For example, we find the following definitions of some characters in the GAEL:

> Ah-broam. one who possesses great knowledge (p. 13 of the GAEL)

> Ahbroam: a follower of righteousness a possesser of greater knowledge (p. 9 of the GAEL)

Since both possession of "great knowledge" and possession of "greater knowledge" exist in the GAEL, it would seem that the concept of both great and greater knowledge was already established (either on an original Book of Abraham document that the GAEL borrows or in the GAEL, if one believes that the GAEL was crafted first), making it less likely that the insertion of "a possessor of greater Knowledge" in Manuscript C was due to a new idea occurring to Joseph Smith during dictation and more likely to be momentary confusion by a scribe copying from an existing manuscript. The "first iteration" suggestion is irresponsible.

The inference in the Introduction to Manuscript C that it may be derived from the GAEL is made more explicit in the Introduction to the volume, where we read that "some evidence" exists for the derivation of the Book of Abraham from the GAEL, rather than the other way around:

> Some evidence indicates that material from the Grammar and Alphabet volume was incorporated into at least one portion of the Book of Abraham text in Kirtland. (JSPRT4, xxv)

A footnote for this statement references an article by Chris Smith[97] which argues that Abraham 1:1–3 seems too choppy and looks like it has

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97. Christopher C. Smith, "The Dependence of Abraham 1:1–3 on the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar," *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*

been crudely assembled from various phrases in the GAEL, which he assumes must pre-date the translation:

> The best evidence for considering the GAEL a *modus operandi* for translation of part of the Book of Abraham is that this method of composition left its mark on the text itself. In Abraham 1:1–3 we find the prophet's most explicit and thoroughgoing attempt to derive the Book of Abraham translation from the GAEL. Very few connecting parts of speech are supplied between the lexemes (units of vocabulary) here; almost every phrase has a correspondent in the Grammar. Material is drawn from all five degrees. This undoubtedly accounts for the choppiness and redundancy of these three verses, which stylistically are very different from the remainder of the Book of Abraham. Verse 3, for example, reads as though it has been cobbled together from a series of dictionary entries. Note the abundance of appositives introduced by the words *even* and *or*:
>
>> It was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth, down to the present time, even the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, or first father, through the fathers unto me. (Abraham 1:3)
>
> The stylistic difference from the rest of the book is a sure sign that these three verses are dependent on the GAEL, rather than the other way around.[98]

Seeing a decisive difference in style in 3 verses that discriminate them from the rest of the text seems like a highly subjective way to evaluate the origins of a text. Introducing phrases with *even* and *or* in seemingly choppy passages is actually not unique to Abraham 1:3. After five more uses of *even* just in Abraham 1, we soon encounter Abraham 2:11 and then Abraham 3:5, both of which employ *even* and *or*.

> And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) and in thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood), for I give unto thee a promise that this right

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29 (2009): 38-54, https://www.academia.edu/2357346/The_Dependence_of_Abraham_1_1-3_on_the_Egyptian_Alphabet_and_Grammar.

98. Ibid., 47.

shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, *or* the seed of the body) shall all the families of the earth be blessed, *even* with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, *even* of life eternal. (Abraham 2:11)

And the Lord said unto me: The planet which is the lesser light, lesser than that which is to rule the day, *even* the night, is above *or* greater than that upon which thou standest in point of reckoning, for it moveth in order more slow; this is in order because it standeth above the earth upon which thou standest, therefore the reckoning of its time is not so many as to its number of days, and of months, and of years. (Abraham 3:5)

Taking context *and* style into account, note that Abraham 1:3's allegedly unique stylistic problems involve discussion of origins and beginnings: "the *beginning of time, yea,* even *from the beginning,* or *before* the foundation of the earth, … even the right of *the firstborn, **or** the first man*." In context, the style of that language seems akin to what we find much later in Abraham 4:4–5, where *or* is again used:

4 And they (the Gods) comprehended the light, for it was bright; and they divided the light, or caused it to be divided, from the darkness.

5 And the Gods called the light Day, and the darkness they called Night. And it came to pass that from the evening until morning they called night; and from the morning until the evening they called day; and this was *the first,* or *the beginning,* of that which they called day and night.

Here we have references to *beginning* and *first* combined with *or,* just as in Abraham 1:3. Is there any substance to Chris Smith's subjective impressions? His claim, cited with approval in JSPRT4, that his perceived difference in style "is a sure sign that these three verses are dependent on the GAEL, rather than the other way around" simply reflects the opinion of an author who has overlooked the possibility that the GAEL was derived from an already existing translation. It is surprising that the article would be cited as if it were legitimate evidence for derivation of the Book of Abraham from the GAEL.

An interesting pattern in Abraham 1:1–2 suggests more than copying and pasting random phrases from the GAEL. Verse 1 begins with Abraham "at the residence of my fathers" but then seeks something more: "another place of residence." This theme of "seeking more" is

developed in verse 2 as Abraham seeks "greater happiness and peace and rest," seeks "the blessings of the fathers," and though already a follower of righteousness, desires "to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge." And then he comes back to the concept that begins his text, the fathers, as he seeks to be "even a father of many nations, a prince of peace," and thus he "became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers." Verse 3 then develops that theme more fully, and may have some structure to it:

A. from the fathers / from the fathers, [fathers]
     B. from the beginning of time / from the beginning [beginnings]
          C. before the foundation of the earth / to the present time [earth & time]
     B. right of the firstborn / first man, who is Adam [firsts]
A. first father / through the fathers [fathers]

Chiasmus may not have been intended (Robert F. Smith proposes larger chiastic structures for portions of the Book of Abraham, one of numerous evidences of antiquity he discusses for the Book of Abraham[99]), but the "redundancy" that Chris Smith sees as a telltale sign of fabrication from clumsy cobbling of phrases from the GAEL may reflect more purposeful authorship in the original text, even if the translation could be reworked to better meet the stylistic expectations of modern readers and critics.

Chris Smith makes a valuable point, however, in observing a connection between Abraham 1 and a blessing Oliver gave in the summer or fall of 1835, apparently penned in September 1835.[100] A more complete excerpt from the JSPP website follows:

> But before baptism, our souls were drawn out in mighty prayer to know how we might obtain the blessings of baptism and of the Holy Spirit, according to the order of God, and we diligently *saught for the right of the fathers*, and the authority of the holy priesthood, and the power to *admin[ister] in the same: for we desired to be followers of righteousness and the possessors of greater knowledge*, even the knowledge of the mysteries of

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99. Robert F. Smith, "A Brief Assessment of the Book of Abraham," Version 10, March 21, 2019, https://www.scribd.com/document/118810727/A-Brief-Assessment-of-the-LDS-Book-of-Abraham.

100. Smith, "The Dependence of Abraham 1:1–3 on the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar," 52. Smith cites Patriarchal Blessing book, 1:8-9, *Early Mormon Documents*, ed. Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 451-54.

> the kingdom of God. Therefore, we repaired to the woods, even as our father Joseph said we should, that is to the bush, and called upon the name of the Lord, and he answered us out of the heavens, and while we were in the heavenly vision the angel came down and bestowed upon us this priesthood; and then, as I have said, we repaired to the water and were baptized. After this we received the high and holy priesthood,[101]

Oliver is using language from Abraham 1:2, where Abraham "*sought* for the *blessings of the fathers*, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to *administer the same, … desiring* also to be … a greater *follower of righteousness*, and *to possess a greater knowledge*, and … I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers." Christopher Smith recognizes that Cowdery is drawing upon the Book of Abraham, not scattered phrases from the GAEL, and thus properly concludes that Abraham 1:1–3 must have been completed before September 1835. However, he improperly concludes that the GAEL therefore must have been completed before September 1835, maintaining the assumption that the GAEL must have come first.[102] It's much more reasonable to recognize that it came later and was drawing upon the translation for whatever its purpose was. Since JSPRT4 cites Christopher Smith's paper, it would have been helpful to recognize that its value is not in providing evidence of derivation from the GAEL, but in raising the bar for theories of the Book of Abraham's being derived from the GAEL, since such theories no longer have the luxury of allowing the GAEL to be completed in late November or early 1836. The concepts from Abraham 1:1–3 are at the core of what is in the GAEL, not just a tiny portion that could have been added as an addendum.

6. Improperly Downplaying Common Knowledge about Champollion and the Nature of the Egyptian Language: Egyptomania without Champollion?

The editors of JSPRT4 seem to minimize the state of public knowledge about the Rosetta Stone and the work of Young and Champollion in understanding the basics of the Egyptian language, thus raising the

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101. Oliver Cowdery, "Patriarchal Blessings," 1:8-9, cited in "Priesthood Restoration," *Joseph Smith Papers,* https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/site/priesthood-restoration. The JSPP site states that this was "probably recorded summer/fall 1835," while Christopher Smith states it was Sept. 1835.

102. Smith, "The Dependence of Abraham 1:1-3 on the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar," 53.

possibility that Joseph Smith really may have thought he could translate hundreds of words of text from a single Egyptian character, as we have in a standard critical narrative about how Joseph allegedly translated the Book of Abraham. In this, they are not alone. Brian Hauglid's coauthor for the forthcoming *The Pearl of Greatest Price: Mormonism's Beleaguered Scripture*,[103] Terryl Givens, one of the scholars on the Joseph Smith Papers' National Advisory Board, has expressed similar views, perhaps influenced by the prominent work of Hauglid and Jensen. In a 2017 lecture, Givens expressed his views on Egyptomania and its influence on Joseph Smith and the Book of Abraham.[104] Below is my transcription of a segment from the video as Givens explains how he thinks Joseph thought about Egyptian hieroglyphs:

> We've had a few references today to Nineteenth Century Egyptomania. The point that I want to make is that the kind of Egyptomania that I think might have been most relevant to Joseph Smith's religious fashioning predates the Napoleonic engagement with Egypt. It goes back to the Early Modern period. And I'm going to just summarize this very quickly for you by saying this, that the notion of hieroglyphs in particular in the Enlightenment and Romantic circles carried echoes of priestly powers of expression and discernment. But the term was also taken to imply an almost mystical concision and economy of expression unknown to modern languages. Many language theorists working in the Nineteenth Century to try to trace language to its Adamic form were convinced that the further back you go, the more compressed and concise language becomes. By the time you get to the hieroglyph, ... you have *the linguistic equivalent of a kind of neutron bomb,* so that the notion being that here is *a priestly emblem that has magically and mystically oracularly condensed within itself worlds of meaning which only a priestly power can unlock* and allow to blossom into fullness. *When I think of Joseph Smith laboring over the Egyptian Papyri and the whole Abrahamic cosmology*

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103. See the announcement for Terryl Givens and Brian Hauglid, *The Pearl of Greatest Price: Mormonism's Beleaguered Scripture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming in August 2019), https://www.terrylgivens.com/projects-1.

104. Terryl Givens, "Joseph Smith and Translation: Notes Toward a Theoretical Framework" (The Mormon Translation Conference, Logan Utah, 16 March 2017), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYkEPHH2xB8.

> *that emerges out of this, it seems to me that we get a perfect understanding of how the hieroglyph was understood.*[105]

While eloquently expressed, this statement may not accurately represent the views likely to be held by Americans in Joseph's day. Indeed, this may be the result of projecting the views of Hauglid and others onto the data to see the desired confirmation of those views.

Hauglid's co-editor of JSPRT4, Robin Jensen, has expressed a viewpoint similar to Givens's:

> While it does not appear that Joseph Smith or his associates drew directly upon earlier scholarship regarding ancient Egypt, they shared with such scholars assumptions about the Egyptian language. For instance, they believed the language was mysterious, symbolic, and closely linked to Hebrew and other languages that reflected a more refined and "pure" language.[106]

The view that hieroglyphs were mysterious characters packed with hidden meaning dates back to Athanasius Kircher in the seventeenth century but quickly declined with knowledge of the Rosetta Stone. In light of Champollion's work, by 1831 the *North American Review* was describing Kircher's views in this manner: "how utterly baseless, how laboriously absurd was his entire scheme of interpretation."[107]

Nevertheless, Givens and Jensen (along with Hauglid, apparently) place Joseph into the mindset prior to the Napoleonic engagement with Egypt when the Rosetta Stone was discovered and the world quickly realized that Egyptian was actually a running language with some kind of reasonable relationship to alphabetic systems. Givens implies that Joseph and his brethren were somehow swept up in Egyptomania without being aware of the hottest news in the world of Egyptomania, namely, that the Rosetta Stone had been found. The story of the Rosetta Stone was widely discussed news dating back to 1799, which would later

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105. Ibid., 14:15 to 15:50, emphasis added.

106. Robin Scott Jensen, "The Joseph Smith Papers and the Book of Abraham," *BYU Religious Education Review* 10, no. 1 (Winter 2017), 16, https://rsc.byu.edu/sites/default/files/review/Review_10.1_webv2%20%28low%29.pdf. See also Brian Hauglid, "The Book of Abraham and Translating the Sacred," *BYU Religious Education Review* 10, no. 1 (Winter 2017), 12; https://rsc.byu.edu/review/2017-winter-review-magazine-101/book-abraham-two-parts.

107. Review of J.-G.-Honoré Greppo, *Essay on the Hieroglyphic System of M. Champollion, Jun.: and on the Advantages Which It Offers to Sacred Criticism*, transl. Isaac William Stuart (Boston: Perkins & Marvin, 1830); *North American Review* 32 (1831):100, https://archive.org/details/jstor-25102877/page/n5.

be coupled with the 1822 news that Champollion had begun to decipher Egyptian. These were key drivers for Egyptomania in the nineteenth century, and cannot be so readily excised from Joseph's world. Givens' view arguably would divorce Joseph from his environment in 1835 and from the very Egyptomania that supposedly inspired him.

Of course, the technical details of Champollion's work were not widely known. In fact, those details may not have lived up to the hype. Champollion's discoveries were somewhat piecemeal, and still did not allow him to fully read and understand the Rosetta Stone. It would not be until 1858, over two decades after Champollion's death, that a full translation of the Rosetta Stone would be published in Philadelphia, an effort that required significant work and further advances.[108]

Even if the Joseph Smith of 1835 were still in "uneducated farm boy mode" and had been unaware of the Rosetta Stone and Champollion before purchasing the mummies and scrolls from Chandler, Chandler and the many other educated people who would come to Kirtland to see the artifacts and meet Joseph likely would have broken the well-known news to him.

Givens's view, romantic as it may be, also requires divorcing Joseph from the Book of Mormon. Joseph's views on Egyptian arguably should not depart wildly from the views expressed by Mormon in the manuscript Joseph translated. Mormon in Mormon 9:32 tells us that

> we have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, *according to our manner of speech.*

The reformed Egyptian of the Book of Mormon *reflected speech.* It must have been phonetic, or at least the reformed script Mormon referred to, like the reformed Egyptian script of demotic.

Mormon's statement is not the only vital clue on the nature of Egyptian. King Benjamin in Mosiah 1:4 explains that Lehi taught the language of the Egyptians to his children so they could read the brass plates, and so they could teach that to their children in turn. The implication, of course, is that Egyptian is a language you can teach to

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108. R. B. Parkinson, Whitfield Diffie, Mary Fischer, and R. S. Simpson, *Cracking Codes: The Rosetta Stone and Decipherment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 41-42, https://books.google.com.hk/books?id=QD9g1mMaAAsC&printsec=frontcover.

your children, one that does not require mystic oracular gifts to draw out mountains of hidden text from a molehill of ink.

Apart from indications in the Book of Mormon about the nature of the Egyptian on the brass plates and the reformed Egyptian used by Mormon, Joseph Smith also expressed his viewpoint directly. Regarding the title page of the Book of Mormon, which came from the last plate (not the last character!) in the Nephite record, Joseph said:

> I would mention here also in order to correct a misunderstanding, which has gone abroad concerning the title page of the Book of Mormon, that it is not a composition of mine or of any other man's who has lived or does live in this generation, but that it is a literal translation taken from the last leaf of the plates, on the left hand side of the collection of plates, the language running same as all Hebrew writing in general.[109]

It was a *running language*, with a chunk of language on the last plate corresponding to the chunk of English on our title page, not an utterly mystical language, one where each squiggle could be paragraphs of English. With his experience in reformed Egyptian behind him, does it stand to reason that once he saw the Egyptian scrolls in 1835, he would suddenly reverse course and see it as pure mysticism completely unlike Hebrew, no longer phonetic nor a "running language"?

Further evidence against such a view comes from Joseph's comments on the meaning of the Facsimiles. The four hieroglyphs for the four sons of Horus in Facsimile 2 (labeled as element 6) become a remarkably concise "the four quarters of the earth," a statement that is actually quite accurate. Other statements he makes regarding the facsimiles and the characters tend to be equally brief. No sign of magical compactness with neutron bombs of meaning waiting to be detonated by the Prophet. That idea died swiftly, though not universally, as news of the translation of the Rosetta Stone spread. It was old news when Joseph saw the scrolls. While it is possible that Joseph and the people of Kirtland had remained in the dark about the Rosetta Stone and Champollion, it seems unlikely. But certainly there was still nothing practical available from Champollion's work in that day to guide them, even if they had had access to French publications. For that, revelation would be needed, and it seems they then would do their best on their own to follow suit and create their own "Alphabet."

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109. Joseph Smith, "History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1]," 9.

Unfortunately, Givens's view on how Joseph saw the Egyptian language may have been shaped by an unwarranted opinion from the editors of JSPRT4, where we read the questionable view that Champollion's work really wasn't well known until decades later and that it did not really change the way typical people thought about Egyptian. Here's the statement from the opening pages:

> Even after Champollion's groundbreaking discoveries, though, some continued to assert competing theories about Egyptian hieroglyphs, whether they rejected Champollion's findings or were ignorant of them. Indeed, in America in the 1830s and 1840s, Champollion's findings were available to only a small group of scholars who either read them in French or gleaned them from a limited number of English translations or summaries. (JSPRT4, p. xviii)

That's an astonishing assertion. Americans in the 1830s had not heard of Champollion's work? Only a tiny group of scholars were in on the news? Should we also assume that news of the Rosetta Stone and its related implications had also gone unnoticed in the US?

Even before Champollion made his discoveries and turned his surname into a household term, the discovery of the Rosetta Stone may have begun influencing common knowledge in the United States about Egyptian as an alphabetic language. Witness the history book published in the United States in 1814 by the American clergyman Samuel Whelpley, *A Compend of History from the Earliest Times*:

> *It is upwards of 3600 years since Memnon, the Egyptian, invented the letters of the alphabet*; about three centuries after which they were introduced by Cadmus into Greece. To perpetuate the memory of events, and to convey ideas to persons absent, invention first suggested the use of figures, or images of things intended. When these were found inadequate, *symbols, emblematic of more complex ideas, were adopted. But the defect of these, in expressing combinations and abstract ideas, must have soon appeared: and was probably followed by the discovery, that a certain combination of arbitrary marks might be adapted to the expression of all articulate sounds*. This was doubtless the noblest of all inventions, as it has proved a most wonderful means of improving the human mind. It not only answered the highest expectations of its inventor, but doubtless far exceeded all conjecture; as it proved to be the

father of all the liberal arts and sciences, and has continued the widening source of knowledge, happiness, and admiration to every age.

The most ancient of authentic historians with whom we are acquainted is Moses. He was born in Egypt 1571 years before Christ, at a time, as we have already remarked, when Egypt was the most enlightened of all nations. He, being the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, was of course educated in all their learning. …

When Moses wrote, alphabetic writing had been known in Egypt several centuries, and if, we consider the rapid improvements which that very ingenious people made in art and science, we shall see cause to believe that, in Moses' time, they had made very considerable progress.[110]

Is it possible that Joseph and the Saints were familiar with Whelpley? Absolutely, for "Whepleys Compend" (sic) is on the 1844 donation list for the Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute.[111]

But what of Champollion, whose discoveries began to be known in 1822? Had word reached the United States in Joseph's day? If so, one clue might be found in books and newspapers that mention Champollion. Do they need to take several sentences to explain to all the nonscholars and non-French speakers just who he is and what the Rosetta Stone was in order to bring readers up to speed, or do they act as if everyone knows the man and what he did? Below is an 1828 newspaper story from the *Delaware Journal*:

Curious Ancient Manuscripts. — M. Champollion, jun., who is about to embark at Marseilles for Egypt, having inspected a valuable collection of ancient manuscripts in the possession of M. Sallier, an inhabitant of Aix, has discovered two rolls of papyrus relating "The History and wars of the Reign of Sesotris the Great." These manuscripts are dated the ninth year of that Monarch's reign. Sesostris-Rhames or the Great, according to the calculations of the German chronologists, lived in the time

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110. Samuel Whelpley, *A Compend of History from the Earliest Times* (New York: Whiting and Watson, 1814), 25-26, https://archive.org/details/CompendOfHistory1814/page/n27.

111. Christopher C. Jones, "The Complete Record of the Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute," *Mormon Historical Studies* 10/1 (Spring 2009): 180-204, http://mormonhistoricsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/The-Complete-Record-of-the-Nauvoo-Library-and-Literary-Institute.pdf. Whelpley's volume is shown at 192.

of Moses, and was the son, as is supposed, of the Pharoah, who perished in the Red Sea, while pursuing the Israelites.

This remarkable document, which, after a lapse of more than three thousand years, M. Champollion has discovered, as by a miracle, may contain details the interest of which will be readily imagined, on some of the grandest incidents of Sacred History. On the 2d inst. The Academical Society of Aix received the report of M. Sallier relative to this discovery. A third roll has also been found, treating either on astronomy or astrology, but more probably on both these sciences combined. It has not yet been opened; but it is hoped that it will throw some additional light upon the conceptions of the heavenly system entertained by the Egyptians and Chaldeans, the first people who devoted themselves to that study. — *Paris Paper*.[112]

There are echoes of the Book of Abraham here, with mysterious ancient scrolls possibly involving issues from sacred history and a recognition that one scroll might pertain to astronomy/astrology. The contents of those scrolls was the news — not the fact that Monsieur Champollion, whose first name needed not to be given, could read Egyptian. That was assumed to be common knowledge for common readers.

Given that newspapers in the nineteenth century become much less likely to have been preserved and digitized the older they are, it can be difficult to find the original announcements that described who Champollion was and what he had done. Mentions of him that I have found in the 1820s and 1830s already treat him as common knowledge and don't give his full name. Thus on April 10, 1823, for example, when the *National Gazette* in Philadelphia printed news about Champollion, he was already simply M. Champollion. [113] The article does mention the progress that is being made in reading Egyptian based on his "alphabet of the Phonetic hieroglyphics" and "guided by this hieroglyphic alphabet" — reports on Champollion frequently speak of his alphabet, a usage that may well be the inspiration for the Egyptian Alphabet documents and the Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language. But the primary news being reported in this 1823 story is that Professor T. Lacour in France had just published a paper on hieroglyphics claiming that

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112. *Delaware Journal*, October 10, 1828, p. 2, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83025530/1828-10-10/ed-1/seq-2/.

113. "Scientific and Literary Travels," *National Gazette* (Philadelphia), April 10, 1823, p. 2, https://www.newspapers.com/clip/20023486/champollions_deciperment_of_rosetta/.

understanding Hebrew may be the key to better understanding Egyptian, for he was convinced that the Egyptian language at the time of Moses was similar to Hebrew. (Such concepts may well have been what motivated Joseph Smith to delve into Hebrew to advance his own intellectual pursuit of Egyptian.)

Likewise in the New York newspaper *The Morning Herald* we read in September 1837 of a rabbi's travels to Egypt:

> It happened, too, that about the time that our Rabbi [Joseph Wolff] went to the East, the singular monumental histories of ancient Egypt began to be revealed to the world by Champollion, Young, Rosselini, and other *savans* of Europe. From these revelations, the public enthusiasm of the west was roused to its highest pitch. The opening of the tombs of Thebes, Luxor, Memphis, Medinet Abu, astonished all the learned, and startled all the religious.[114]

Joseph Wolf traveled to Egypt in 1821 and returned to England in 1826.[115] This was the time when the news of the decipherment work of Champollion and Young "astonished all the learned, and startled all the religious," not just a few scholars who could read French. Or Italian and Latin, for that matter, for Ippolito Rosselini, also apparently a household name in the 1830s, the friend of Champollion and founder of Egyptology in Italy, published his works in Italian and Latin.[116] As with Champollion, while the technical details may have required knowledge of a foreign language, the news did not.

Maybe folks in Delaware and the East Coast were up to speed on this, but what about the more remote hinterland of Ohio? Could those more rural folks, perhaps swept up in their own agrarian brand of Egyptomania, have heard anything of the Rosetta Stone and its translator? The following story from an Ohio newspaper in 1837 reminds us of the history of the Rosetta Stone, but assumes that readers understand its multilingual nature. Champollion and Dr. Young are mentioned as if readers will know these famous men with no need to give their first names or the details of what they did regarding their

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114. *The Morning Herald*, September 7, 1837, p. 2, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030312/1837-09-07/ed-1/seq-2/.

115. Wikipedia, s.v. "Joseph Wolff," last edited May 5, 2019, 08:22, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Wolff.

116. Wikipedia, s.v. "Ippolito Rosellini," last edited April 24, 2019 18:18, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ippolito_Rosellini.

discoveries "concerning the hieroglyphic language of Egypt." The source is the *Maumee Express* of Maumee City, Ohio, November 18, 1837:

> Antique. — The Currators [sic] of the Albany Institute [Albany, New York] acknowledge the donation of a copy in plaster of the *Rosetta Stone*, now in the British Museum, from Henry James Esq. …

> The interest of this piece of antiquity is increased by the fact that all the discoveries of Dr. Young and Champollion concerning the hieroglyphic language of Egypt, originated in a study of the inscription on it. [117]

It is taken for granted that readers know of Champollion and also of his predecessor in studies of the Rosetta Stone, Dr. Thomas Young.[118]

Another source to consider is the 1830 publication in the US of the book *Essay on the Hieroglyphic System of M. Champollion, Jun.: and on the Advantages Which It Offers to Sacred Criticism* by J.-G.-Honoré Greppo, translated from French.[119] The eminent American scholar Moses Stuart offered his views in the Preface:

> The great problem of Hieroglyphics is at last solved; and the veil has been lifted up which hid from past ages the mysteries that lay concealed under them. We now know that they were usually employed as mere *alphabetic letters*; that when thus read, they give us regular composition in the Coptic or old Egyptian language; and that, as the Coptic is understood by a considerable number of scholars in Europe, we are in a fair way of knowing all which the Egyptian *phonetic* or *alphabetic* Hieroglyphics on the monuments, were designed to teach.

> We know also that Hieroglyphics were often employed as *symbols*, i.e., as the *signs of ideas*; and these symbols are to a great extent already known, and progress in the knowledge of them is gradual and constant.

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117. *Maumee Express*, November 18, 1837, p. 2, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85026142/1837-11-18/ed-1/seq-2/.

118. See Wikipedia, s.v. "Thomas Young (scientist)," last edited May 26, 2019, 05:28, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Young_(scientist)#Egyptian_hieroglyph.

119. J.-G.-Honoré Greppo, *Essay on the Hieroglyphic System of M. Champollion, Jun.: and on the Advantages Which It Offers to Sacred Criticism*, trans.. Isaac William Stuart (Boston: Perkins & Marvin, 1830), https://archive.org/details/essayonhierogly00stuagoog/page/n8.

> It is also ascertained, that there are Hieroglyphics, or rather, groups of them, which have a mystical meaning; such as they have generally been supposed to convey.[120]

Stuart leaves open the possibility that some characters or groups of characters can have a deeper mystical meaning but tells us they were usually simply used as phonetic alphabetic symbols, consistent with the implications we find from the reformed Egyptian of the Book of Mormon.

Val Sederholm has expounded on some of the issues above, describing what news of Champollion would mean for ordinary people during the Kirtland era. He adds further evidence and concludes that the literature of that era "shows both keen interest and an easy familiarity [with Champollion] — not to know about these breakthroughs in 1837 would be like not knowing about the railroad or the steam engine. … Ohioans in 1837 didn't need a Jean-Francois attached to their Champollion."[121]

If Joseph had retreated from his earlier statements about reformed Egyptian (and relevant statements in the Book of Mormon) and in 1835 began to view Egyptian as a mysterious oracular language where each character could yield vast treasures of information, why seek to develop an *alphabet* of the language? Isn't the very idea of an Egyptian alphabet contrary to the notions of Kircher? Champollion's work was widely reported to be yielding an "alphabet of Egyptian," but if Joseph were ignorant of Champollion rather than informed by his achievement, why would he have imagined an *alphabet* could be possible or have any value? The very word seems to imply a belief that the Egyptian language is at least largely phonetic, and seems to reflect awareness of the Rosetta Stone and Champollion. The 1828 Webster dictionary gives this definition for "alphabet": "The letters of a language arranged in the customary order; the series of letters which form the elements of speech."[122] Kircher's pre-Rosetta notions don't leave much room for pursuing such. If the notions espoused in JSPRT4 are correct, why would the Saints even hope to create an "alphabet" (complete with sounds!) for such a language?

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120. Moses Stuart, "Preface," in Greppo, *Essay on the Hieroglyphic System of M. Champollion, Jun.*, iii–iv.

121. Val Sederholm, "What did Joseph Smith say about the nature of Egyptian hieroglyphs?," *I Began to Reflect* (blog), May 17, 2017, https://valsederholm.blogspot.com/2017/05/what-did-ohioans-in-joseph-smiths-day.html.

122. Noah Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828, http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/alphabet.

7. Minor But Sometimes Important Details

There may be other gaps on some of the minor details in the book. One issue, for example, is the method used to identify handwriting. I may be missing something, but I have not noticed any description of who made the determinations and what process was used. This may be especially important in identifying Joseph Smith's handwriting in the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. A small fragment is attributed to Joseph Smith in the Egyptian Alphabet document A for the first page and a half. But do we really know that was Joseph writing? I ask out of curiosity, not as an expert on nineteenth-century handwriting, though I have heard that handwriting from that era can be easily confused, since many people learned to write in similar styles. Just glancing at the part attributed to Joseph in Egyptian Alphabet document A and comparing it to his handwriting in other documents from around 1835 (e.g., his Letter to Sally Waterman Phelps from July 20, 1835,[123] and his journal[124]), one can notice some differences in spite of basic similarities, such as a dramatic difference in the capital *Z* (simple in the Egyptian Alphabet, more complex and ornate in other documents), an apparent difference in capital *I*, and differences in details on several other letters. I expect there was a thorough investigation and probably review from handwriting experts, but that detail has escaped me if it is in the book.

Other details may be minor and not of much concern to most readers. However, for those searching for particular details, one challenge is that some of the transcriptions on the website and, to a lesser degree, in the book, may be in error. For example, in searching for names related to *Katumin*, I could not find one example (an instance of *Kah tou mun* in the GAEL) that I had just seen because the transcription on the website had *Kah ton mun*,[125] while the book has the more accurate *Kah tou mun* (JSPRT4, pp. 122–23). The *n* and *u* in handwriting can look much the same, but *Kah tou mun* seems to be the correct choice.

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123. Joseph Smith, "Letter to Sally Waterman Phelps, 20 July 1835," *Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-sally-waterman-phelps-20-july-1835/1.

124. Joseph Smith, "Journal Entry, September 22, 1835," *Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-1835-1836/2. Use the "scribe" icons in the transcript to identify handwriting. Joseph Smith's starts with the "September 23" entry.

125. GAEL, p. 4 with transcript, *Joseph Smith Papers*, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/grammar-and-alphabet-of-the-egyptian-language-circa-july-circa-november-1835/10.

I also encountered several cases where an *o* in handwriting appeared to be misread as *a,* giving, for example, *Iata* when *Iota* seems to be meant. The two letters can often be very close, but there are usually clues if one compares other instances of those letters on the same page, such as a tendency for the tail stroke of *a* to descend further than in *o* or a tendency for *a* to be more open at the top than *o*. One example is the *Iata* listed at JSPRT4, p. 119, for the image on p. 118, the second page of the GAEL. An example of *e* and *o* probably being confused is the listing of "Gahmel" at JSPRT4, p. 181 (image from GAEL at p. 180), which I believe should be *Gahmol*. But in general, JSPRT4 seems to be meticulous and accurate in transcriptions, while the outstanding website has not yet incorporated what may be relatively recent corrections in the book. But the website also remains an extremely useful and valuable resource.

8. Missing "First Aid" and Ignoring the Positives

My final problem area to discuss is the general failure to include *first aid* for some of the thorny issues as well as a tendency to ignore the many positives that could be at least hinted at for those interested in the strengths of the Book of Abraham and not just the obvious warts.

Looking through JSPRT4 and its helpful "Comparison of Characters" section (pp. 350–80), students of the Book of Abraham who have heard that Joseph Smith used the GAEL to create his "translation" might be startled to see how very few of the many characters considered in the GAEL are actually used on Book of Abraham manuscripts, and especially startled to see how few of the 28 characters on the Book of Abraham manuscripts are actually found in the GAEL or the Egyptian Alphabet documents. Of those 28 characters, I see only three (labeled characters 3.11a, 5.27, and 5.28) that are in the GAEL or the Egyptian Alphabet documents, one of which is part of the 18 characters said to be found on the scroll called the "Fragment of Breathing Permit for Horus-A," with eight characters apparently not found on the scrolls or in the GAEL or Egyptian Alphabet documents. If the GAEL shows us how Joseph did the translation, it seems to apply to only about ten percent of the characters in the margins of the Book of Abraham manuscripts. The numbers raise serious doubts to common theories about how the translation was done. It would have been helpful for the editors of JSPRT4 to make several such rudimentary observations to help faithful readers understand the gaps in some of the arguments used against the Book of Abraham. Such factual observations can be made in an academically appropriate way without "tainting" the volume with ugly apologetics

or otherwise losing face before the academic world. However, such information might have weakened the apparent favored theory of the JSPRT4 editors that the Book of Abraham was at least partially derived from the GAEL and not the other way around, and would also have undermined the controversial thesis put forward in JSPRT4 that the twin Book of Abraham manuscripts with Egyptian characters in the margins represent Joseph Smith's "translation" of those characters, being dictated live by Joseph to his scribes, presumably drawing upon prior work with the Egyptian Alphabets and the GAEL.

The commentary, however, need not be and, in my opinion, should not be blind to the debates that swirl around the Book of Abraham manuscripts. This narrative of the critics claiming that the KEP shows how the Book of Abraham was "translated" fails in several ways, and the editorial comments on these documents could have and should have prepared readers to understand that there are plausible reasons to reject the critical narrative. On the other hand, yes, it is possible to be a faithful member of the Church and accept that narrative, which holds the Book of Abraham to be inspired or inspiring fiction, a mostly or purely human work that occasionally manages to convey interesting doctrine and uplifting sentiments through a fictional (if not fraudulent) medium. But for those who see the Book of Abraham as a prophetic work with some kind of roots in antiquity, we expect that a Church publication with these valuable documents should not leave the reader defenseless against the well-crafted and increasingly disseminated claims of critics. We should expect the publication to at least hint at reasonable frameworks for coping with the challenges to faith that are underway based on arguments related to these documents. Such first aid is not to be found in this volume.

Similar statements can be made for many other issues in JSPRT4, where other scholars have provided materials to help readers come to terms with challenges in the Book of Abraham manuscripts and appreciate the strengths therein — but such aid is generally lacking in this volume. The complete absence of High Nibley, one of the most prolific and most cited scholars to have dealt with Book of Abraham issues, is genuinely startling. Even if one sharply disagrees with Nibley and finds his work "abhorrent," to neglect his pioneering work and his extensive research culminating in *One Eternal Round* seems simply improper and unscholarly. The neglect of the evidence in support of the Book of Abraham or the frameworks for coping with Book of Abraham issues from faithful Egyptologists Kerry Muhlestein and John Gee is also

disconcerting, although nine works of Gee's many dozens at least make it into the list of works cited, as do two of Muhlestein's many dozens.

Scholarship involving the claims of any faith and canonized scriptures from that faith cannot be done in a vacuum of pretended indifference to the implications of the study. When it comes to the scriptures, theories and interpretations of data that may undermine or disturb the faith of readers should be discussed with an intent to also let readers know that others have already dealt with the issues and found reasonable frameworks for dealing with the problems that appear.[126] This is a vital role of apologetics: not to ignore problems and stumbling blocks, but to give others reasons to maintain hope and faith, and to provide roadmaps for coping with difficult terrain such that stumbling blocks do not necessarily become impasses to faith.

As a final observation, there is an unfortunate misunderstanding among many Latter-day Saints that apologetics is the opposite of scholarship. To defend, in some people's minds, is to lose credibility and to promote blind faith rather than scholarship. But in my opinion, good scholarship is often behind the best work that helps us better understand and respect the Church's scriptures. Today there are many intelligent resources that readers can turn to for appreciating the strengths of the Book of Abraham.[127] Students of the Book of Abraham ought to know, for example, that the time and place of the origin of the Joseph Smith Papyri, namely Thebes around 200 B.C., correspond with the very time and place where there was a fascination with Abraham and Moses among Egyptian priests, making it the time and place where one would expect to find an

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126. Kerry Muhlestein, "Egyptian Papyri and the Book of Abraham: A Faithful, Egyptological Point of View," in *No Weapon Shall Prosper: New Light on Sensitive Issues*, ed. Robert L. Millet (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2011), 217-43, https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/no-weapon-shall-prosper/egyptian-papyri-and-book-abraham-faithful-egyptological-point-view.

127. Some general resources might include (1) Gee, *Introduction to the Book of Abraham*; (2) Nibley, *One Eternal Round*; (3) "What evidence does the Book of Abraham demonstrate to support its own antiquity?," FAIRMormon, https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Question:_What_evidence_does_the_Book_of_Abraham_demonstrate_to_support_its_own_antiquity%3F; (4) Michael D. Rhodes, "The Joseph Smith Hypocephalus: Twenty Years Later," 2012, https://web.archive.org/web/20120204014818/http://home.comcast.net/~michael.rhodes/JosephSmithHypocephalus.pdf; (5) Kerry Muhlestein, "Egyptian Papyri and the Book of Abraham: A Faithful, Egyptological Point of View"; and (6) Robert F. Smith, "A Brief Assessment of the Book of Abraham."

actual Book of Abraham text in Egypt, if one existed.[128] They should be aware of the general plausibility of many aspects of the Book of Abraham in light of what we can determine about the ancient setting treated in the text.[129]

They should understand the evidence for the potential authenticity of several names in the Book of Abraham.[130] They should know that the Book of Abraham's cosmology and the theme of the divine council fit remarkably well in the world of the ancient Near East.[131] They may wish to learn that there is support for *Shinehah* as a term that means "the sun,"[132] or that modern archaeological evidence provides tentative support for the ancient place name *Olishem* in the right time and place to correspond to the Book of Abraham,[133] or that there might be support in ancient Egyptian for some of the strange titles given to various celestial objects in the Book of Abraham.[134] They should know that the once ridiculed idea of Egyptian priests offering human sacrifice has been shown to have significant

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128.   Gee, *Introduction to the Book of Abraham*, 49-65; Muhlestein, "The Religious and Cultural Background of Joseph Smith Papyrus I"; and Muhlestein, "Abraham, Isaac, and Osiris-Michael."

129.   John Gee and Stephen D. Ricks, "Historical Plausibility: The Historicity of the Book of Abraham as a Case Study," in *Historicity and the Latter-day Saint Scriptures*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2001), 63-98, https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/historicity-and-latter-day-saint-scriptures/3-historical-plausibility-historicity-book.

130.   John Tvedtnes, "Ancient Names and Words in the Book of Abraham and Related Kirtland Egyptian Papers" (2005 FAIR Conference, August 5, 2005), https://www.fairmormon.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/2005-John-Tvedtnes.pdf. (See the links on the final page to watch the presentation on YouTube.)

131.   Stephen Smoot, "Council, Chaos, and Creation in the Book of Abraham," *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 22, no.2 (2013), https://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=2891&index=3.

132.   *Book of Mormon Onomasticon*, s.v. "Shinehah," last modified May 12, 2018, 23:59, https://onoma.lib.byu.edu/index.php/SHINEHAH.

133.   Gee, *Introduction to the Book of Abraham*, 98, 101. Also see the press release "Prophet Abraham's lost city found in Turkey's Kilis," *The Hurriyet Daily News*, August 16, 2013, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/prophet-abrahams-lost-city-found-in-turkeys-kilis-52591. On this matter, Gee has noted the potential value but urges patience as more work is needed. See John Gee, "Has Olishem Been Discovered?," *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 22/2 (2013): 104-7, https://publications.mi.byu.edu/pdf-control.php/publications/jbms/22/2/9Gee_Olishem%20Discovered.pdf.

134.   Val Sederholm, "An Egyptologist Looks at Enish-go-on-dosh in LDS Book of Abraham, Facsimile 2, Figure 5," *I Began to Reflect* (blog), Jan. 13, 2014, https://valsederholm.blogspot.com/2014/01/an-egyptologist-looks-at-enish-go-on.html.

support, in part from Kerry Muhlestein's PhD dissertation and related publications.[135] Sound scholarship can also lead students to awareness of extensive ancient traditions consistent with numerous extrabiblical details of the Book of Abraham,[136] such as the attempt to slay Abraham for his opposition to idol worship, the sin of his father in pursuing idolatry, and many other details. They may wish to learn that at least some of the comments about the Facsimiles have strong plausibility, such as the crocodile being the god of Pharaoh,[137] the four sons of Horus (Fig. 6 in Facs. 2) representing the "four quarters of the earth," the association of Hathor (the cow in Facs. 2) with the sun,[138] the association of bird wings with the expanse of heaven, the association of the solar barque with the number 1000,[139] the relationship of Facs. 1 to the hieroglyph for prayer,[140] etc. While the lofty standard of academic credibility and the dream

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135. Kerry Muhlestein, *Violence in the Service of Order: The Religious Framework for Sanctioned Killing in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011), https://www.academia.edu/10132431/Violence_in_the_Service_of_Order_the_Religious_Framework_for_Sanctioned_Killing_in_Ancient_Egypt._British_Archaeological_Reports_International_Series_2299_Oxford_Archaeopress_2011_. See also his "Sacred Violence: When Ancient Egyptian Punishment was Dressed in Ritual Trappings," *Near Eastern Archaeology*, 78, no. 4 (2015): 229-35, https://www.academia.edu/23378038/_Sacred_Violence_When_Ancient_Egyptian_Punishment_was_Dressed_in_Ritual_Trappings_Near_Eastern_Archaeology_78_4_2015_229-235; and "Royal Executions: Evidence Bearing on the Subject of Sanctioned Killing in the Middle Kingdom," *The Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 51/2 (2008): 181-208, https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1890&context=facpub.

136. John Gee, Brian Hauglid, and John Tvedtnes, *Traditions about the Early Life of Abraham* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship: 2001).

137. Quinten Barney, "Sobek: The Idolatrous God of Pharaoh Amenemhet III," *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 22, no. 2 (2013): 22-27, https://web.archive.org/web/20171115002357/https://publications.mi.byu.edu/pdf-control.php/publications/jbms/22/2/2Barney_Sobek.pdf. Also see "The Crocodile God of Pharaoh in Mesopotamia," *FARMS Update No. 108*, in *Insights* 16, no. 5 (Oct. 1996): 2, https://publications.mi.byu.edu/pdf-control.php/publications/insights/16/5/16-5%20October%201996.pdf.

138. Jeff Lindsay, "Questions About the Book of Abraham, Part 2: Evidences for Plausibility," *LDS FAQ*, last updated February 5, 2018, https://www.jefflindsay.com/LDSFAQ/FQ_Abraham2.shtml.

139. Ibid.

140. E. A. Wallis Budge, *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary* (London: John Murray, 1920), xcvii, https://archive.org/details/egyptianhierogly01budguoft/page/xcvi. See also Jeff Lindsay, "A Leg Up on the Critics: Facsimile 1 of the Book of Abraham," *Mormanity* (blog), Jan. 11, 2007, https://mormanity.blogspot.com/2007/01/leg-up-on-critics-facsimile-1-of-book.html.

of objectivity may make it difficult or improper to raise or even hint at such issues in JSPRT4, that volume seems to do too much to underscore the positions of our critics. There is a lack of balance that I hope can be corrected at some point in the future.

Postscript: A Window into the Editors' Stance and More Friendly Fire

As this paper was nearing publication, the Maxwell Institute revamped their website after roughly a week of downtime, introducing dramatic changes and some painful losses.[141] The new website gave pride of place to a new podcast featuring the editors of JSPRT4 as they discussed the Book of Abraham and what they had learned through their editorial work.[142] The interview was conducted by Blair Hodges of the Maxwell Institute. Unfortunately, the comments of both editors underscore some of the concerns raised to this point in this paper.

The risk of editorial blindness to many crucial issues relative to the Book of Abraham and the possible bias against or neglect of evidence supporting the Book of Abraham as a revealed work rooted in antiquity (the disreputable stance of "abhorrent" apologists, per Hauglid's above-mentioned denunciatory Facebook comment) was first made clear to me when I heard of a damaged testimony from a Church member who listened to Hauglid and Jensen's January 2019 seminar at BYU.[143] As noted above, in that presentation problems with the Book of Abraham and Joseph's translation were raised with no hint of "first aid." After writing several blog posts with criticism of that presentation and of Hauglid and Jensen's personal opinions that appear to have influenced comments, citations, and omissions in JSPRT4 — concerns that I am confident were made known to the editors — I was disappointed to find similar comments in the new podcast. The podcast presumably did not have the tight time constraints of the BYU seminar, which I initially hoped might have been the reason for the lack of discussion of the strengths of the Book of Abraham. It was not an official scholarly document that could

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141. Jeff Lindsay, "Lost Treasures at the Maxwell Institute?," *Mormanity* (blog), June 27, 2019, https://mormanity.blogspot.com/2019/06/lost-treasures-from-maxwell-institute.html.

142. "MIPodcast #92 — Joseph Smith's Egyptian papers, with Robin Jensen & Brian Hauglid," Brian Hauglid and Robin Jensen, interviewed by Blair Hodges, Neal A. Maxwell Institute, June 27, 2019, https://mi.byu.edu/mip-hauglid-jensen/.

143. Hauglid and Jensen, "A Window into Joseph Smith's Translation," 2019. See also Lindsay, "Friendly Fire from BYU."

possibly require strict rules against discussing faith-promoting material. It was simply an informal opportunity to discuss and share views from the editors and what they have learned from their study.

Several problems are apparent in this podcast. One is that an overly simplistic view of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers is promulgated when Hauglid says:

> In other words, they'll take characters from the papyri, they'll put them in the left column, and I think they tried to do a pronunciation guide with how to say this particular glyph or whatever.

Later he adds:

> Those documents [the Book of Abraham manuscripts with added characters] are unique because they have in the left margins characters taken from the fragment that was once attached to the vignette that we get Facsimile One from.

An important point that needs to be underscored is that many of the glyphs in the KEP and on some Book of Abraham manuscripts are not Egyptian at all and do not come from the papyri. As noted earlier, at best only 7 of the 62 characters given translations in the KEP are found on the key papyrus fragment. Some of the KEP characters come from a letter W. W. Phelps wrote about the "pure language" before the scrolls ever reached Kirtland, and some appear to come from other sources such as Greek, including archaic Greek, Masonic ciphers, etc. Only about ten percent of the characters on the Book of Abraham manuscripts both have definitions in the GAEL and are found on the papyrus, raising serious questions about the theory that the GAEL was an attempt to translate the papyri and was somehow used to translate the Book of Abraham. Some of the characters in the Book of Abraham manuscripts are not found on the papyri at all. To overlook the puzzling diversity of origins of the characters in the KEP is severe oversimplification that irons out some vital clues about what is or is not going on in the work with so-called "Egyptian" characters.

Another questionable viewpoint expressed in the podcast is that the Book of Abraham was an evolving product reflecting Joseph's culture and theology, which began in 1835 for only Abraham 1 through 2:18, and then, years later in Nauvoo as Joseph's thinking evolved, he added the remaining material. The editors are quite confident of this:

> JENSEN: One thing that I find interesting, if you look at the Joseph Smith Papers volume, this volume we've been talking about, the majority of the documents were created in Kirtland in 1835. But if you look at just the Book of Abraham

itself, **the majority of the Book of Abraham was actually produced, translated in Nauvoo**. I think that's something that not many have realized, where this **really was divided into two parts**. Joseph Smith first began work in Kirtland and then he stopped, the temple was being built, he moved to Missouri, there were all sorts of problems in Missouri with non-Mormon neighbors, and then it took a long time to get things settled in Nauvoo trying to get that going.

HODGES: Why did that break matter? Why should anyone care that it had this break?

JENSEN: So I find it fascinating because Joseph Smith as religious leader — **you can trace his developing, understanding of theology, of the things that he's teaching to Latter-day Saints**. So to know that the first portion of the Book of Abraham is in Kirtland, historians can better, then, understand how the theology as found in the first portion of the Book of Abraham was read by Kirtland Saints and the theology that was, to that point, revealed to those Saints.

But then you look at the later portion of the Book of Abraham and, placing that in a Kirtland theological setting, doesn't make as much sense. But when you look to the Nauvoo theological setting, Joseph Smith has revealed all sorts of new information that it fits better. There's a better context to that in Nauvoo than in Kirtland.

HAUGLID: And Joseph Smith also incorporates Hebrew terms that he learned after his Joshua Seixas tutoring at the Hebrew school in Kirtland that come out after his tutoring experience in Nauvoo, where he put some of those in Abraham 3 and there's other things that you find with some Hebrew connections that he would have learned.

So I think we've kind of got it where we can see what's going on in the Kirtland area there pretty well. The Abraham chapter one to chapter two, verse eighteen seems to fit just fine right in that time period. Then, as Robin said, when you get up to Nauvoo that also fits that context really well in terms of his theology, in terms of how they're looking at the language, how they're incorporating some of the Hebrew. It fits into that Nauvoo period. Plus, you also have some plain

language coming out of Joseph Smith's journal saying "we're translating on March eighth and March ninth for the tenth number of the *Times and Seasons*." So that fits as well. So you've got some historical backing there.

This split scenario is countered by scholarship from one of the peers decried by Hauglid. In an important work that is not acknowledged in JSPRT4, in the podcast, nor in the January seminar, Kerry Muhlestein and Megan Hansen have provided compelling reasons for accepting that much more than Abraham 1 and 2 had been translated by 1835.[144] If the editors had been more open to the possibility that the Book of Abraham translation preceded the creation of the relevant portions of the existing Egyptian Alphabet documents and the GAEL, then it would seem much more logical that those documents are drawing upon bits and pieces of the translation, including terms related to the supposedly later cosmological material and to the creation account, rather than providing a tool that could have been used in the translation of the papyri. Again, given that roughly 90% of the "Egyptian" characters translated in the GAEL and the Egyptian Alphabet documents are not even found on the papyrus fragment supposedly being translated, theories of Joseph using the GAEL to translate the papyrus seem untenable.

Further, the use of Hebrew learned from Joshua Seixas in 1836 does not date the translation that employs those term to the Nauvoo era, nor does it even require that it occurred after 1836. Relevant Hebrew terms could have been added as late editorial glosses in preparing and revising the original 1835 material for publication. It was in 1835 when Joseph, while translating, indicated that the system of astronomy had been unfolded to him.[145] That would be consistent with Facsimile 2 and Abraham 3 having been already revealed by that time.

Among the numerous evidences raised by Muhlestein and Hansen for the translation being largely done in 1835, one of them is the vastly different pace of translation required if Joseph had translated Abraham 2:19 through Abraham 5 in the day-and-a-half allocated to translation in 1842. Compared to the days of known translation in 1835, he would have to have translated over 2,200 words a day in 1842 compared to an average of about 250 words a day in 1835, a pace nine times greater. Rather than generating new verses in 1842, a more reasonable hypothesis is that Joseph was editing the existing translation to incorporate Hebrew

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144. Muhlestein and Hansen, "'The Work of Translating.'"
145. Joseph Smith History, Oct. 1, 1835.

and lessons learned from Hebrew study and to make other changes to prepare the manuscript for publication.

The prior scholarship of Muhlestein and Hansen, along with many others, should have been carefully addressed in some way for JSPRT4, and especially for the podcast.

The editors seem to see Joseph's later use of material related to the last three chapters of the Book of Abraham and Facsimile 2 as evidence that his theology (and cosmology) came first, then the "translation" with related material. Here the editors should have considered the possibility that Joseph had been learning from what he translated and applied it in later discourses. To see his evolution in thinking as the cause for the additional material in Abraham 3–5 rather than being partly a response to what he learned from Abraham 3–5 reflects an overly humanistic, secular view of Joseph Smith's work in creating scripture. It may be that the editors and other scholars associated with this project are comfortable with that approach, but it does not represent the only reasonable approach. Further, it does not represent sound scholarship if approaches from other scholars are not fairly considered, and it does not fairly represent the position of the Church and faithful members (including many scholars) who see the ancient and the divine in Joseph's translations of the Book of Abraham, the Book of Mormon, and the Book of Moses.

Let us now turn to a critical issue. The editors reveal in the podcast that they are keenly aware that people have left the Church over arguments about Joseph's allegedly failed translation of the Book of Abraham from the Joseph Smith Papyri. At that point, it would have been reasonable to offer some consolation and encouragement based on the strengths of the Book of Abraham and the many evidences for its antiquity and divine translation. Instead, both editors take a stance that seems consistent with Hauglid's "coming out" on Facebook:

> HODGES: You're just trying to make the documents themselves accessible so that people can then do work based on the documents.

> HAUGLID: Right. It's a resource for people. And so I agree. There's plenty to talk about in terms of the content of the Book of Abraham.

> JENSEN: I think increasingly you're seeing less angst over the content of the Book of Abraham than you are with the context of the Book of Abraham. There've been people who may have

left the church or felt frustrated with the historical narrative. It's not so much about the content itself. It's not about the actual narrative of the Book of Abraham. It's about the way in which it was produced, and I find that interesting, not surprising at all that Joseph Smith as prophet, seer, and revelator, there's a lot hanging on the Book of Abraham and what it means for Joseph Smith's revelatory process, his translation. It's been such an important symbol for Joseph Smith's calling.

And when people look to the Book of Abraham and when people say, "I left the church because of the Book of Abraham," that's shorthand that I think almost everyone understands is, "It's not the content. It's "Joseph Smith produced this text from papyri. The papyri does not actually contain the Book of Abraham, therefore Joseph Smith is a fraud." That is, frankly, a reasonable, logical conclusion to someone whose testimony is based upon this simplistic view of Joseph Smith's translation. If we have simplistic views of how Joseph Smith produced his scripture, then it's not going to take much to topple that simplistic understanding. So I think that producing a better understanding — kind of this nuanced understanding of production of scripture by Joseph Smith — is not only good scholarship, but I think it's good for Latter-day Saints throughout the world.

HAUGLID: **Let me just add that — maybe in defense of those who do leave — they were raised in the church. They were given the narrative they were given, that they were supposed to believe. There was no nuancing that was going on, really, with any of that as we're trying to do now with what happened with the Book of Abraham. So yes, it's a big decision that these people sometimes make, and perhaps there is a simplistic aspect to that, their testimonies, but I'm of the opinion that it's not all their fault.**

Those believing Joseph's translation to be divinely inspired are told that leaving the Church may be a "reasonable, logical conclusion" based on that expectation, but the expectation is said to be overly simplistic. The fault for people leaving the Church over the Book of Abraham is laid, in part, at the doorstep of the Church for teaching that Joseph actually translated the Book of Abraham through the gift and power of God.

Jensen oversimplifies by claiming that the Church has given believers a particular "narrative" for the translation of the Book of Abraham.

Further, in the above statement we see the "translation" is not valid as those with "simplistic" testimonies had unwisely expected. Hauglid and Jensen seem to see the "translation" as Joseph's (failed) human toying with the Egyptian on the Joseph Smith Papyri — there is no mention of other possibilities that many other scholars have discussed at length, no mention of the clear evidences that something other than fraud and guesswork is behind the text, but an apparent acknowledgement that the critics have been right all along about the Book of Abraham, echoing Hauglid's earlier, online agreement with Dan Vogel.

Unlike JSPRT4, Nibley is mentioned in the podcast, but only to dismiss his arguments regarding the possibility of translation from a missing scroll and his views on the KEP coming after the translation. The basis for the editors' belief that they have largely "overturned" Nibley's views is that they can see bits and pieces of the Book of Abraham in the KEP, as if the Book of Abraham later worked out those concepts more fully. But that's a subjective view. Why aren't the bits and pieces of the Book of Abraham concepts found in the KEP pointing to derivation from the Book of Abraham? They argue that since Joseph's history speaks of work on the Egyptian alphabet, whatever that was (we don't know that it was the same as the extant manuscripts — an assumption is involved in the editors' argument), around the same time as the translation, that it was a concurrent process and that the alphabet was therefore used somehow in the translation. That process, however, could easily involve periods of revelatory translation followed by personal attempts to understand Egyptian and crack the code. There is no new evidence presented here that overturns the reasons offered by Nibley and others for the KEP to be a derivative work based on translated material.

Both editors call for a more mature, nuanced approach, which seems to mean that as Joseph evolved over time, he injected his theological views into the framework of a fictional Book of Abraham from a failed but perhaps sincerely attempted "translation" of papyri that he could not understand. So, to understand the Book of Abraham, we don't need to look to antiquity, to ancient literature about Abraham, or to what Egyptian priests may have known and written about Abraham, but we should only turn to the nineteenth century and consider how Joseph perceived the papyri in his nineteenth century setting, the only context that determined the fruits of his work:

JENSEN: Yep. Intellectually you want to divide them. You want to say "well the papyri, that's one thing. The nineteenth century setting, that's another thing. They're not together." In some senses that is true. But in another way, we have to understand how Joseph Smith and others viewed the papyri, viewed them in their nineteenth-century context, without trying to take on our own understanding. There's been a lot of work in Egyptology since Joseph Smith's day, obviously.

HODGES: I would say the vast majority of usable work has been.

JENSEN: So it's very tempting to say "well, Joseph Smith didn't know what he was talking about. Oliver Cowdery, Phelps, others, they were naive in thinking they could even make sense of this," but for Joseph and his contemporaries this was a real effort. This was a real attempt to understand these papyri for what they were, what they could offer them, and what they could teach about the universality of human nature.

HAUGLID: Yes. That's kind of where I was going to go. You have really a first response to all this Egyptomania stuff going on with all these papyri fragments and such coming in. We're seeing Joseph Smith as one of those first responders in a sense to this material coming into their possession, and what they're making of it is sometimes, for us we might say it's off, it's not Egyptology at all, and that's okay, but just the fact that how they responded to it tells us things. It helps us understand where they're coming from and this Egyptian material triggers that for us. So we get kind of a close-up view in a sense.

JENSEN: I also often tell people that Joseph Smith and other's work in understanding, trying to decipher these papyri, tells us more about their own worldview than it does about the ancient world.

So in light of the apparent problems the editors choose to emphasize, it's "tempting to say Joseph was a fraud," but he was really trying, rather sincerely, in "a real effort."

This "nuanced" approach advocated by Hauglid and Jensen not only makes the translation of the Book of Abraham a pious fraud, but raises obvious questions about Joseph's translation of the reformed Egyptian that yielded the Book of Mormon. We don't even get the reassurance

that since there are compelling reasons to accept the Book of Mormon as a legitimate translation of an ancient document through the gift and power of God, then perhaps our approach to the challenges of the Book of Abraham should be given enough "nuancing" to recognize that there may be answers to the challenges it seems to face based on the "simplistic" assumptions used by critics.

Ironically, the dangerously "simplistic" approach that can cause so much harm is not that of believing Joseph could give revealed translations of ancient documents through the gift and power of God, but the overly simplistic approach taken by the critics: "the only papyri Joseph attempted to translate are the surviving fragments," "no missing scrolls can account for anything," "these twin documents from two scribes mean Joseph was dictating the translation live from these few Egyptian characters," "the GAEL is the source of the translation," etc. Hauglid and Jensen lend credibility to those perspectives in their podcast, their Maxwell Institute seminar, and in their editorial work for JSPRT4. They have excluded significant and well-considered alternative possibilities, even going so far as to excise any mention of some of the most important scholarship and scholars related to the field of their work. This is not balanced scholarship, but, even if purely unintentional, a highly biased perspective that unnecessarily undermines the position of the Church, the original mission of the Maxwell Institute, and the faith of many members of the Church.

The issue of the twin Book of Abraham manuscripts by Frederick Williams and Warren Parrish is particularly egregious in the podcast. The idea that Joseph Smith is dictating the Book of Abraham translation live to his scribes, based on "Egyptian" characters from the papyri in the margins (some of which are not Egyptian) is an old hypothesis from critics, but is raised in response to Hodges' question: "Did the Joseph Smith Papers research team uncover anything new that was previously unknown about these documents while putting this book together?" The contribution of the editors on this issue was realizing that the scribes were writing on paper from a common source, but the textual evidence of simultaneous work is already clear. The issue, though, is what was occurring in this process. Was it really dictation from Joseph Smith giving original translation?

> JENSEN: So what we have is pretty compelling evidence that they're there at the same time using the same piece of paper, **creating this text, the Book of Abraham**, that gives us a new appreciation to the dictation process. Usually when

we hear about **Joseph Smith dictating**, it's him dictating to one singular scribe. So it's interesting to imagine to try to reconstruct what that would look like with Joseph Smith dictating to multiple clerks.

HAUGLID: It's interesting that we're now talking about this when years and years ago Ed Ashment proposed the same thing. It created a firestorm of rejection amongst our LDS scholars, but **now here we are talking about this and agreeing with Ed Ashment**.

HODGES: About having multiple clerks in particular at the same time?

HAUGLID: Receiving dictation, yeah.

HODGES: Why was that so controversial?

JENSEN: I have no idea.

HAUGLID: Probably because it was Ed Ashment that proposed it. [laughter]

Simultaneous writing, yes, but what is the evidence that they were "creating" the Book of Abraham in that moment? That is the argument of the critics — one that is based on assumptions, not evidence. In fact, as noted above, analysis of the text suggests that the most plausible scenario for the twin documents is that Warren Parrish was reading from an existing manuscript until he ceased and probably left, at which time the other scribe began copying directly by himself and then committed a major scribal error typical of copying visually, an unlikely error in oral dictation. In other words, it is highly unlikely that Joseph was dictating.

Arguments based on the twin manuscripts are at the heart of modern attacks on the Book of Abraham. This is a pivotal issue that Dan Vogel uses to undermine acceptance of the Book of Abraham as a revealed text, one that has weakened the "simplistic" testimonies of many unprepared to see past the gaps in the argument.

Why is this controversial? The JSPRT4 editors unfortunately have no idea, but many students of the Book of Abraham may recognize the controversy. If the assumptions of our editors about these documents are valid, it suggests that Joseph Smith was giving live translation for a handful of characters, translation apparently derived from the characters rather than characters being added by the scribes to an already existing translation (for reasons that aren't clear).

This scenario is controversial because it suggests that we do, in fact, have the very characters that Joseph was translating (no mention, again, is made of the fact that several of these characters are not even Egyptian), that the Joseph Smith Papyri were the source of Joseph's translation work, that he foolishly thought that one character could give over 100 words of translation, and that what the Church considers to be a revealed translation is idiotic and inept, with nothing of any value. The inability of the editors to understand why that position is controversial and potentially harmful is deeply puzzling. But it's consistent with the tone of their previous webinar, rich in presenting warts without first aid. For those who feel that Joseph translated the Book of Abraham with divine power from an ancient document of some kind, such unbalanced and overly simplistic negative information can be harmful.

It is time to recognize that in spite of the meticulous scholarship regarding the photography and transcription of the documents in this volume, significant and harmful bias has crept into JSPRT4 and in the recent publications (a seminar and the follow-up podcast) of the Maxwell Institute. Significant harm has been done to the testimonies of some, not because the Church has irresponsibly taught them that Joseph Smith translated with the gift and power of God, nor because the believers were too simplistic in believing what they had been taught. It is true that the issues are complex, that warts exist, and that nuance is needed, but not the nuance that says, "The critics were right; the Church was wrong. But Joseph had some inspiring ideas in his fiction shaped by his nineteenth-century environment." We need to strengthen our awareness of the other side of the story, of the positives around the Book of Abraham and the abundant evidences of antiquity, to help those who struggle to have the balanced information needed to have a truly more nuanced testimony. "Friendly fire" that zealously overlooks the existence of "first aid" is not the solution.

Conclusion

JSPRT4 is an extremely valuable resource for scholarship, especially when coupled with the outstanding and innovative website of the Joseph Smith Papers Project. Unfortunately, the commentary in many ways reflects the personal biases of the editors, which results in not only missed opportunities but also may have done some mischief that advances the cause of critics of Joseph Smith. There is much more to the story and significantly different approaches in dealing with these documents that should have been considered in the name of fairness and

open scholarship that recognizes the related work of others. Of particular concern may be errors in the dating of the documents, due in part to failure to consider the possibility of the Hebrew study on the generation of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. It is hoped that some of these defects may be remedied with a future addendum.

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Comparing Phonemic Patterns in Book of Mormon Personal Names with Fictional and Authentic Sources: An Exploratory Study

Brad Wilcox, Bruce L. Brown, Wendy Baker-Smemoe, Sharon Black, and Dennis L. Eggett

Abstract: *In 2013 we published a study examining names from Solomon Spalding's fictional manuscript, J. R. R. Tolkien's fictional works, and nineteenth-century US census records. Results showed names created by authors of fiction followed phonemic patterns that differed from those of authentic names from a variety of cultural origins found in the US census. The current study used the same methodology to compare Book of Mormon names to the three name sources in the original study and found that Book of Mormon names seem to have more in common with the patterns found in authentic names than they do with those from fictional works. This is not to say that Book of Mormon names are similar to nineteenth-century names, but rather that they both showed similar patterns when phonotactic probabilities were the common measure. Of course, many more invented names and words from a variety of authors and time periods will need to be analyzed along with many more authentic names across multiple time periods before any reliable conclusions can be drawn. This study was exploratory in nature and conducted to determine if this new line of research merits further study. We concluded it does.*

In 2013, we published a study in *Names*, the journal of the American Names Society, exploring whether or not authors could be identified by phonoprints in their characters' names.[1] A phonoprint is like

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1. Brad Wilcox, et al., "Identifying Authors by Phonoprints in Their Characters' Names: An Exploratory Study," *Names* 61, no. 2 (2013) 104-25.

a wordprint except it describes how authors put sounds together, while wordprints describe how they put words together. In the past, wordprints have been used to verify a writer's identity.[2] Wordprints are, however, more tentative and difficult to define than fingerprints.[3] Nevertheless, they are used regularly in verifying authorship of documents[4] and have surfaced even in terse notes sent digitally such as through instant messaging and Twitter.[5] We began to wonder if authors put sounds together in identifiable ways when they invent names. Could they have unique phonoprints as well?

Traditionally, words have been seen as the smallest building blocks over which authors have some freedom to choose. Our new line of research reduces the fundamental unit of text to the phonemic level, and despite the fact that authors have fewer sounds with which to create words than they have words with which to create prose and poetry, we proceeded to compare phonemic patterns.[6] We examined 55 male names from Solomon Spalding's fictional manuscript, 197 male names from J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and other fictional works, and 100 male names from nineteenth-century US census records. In the 2013 study, we concluded that although it is possible to create a convincing set of names for a story, as Spalding and Tolkien did, such names seemed to follow patterns at the phoneme and bifone levels usually different from the authentic names from a variety of cultural origins found in nineteenth-century US census records.

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2. John L. Hilton, "On Verifying Wordprint Studies: Book of Mormon Authorship," *BYU Studies* 30, no. 3 (1990): 89-108. See also Andrew Q. Morton, *Literary Detection* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1979). See also John B. Archer, John L. Hilton, and G. Bruce Schaalje, "Comparative Power of Three Author-Attribution Techniques for Differentiating Authors," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6, no. 1 (1997):47-63.

3. D. James Croft, "Book of Mormon 'Wordprints' Reexamined," *Sunstone* 6, no. 2 (1981): 15-22.

4. Richard W. Bailey, "Authorship Attribution in a Forensic Setting," *Advances in Computer-Aided Literary and Linguistic Research* (1979): 9. See also David I. Holmes, "Authorship Attribution," *Computers and the Humanities* 28, no. 2 (1994): 87-106.

5. See Ben Zimmer, "Decoding Your E-mail Personality," *New York Times*, July 24, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/24/opinion/sunday/24gray.html?_r=0.

6. Wilcox, "Identifying Authors by Phonoprints in Their Characters' Names."

Phonotactic probabilities were determined using a calculator available on the Internet.[7] When multivariate patterns of mean phonotactic probabilities at each ordinal phoneme position were considered, phonoprints emerged for both authors of fiction that were different from the patterns found in the natural naming system. These authors of fiction appeared to have, consciously or subconsciously, unique phonoprints.

Spalding used several preferred phonemes in each of the positions. In the first ordinal position, 16 of the 55 names begin with /h/ as in *Helion* (29.1%). Out of the 55 names, 30 (54.6%) have /ă/ as in *animal* in the second ordinal position (e.g. Hakoon). In the third ordinal position, Spalding preferred to use /m/ as in *Hamko* (38.2%). He used /ə/ (schwa) as in *America* (23.6%) in the fourth ordinal position (e.g. Hamack and Hamelick).

Tolkien favored onset consonant clusters that combined voiced plosives (/g, d, b/) with liquids (/l, r/) or glides (/w/). Most sounds in coda position were liquids (/l, r/) or nasals (/n, m/). This was true in dwarf names (100%), hobbit names (87%), elf names (76%), and man names (85%). Tolkien used /b/ as in *Bandobras*, /r/ as in *Radagast*, /n/ as in Nahar, /l/ as in Legolas, /ə/ as in the end vowel sound of *Arminas*, and /ĕ/ as in Elrond. Common onsets were /br, gr, gl, dr/ (*Bregor*, *Grishnakh*, *Glom*, *Draugluin*). Common codas were /m, l, r, nt, rn/ (*Gollum*, *Nimrodel*, *Faramir*, *Ungoliant*, and *Arathorn*).

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to compare the results of our 2013 study with phonemic patterns of 124 unique single-word male names found in the Book of Mormon. This list includes Kim and Josh, which are proper nicknames in our day but are not listed in the Bible. Royal Skousen's research on the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon has shown varied spellings for some of the same names, but these spelling errors have been corrected and unified,[8] so variant spellings of the same names were not included in this study. Also not included in this study were Book of Mormon names spoken of by Joseph Smith that were never in the book, such as Zelph and Mahonri Moriancumer.[9]

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7. Phonotactic Probability Calculator, accessed June 26, 2019, https://calculator.ku.edu/phonotactic/English/words.

8. Royal Skousen, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

9. Mark L. McConkie, *Remembering Joseph: Personal Recollections of Those Who Knew the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 159, 275.

We emphasize that our efforts are exploratory in nature since many more names and words found in fiction by a variety of authors across many periods need to be examined before any reliable conclusions can be formed. Similarly, many sources of authentic names will also need to be examined to establish a baseline with which valid and reliable comparisons can be made. This will have to include diverse names from different language origins. Despite the obvious need for completing these next steps, we wanted to see how our findings in 2013 would compare to Book of Mormon names.

Phonotactic Research

When studying names, typical methodologies include structural analysis and contemporary or historical comparison. In these ways, researchers can examine a word to determine whether it is part of a specific language.[10] Another method is to ask native speakers to confirm whether a word "sounds" like their language.[11] Some studies have used a corpus — a sample of a particular language — to do historical linguistic analysis on whole words.[12]

These methods are not completely adequate for studying the unique names in the Book of Mormon. Traditional structural analysis of the names would require much more data than currently exist. Historical comparative or parallel methods that compare the names to words in other languages have been used, but not without some criticism since names may come from several sources and the languages known by Book of Mormon authors, which cannot be verified.[13] It would be

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10. Rui-Wen Wu, "Development and Strata Analysis of Geng She Unrounded Cognates in Proto-Min," *Language and Linguistics* 11, no. 2 (2010): 297-334.

11. Steven Young, "'Old Prussian' in M. Pratorius' Deliciae Prussicae," in *Studies in Baltic and Indo-European Linguistics, In Honor of William R. Schmalsteig*, eds. Philip Baldi and Pietro U. Dini (Amsterdam NL: John Benjamins, 2004), 275-83.

12. Sean S. Downey, et al., "Computational Feature-Sensitive Reconstruction of Language Relationships: Developing the ALINE Distance for Comparative Historical Linguistic Reconstruction," *Journal of Quantitative Linguistics* 15, no. 4 (2008): 340-69.

13. Anthony A. Hutchinson, "The Word of God Is Enough: The Book of Mormon as Nineteenth-Century Scripture," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology*, ed. Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 1-19. See also Edward H. Ashment, "'A Record in the Language of My Father': Evidence of Ancient Egyptian and Hebrew in the Book of Mormon," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology*, ed. Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 329-93. See also Clyde Revere Forsberg Jr., "The Roots of Early Mormonism: An Exegetical Inquiry" (master's thesis, University of Calgary, 1990).

impossible to ask native speakers to make intuitive judgments since there are no living speakers of these languages. Therefore, examining names required a new method.

We determined to examine the sounds within words using *phonotactic probability.* Michael S. Vitevitch and his associates previously defined this term as the general frequency of occurrence of phonological segments and sequences of segments in a given language.[14] For example, the vowel sounds found at the beginning of the words *eat* and *if* are more common in English than the vowel sounds found at the beginning of *alms* and *oink*. Similarly, consonant sounds such as those found at the beginning of *love, kiss, ton*, and *new* are all much more common in English than those found at the beginning of *young* and *whip*.[15] Beyond the prevalence of sounds, phonotactic probability also considers the segments of sounds commonly found in close proximity to each other in English.[16] For example, consonant-vowel-consonant content words comprised of common sounds tend to have many predictable lexical neighbors.[17] The sounds in the word *can* are also heard in *cap*, *cat*, *cost*, and *man*.

The probability of sounds (phonemes) and pairs of sounds (biphonemes, labeled *bifones* by Vitevitch and Luce[18]) appearing in the order they do in English is not dependent on origin of words. *Adam* and *Solomon* both are names from Hebrew, yet the average probability that in English all the phonemes and bifones would be arranged thus is much higher for Solomon than for Adam. Along with not distinguishing between origins, phonotactic probability does not measure how common a word or name is. For example, more men may be named Adam than Solomon, but phonotactic probability does not account for that. It deals only with the prevalence of the sounds within the names.

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14. Peter W. Jusczyk, Paul A. Luce, and Jan Charles-Luce, "Infants' Sensitivity to Phonotactic Patterns in the Native Language," *Journal of Memory & Language* 33, no. 5 (October 1994): 630-45.

15. Brett Kessler and Rebecca Treiman, "Syllable Structure and the Distribution of Phonemes in English Syllables," *Journal of Memory and Language* 37, no. 3 (1997): 295-311.

16. Michael S. Vitevitch, et al., "Phonotactics and Syllable Stress: Implications for the Processing of Spoken Nonsense Words," *Language & Speech* 40, (1997): 47-62.

17. Paul A. Luce and David B. Pisoni, "Recognizing Spoken Words: The Neighborhood Activation Model," *Ear & Hearing* 19, no. 1 (February 1998): 1-36.

18. Michael S. Vitevitch and Paul A. Luce, "A Web-Based Interface to Calculate Phonotactic Probability for Words and Nonwords in English," *Behavior Research Methods, Instruments, & Computers* 36, no. 3 (2004): 48-487.

Such determinations are made using the probability calculator that Michael S. Vitevitch and Paul A. Luce developed. The calculator compares inputted words to 20,000 words found in an English dictionary. The frequencies for those selected words were provided by the database of standard American English created by Henry Kucera and Nelson W. Francis,[19] referred to as the Brown Corpus.

Those using the calculator must enter each word phonemically or phonetically using the computer-readable transcription method Dennis Klatt developed.[20] In this study, we entered words phonemically rather than phonetically because little is known about the context-conditioned variations of Book of Mormon names on a phonetic level. Klatt's transcription method utilizes keys available on any keyboard to represent unique sounds (Edgar was entered as *Edgx*, Erchamion was rendered as *xCamian*, and Borthand was *borT@nd*). The calculator's output contains the position-specific probability for each phoneme and the sum of all phoneme probabilities as well as the position-specific probability for each bifone and the sum of all bifone probabilities.

For example, Edgar has four phonemes. Using Klatt's transcription method, the name was entered into the calculator as *Edgx*. The calculator presented the probability of the placement of *E* in the first position as .0175, *d* in the second position as .0084, *g* in the third position as .0179, and *x* in the fourth position as .0798. Edgar has three bifones. The calculator presented the probability of *Ed* appearing in the first and second positions of a word as .0004, *dg* in the second and third positions as .0000, and *gx* in the third and fourth positions as .0013. The overall probability of all the phonemes and bifones arranged as they are in *Edgx* is 1.1236 and 1.0017, respectively.

We employed this new methodology in our 2013 study comparing names written by authors of fiction to names found on the census. We also use this methodology in two studies comparing name groups found within Tolkien's works (dwarfs, elves, hobbits, etc.) to each other.[21] We used phonotactic probabilities first to look at Book of Mormon names in our exploratory study that examined Lamanite, Nephite, Mulekite,

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19.   Henry Kucera and Nelson W. Francis, *Computational Analysis of Present-day American English* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1967).

20.   Dennis Klatt, "Phonotactics on the Web," 487, table A1, last updated October 14, 2003, http://www.people.ku.edu/~mvitevit/Klatt_IPA.pdf.

21.   Wendy Baker-Smemoe, et al., "Naming practices in J.R.R. Tolkien's Invented Languages," *Journal of Literary Onomastics, 3* (2014): 5-23; Brad Wilcox, et al., "Tolkien's phonoprint in character names throughout his invented languages," *Names: A Journal of Onomastics* 66, no. 3 (2018): 135-43.

and Jaredite names, then to compare them to Tolkien's name groups.[22] The current study once again uses this methodology to consider Book of Mormon names.

Background

In our 2013 study, we discussed the background and pronunciation of the Spalding names, Tolkien names, and nineteenth-century names as well as characteristics of the names (shortest, longest, etc.). We now provide the same information about the Book of Mormon and its unique names.

Terryl L. Givens referred to the Book of Mormon as "the American scripture that launched a new world religion."[23] Joseph Smith maintained that he translated the Book of Mormon from an ancient record engraved on metallic plates. In 1827, an angel allowed him to retrieve the plates from a hill where they had been buried for centuries, and the resulting manuscript, the Book of Mormon, was published in 1830. Although followers throughout the world accept it as a fifth gospel that supports the Bible,[24] its authorship has been controversial since its publication.

Some of the unique names readers encounter in the Book of Mormon are Nephi, Helaman, Shiblon, Moronihah, Amalickiah, Korihor, Pahoran, Lamoni, Zeezrom, and Shiz. Joseph Smith claimed these names came from ancient records. However, others suggest that Joseph Smith adapted names from the Bible or from Solomon Spalding's manuscript.[25] Others maintain that the Book of Mormon is an extraordinary work of fiction comparable to *The Lord of the Rings*[26] and that Joseph Smith selected or invented the names just as Tolkien created his character names. Whether names are authentic, adapted, selected, or created, generating them is a process that has been studied for years.[27] Even names in the Book of Mormon have been the topic of previous research,

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22. Brad Wilcox, et al., "Comparing Book of Mormon Names with Those Found in J. R. R. Tolkien's Works: An Exploratory Study," *The Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 30 (2018): 105-24.

23. Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2002).

24. Ibid., front cover jacket.

25. Hutchinson, "The Word of God Is Enough: The Book of Mormon as Nineteenth-Century Scripture," 1-19. See also Forsberg Jr., "The Roots of Early Mormonism: An Exegetical Inquiry."

26. Peter A. Huff, "A Gentile Recommends the Book of Mormon," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 43, no. 2 (2010): 209.

27. W. Nelson Francis, "Word-Making: Some Sources of New Words," in *Language: Introductory Readings*, eds. Virginia P. Clark, Paul A. Eschholz and Alfred

but additional work has been called for.[28] Paul Y. Hoskisson stated that much work still "remains to be done."[29]

Critics are quick to label the personal names they encounter in the Book of Mormon as "preposterous proper nouns" [30] invented by Joseph Smith, but analysis of the original manuscript dictated by Joseph to various scribes shows that when Joseph came to a name he did not recognize or could not pronounce, he sometimes dictated the spelling letter by letter.[31] If the names were of his own invention, this process would seem an elaborate and unnecessary charade to put on over and over for scribes who were already believers. However, if the Book of Mormon is indeed the translation Joseph claimed it to be, these names would be among the few words in the original text not rendered in English. Even if they were transliterations, not presented in the original language but altered in ways to make them accessible to English readers, they would still represent to some degree the original languages from which they came, even though such transliterations may not show all the original phonemes.[32] One way or the other, the names would represent a vital link to the past worthy of investigation.

Some claim that many of the Hebrew, Egyptian, and classical names that appear in the Book of Mormon can be explained as nothing more than biblical variants. Others do not dismiss them so casually.

Previous research has compared names in the Book of Mormon to those used in cultures contemporary with the people described in the book. Considering the names unique to people in the Book of Mormon, John Tvedtnes published a phonemic analysis in which he reported that many Book of Mormon names have Hebrew roots and relationships.[33]

F. Rosa (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), 316-28. See also Henry L. Mencken, *The American Language* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1936).

28. John A. Tvedtnes, *A Phonemic Analysis of Nephite and Jaredite Proper Names* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1977). See also Paul Y. Hoskisson, "An Introduction to the Relevance of and a Methodology for a Study of the Proper Names of the Book of Mormon" in *By Study and Also by Faith: Volume 2*, eds. John M. Lundquist and Steven D. Ricks (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1990), 126-35.

29. Hoskisson, "Book of Mormon Names," 186-87.

30. Huff, "A Gentile Recommends the Book of Mormon," 209.

31. Royal Skousen, "How Joseph Smith Translated the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7, no. 1 (1998): 27.

32. John A. Tvedtnes, *A Phonemic Analysis of Nephite and Jaredite Proper Names* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1977).

33. Ibid.

For instance, *Abish* and *Abinadi* resemble *ab* (father) names in Hebrew; *Alma* appears in a Bar Kokhba letter found in 130 CE in the Judean desert;[34] *Mulek (Muloch* in Skousen's critical text[35]), the name given to a prince, could be a diminutive of West Semitic *mlk* (king); and *Jershon* is remarkably close to a noun form of the Hebrew root *yrs*. Scholars such as Hugh Nibley[36] and George Reynolds[37] pointed out how other Book of Mormon names closely resemble Egyptian: for example, *Ammon, Korihor,* and *Paanchi.*

Scholars have looked at consistencies within and differences between the names of various Book of Mormon cultures. For example, B. H. Roberts recognized that Jaredite names end primarily in consonants, and Nephite names end primarily in vowels.[38] Tvedtnes wrote that Jaredite names from the Book of Mormon exhibit no consistently obvious linguistic affinity with Hebrew or Egyptian, but the Nephite names do.[39] Donald Parry wrote, "Typical of the ancient Semitic languages from which the Nephite record is [said to have been] derived, the Book of Mormon does not use surnames or attach modern titles to its names."[40]

Some claim that these similarities between Book of Mormon names and ancient languages can be explained because of the Rosetta Stone, a multilingual stele that allowed linguists to begin deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphs.[41] Its discovery in 1799, just prior to Joseph Smith's birth, raised public awareness of ancient languages, and some conclude that knowledge of it could have provided Joseph Smith with access to ancient words beyond the Bible on which to base his invented names. Although French scholar Jean-Francois Champollion deciphered a list of Egyptian names prior to Book of Mormon publication, this list was published

34. Yigael Yadin, *Bar Kokhba: The Rediscovery of the Legendary Hero of the Last Jewish Revolt Against Imperial Rome* (West Sussex, UK: Littlehampton Book, 1971).

35. Royal Skousen, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text.*

36. Hugh Nibley, "Book of Mormon as a Mirror of the East," *Improvement Era* (April 1948): 202-4, 249-51. See also Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert and the World of the Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1952).

37. George Reynolds, "Nephite Proper Names," *Juvenile Instructor* (September 1880): 207-8.

38. Brigham Henry Roberts, *New Witnesses for God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1951).

39. Tvedtnes, *A Phonemic Analysis.*

40. Donald W. Parry, "The Book of Mormon: Integrity and Internal Consistency," in *Expressions of Faith: Testimonies of Latter-day Saint Scholars*, ed. Susan Easton Black (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996), 211.

41. John D. Ray, *The Rosetta Stone and the Rebirth of Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

in French and was available only in Europe.[42] No one has been able to demonstrate that Joseph Smith ever had access to it because news of Champollion's work was published in the United States only in elite periodicals and, as Richard L. Bushman concluded, "Smith could not aspire to enter this learned world."[43]

Rather than comparing Book of Mormon names to ancient languages, this study compares them to a corpus of modern English. By examining how similar or different the words are to standard American English, comparisons can be made with other names created by authors of fiction and with authentic names that have come from a variety of origins. Similarities or differences do not make a statement about whether names are ancient or modern or from the nineteenth or twentieth centuries. The probabilities simply provide a common measure with which to look at patterns that surface. These patterns can then be compared to each other regardless of when the names were created, adapted, or selected.

The pronunciation of names from the Book of Mormon is problematic since there is no evidence that they were ever pronounced verbally for Joseph Smith (except for when Moroni introduced himself; see Joseph Smith History 1:33), and Joseph had no way of knowing how peoples in the Book of Mormon pronounced their own names. English-speaking readers of the Book of Mormon have pronounced the names with little thought of how they may have been originally spoken, much as English-speaking readers of the Bible have pronounced its names; in neither case are pronunciations uniform.

Through the years, efforts have been made to standardize pronunciations of Book of Mormon names. Perhaps the earliest attempt took place when the Book of Mormon was published in the Deseret alphabet in 1869.[44] Later, during the early 1900s, various guides were produced by a variety of Latter-day Saint leaders and committees. These guides made no attempt to reflect the names' possible Semitic roots but offered renderings of the names based on common practice at the time.[45]

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42. John A. Wilson, *Signs and Wonders Upon Pharaoh: A History of American Egyptology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

43. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 131.

44. Frederick M. Huchel, "The Deseret Alphabet as an Aid in Pronouncing Book of Mormon Names," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 9, no. 1 (2000): 58-59.

45. Mary Jane Woodger, "How the Guide to English Pronunciation of Book of Mormon Names Came About," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 9, no. 1 (2000): 52-57.

As Latter-day Saint leaders prepared for the publication of the 1920 edition of the Book of Mormon, "[Church] President Joseph F. Smith noted … that variant pronunciation methods for proper names existed among Church members, so he appointed a committee of scholars [to determine a common pronunciation]."[46] The committee's recommendations were accepted by the First Presidency of the Church and published in the 1920 edition. Six decades later, before the 1981 edition was produced, Church leadership determined that the pronunciation guide should be revised for consistency and simplicity — "to reflect pronunciation among present-generation Latter-day Saints."[47] Soren Cox, an English professor at Brigham Young University, was asked to complete the work; he selected the general American dialect as a model for his pronunciation guidelines in English, which are still published today.

For this study, we obtained phonotactic probabilities for the Deseret Alphabet, 1920 and 1981 pronunciations, and compared each to the other name sources. The pronunciations based on the Deseret Alphabet were different from the others but not enough to alter the results and patterns. Since the 1920 and 1981 pronunciations yielded similar results, we determined to present only the results for name pronunciations based on the 1981 guidelines. The only variations from this guide were for pronunciations based on updated spellings found in Skousen's work with the original handwritten manuscript and printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon.[48]

Characteristics of the 124 Book of Mormon names follow. The names found to contain the most phonemes in the Book of Mormon are Coriantumr, Gidgiddonah, and Morianton, with ten each. The names containing the least are Aha, Ahah, Com, Gid, Hem, Josh, Kib, Kim, Lib, Shez, Shiz, and Shule, all containing three. The phonemes in Moron, Manti, and Corom are the most like standard American English. Emer and Ethem are the least like English. When bifones were considered, the name most like standard American English is still Moron, while Emer, Ether, Hagoth, and Omni are the least like English. Generally, the longer the names, the more similar they are to standard American English.

46. Dennis L. Largey, ed. *Book of Mormon Reference Companion* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 140.

47. Ibid.

48. Royal Skousen, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text.*

Results of Phonotactic Comparisons

As in our 2013 study, we used a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to compare the average word lengths of the groups of names. The nineteenth-century census names are, on average, shorter than the Spalding names, which are shorter than the Book of Mormon names. Tolkien names are longest. We then examined phoneme and bifone probabilities and found statistically significant differences among the four sources in average phoneme and bifone probabilities, but such differences would be expected when examining any of the four name sources.

In our 2013 study, the analysis of patterns of probabilities across the successive phoneme ordinal positions yielded the most interesting results. In this study, we analyzed names from the Book of Mormon in the same ways to enable the comparison of outcomes. Below, we present the original four hypotheses, results, and comparisons with Book of Mormon names.

First Hypothesis

The first hypothesis held that natural naming practices would show greater variance in phoneme and bifone probabilities than would fictional naming systems. We reasoned that names created by single authors would be expected to be more similar in their phonotactic probabilities than names developed from a variety of origins within a natural language population.

Since the Spalding manuscript had no names with fewer than four phonemes or more than eight, we restricted ourselves to this range. Results of the 2013 study showed that the tests differentiated clearly between the Spalding names and the natural nineteenth-century names. However, the fictional names crafted by Tolkien were similar to natural naming patterns. Book of Mormon names also differed from the Spalding names and aligned with the phonemic probabilities of the nineteenth-century and Tolkien names. These three name sources showed greater variances in each ordinal position, whereas the Spalding names did not vary greatly (see Figure 1).
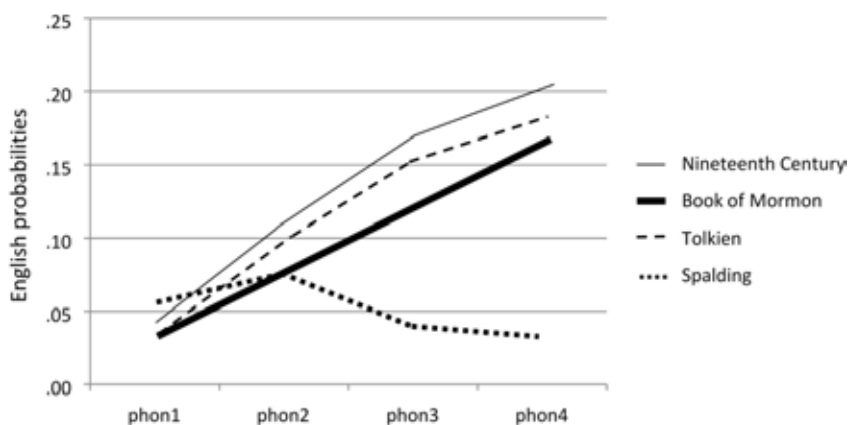
Figure 1. A comparison of the four name sources in their average English phonemic probabilities at each of the four phonemic ordinal positions.

A similar pattern was seen with bifones (see Figure 2). Because this was the case in the tests for the other hypotheses as well, only phonemes are reported in the rest of this article.
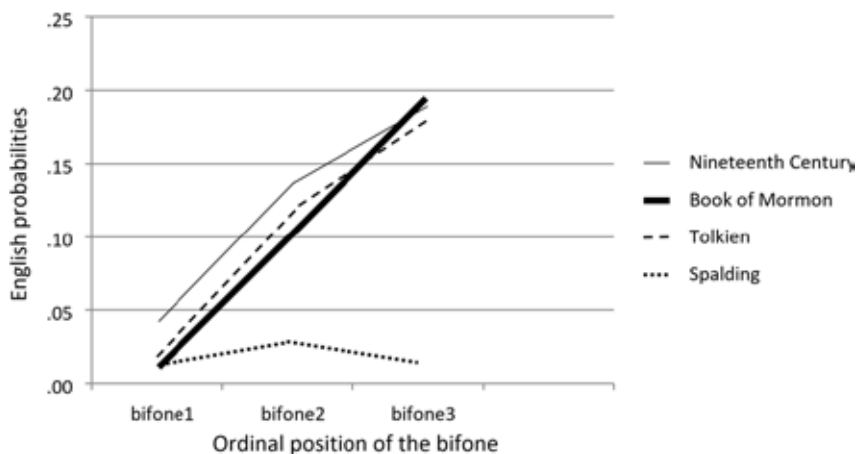
Figure 2. A comparison of the four name sources in their average English probabilities at the three bifone ordinal positions.

Second Hypothesis

The second hypothesis was extended from the first variance hypothesis but was more subtle, dealing with variances of mean phonotactic probabilities for names at various word lengths. We assumed that an author's artificial naming system would use the same processes regardless of name length

but that names chosen by people from varying origins and backgrounds would involve a more heterogeneous set of phonotactic structures. In other words, the phonotactic probabilities of individual phonemes in natural naming practice would vary more across name lengths.

This hypothesis was tested with a two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) of the interactive effects of name source and name length on the ordinal position profiles of phonotactic probabilities. Figure 3 shows the phonotactic probability profiles as a function of name length for the four name sources. Nineteenth-century names and Book of Mormon names had substantially more phonotactic variation than did the names from Tolkien, particularly in the first ordinal position and in the fourth. However, the Spalding names peaked at phoneme two like the others, but the range of probabilities at phoneme positions one and four were more comparable to those seen in nineteenth-century and Book of Mormon names.
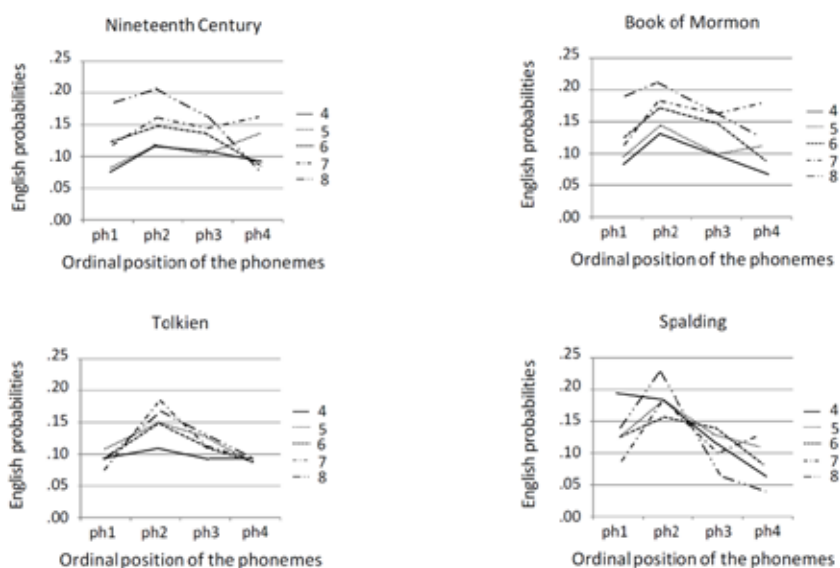
Figure 3. Phonotactic probability profiles as a function of name length for the four name sources.

Third Hypothesis

Whereas the first hypothesis explained the variances of phonotactic probabilities and the second was concerned with the variances of means within each ordinal position, the third hypothesis dealt with the patterning of the mean probabilities themselves. It held that natural and

fictional naming systems would differ in multivariate patterns of mean phonotactic probabilities across the ordinal positions.

The results of the multivariate tests were each significant and showed differences between the Spalding names and Tolkien names, but more important for this study was that both differed significantly from the nineteenth-century names showing a clear separation between fiction and nonfiction (accounting for eight percent of the variance). Notice the wide spread at the fourth ordinal position for nineteenth-century names compared to the small spread for Tolkien and Spalding names. Notice that the Book of Mormon names show a spread similar to nineteenth-century names (see Figure 4).
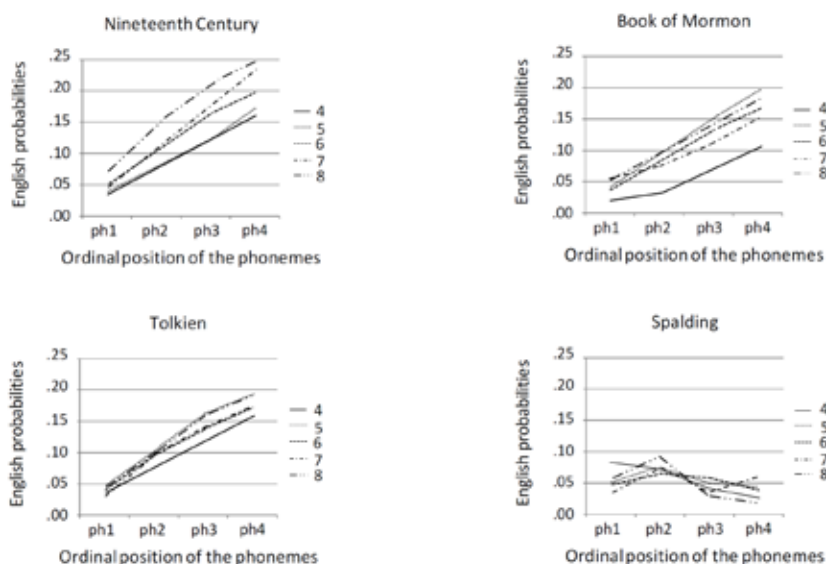
Figure 4. A comparison of the English phonemic probabilities for each word length (from four phonemes through eight phonemes) at each of the first four ordinal positions.

Fourth Hypothesis

The fourth hypothesis held that distributional properties could also distinguish between historical naming systems and individual author systems. We calculated the mean phonotactic probability for each of five name lengths (from a length of four phonemes to a length of eight) for each of the four name groups as well as the standard error of the mean (i.e., how the five length means deviate from each other) for each name source at each phoneme position.

Book of Mormon name variances of errors do not differ significantly from those for nineteenth-century names, but variances of errors for the Spalding and Tolkien names do differ significantly from the others. Again, this is most obvious in the fourth phoneme position (see Figure 5).
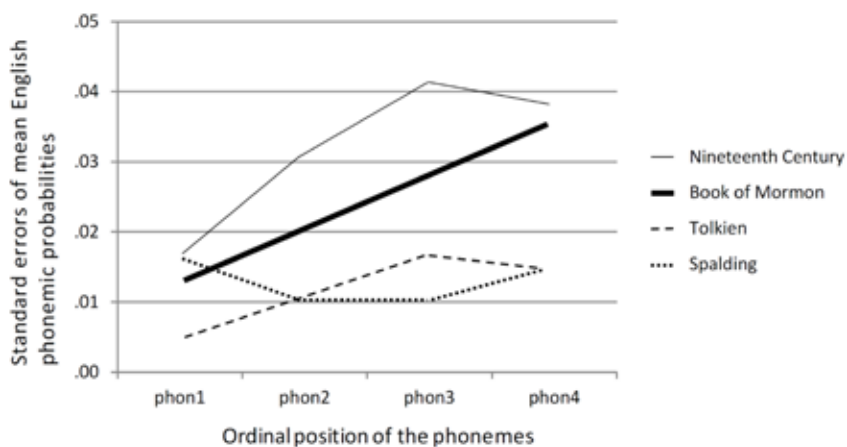
Figure 5. Standard errors of mean English phonemic probabilities as a measure of spread across the five word lengths for each of the four name sources at each of the four phoneme ordinal positions.

Summary of Findings and Discussion

In the test of the first hypothesis, Book of Mormon and Tolkien names aligned with nineteenth-century names. In the second hypothesis, Book of Mormon names and Spalding names aligned with nineteenth-century names. In the third and fourth hypotheses, Book of Mormon names aligned with nineteenth-century names and both differed significantly from Spalding and Tolkien names. In these tests, the variance of phonotactic probabilities across different name lengths was greater in the natural naming practices of nineteenth-century names than in Spalding's and Tolkien's fictional naming systems. Across all four tests, the Book of Mormon phonotactic probabilities were consistent with natural naming practices. Thus, the pattern that surfaced in names in the Book of Mormon seems to have more in common with the pattern found in authentic names from a century of census recording than it does with those from fictional works. We are not saying that Book of Mormon names are similar to nineteenth-century names. Rather, they both show similar patterns when phonotactic probabilities are the common measure.

We recognize that we have made broad diachronic comparisons between works attributed to both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and between them and a record purportedly from ancient origins. Nevertheless, we proceeded with this study understanding that it was exploratory in nature. We wanted to determine whether there were enough phonemic differences between fictional and Book of Mormon names to merit further investigation and results seem to indicate there are.

Of course, many more invented names and words from a variety of authors and time periods will need to be analyzed before any reliable conclusions can be drawn. Similarly, many more authentic name sources across many time periods will need to be tested.

That said, results of this study indicate that when authors invent names, as Spalding and Tolkien did, they can do so with varying levels of effectiveness. They both were able to mirror the patterns found in authentic names to some extent, but seem to have been unable to replicate the patterns in authentic names that came from a variety of cultural origins. The patterns found in Book of Mormon names were consistent with those of authentic names.

Joseph Smith claimed that the Book of Mormon names are authentic from a variety of cultural origins. The fact that in this study those names have phonemic probabilities more in common with a compilation of authentic names than with fictional names may be of some interest to those who view the Book of Mormon as a translation of a historical/religious record into English rather than as a work of fiction written in English. It appears that both authors in this study were unable to escape their phonoprints, while Book of Mormon names and nineteenth-century names did not adhere to unique phonoprints.

Bob Bennett has written, "the Book of Mormon is much more complex than its casual readers, believers and critics alike, think it is."[49] In addition, he declared, "it has all of the complexities and nuances of an authentic history."[50] When considering personal names in the text, results of this exploratory study seem to support Bennett's statements.

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49. Bob Bennett, *Leap of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2009), 207.
50. Ibid., 285.

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Text as Afterthought: Jana Riess's Treatment of the Jacob-Sherem Episode

Duane Boyce

Review of Jana Riess, "'There Came a Man': Sherem, Scapegoating, and the Inversion of Prophetic Tradition," in *Christ and Antichrist: Reading Jacob 7*, eds. Adam S. Miller and Joseph M. Spencer (Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, 2017), 17 pages (chapter), 174 pages (book).

Abstract: *The Neal A. Maxwell Institute recently published a book on the encounter between Jacob and Sherem in Jacob 7. Jana Riess's contribution to this volume demonstrates the kind of question-asking and hypothesis formation that might occur on a quick first pass through the text, but it does not demonstrate what obviously must come next, the testing of those hypotheses **against** the text. Her article appears to treat the text as a mere afterthought. The result is a sizeable collection of errors in thinking about Jacob and Sherem.*

Writing about prophets is a significant undertaking. Commissioned by the Lord to represent him in the highest mortal office, their status is unique. Because they are chosen by the Lord, and because they represent him, what people come to think about prophets can have deep and enduring consequences. That is why careful attention, both to detail and to context, is important in thinking about them.

A case in point is the confrontation between Jacob and Sherem in Jacob 7, to which the Neal A. Maxwell Institute recently devoted a book.[1] Jana Riess's contribution to the discussion — "'There Came

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1. A conference entitled "Christ & Antichrist: Reading Jacob 7" was held in June 2015 at the Union Theological Seminary in New York City, cosponsored by the

a Man': Sherem, Scapegoating, and the Inversion of Prophetic Tradition" (pp. 1–17) — is a good example of the importance of careful attention both to detail and to context because, as manifested by its multiple errors, it exhibits far too little of either. Because the episode between Jacob and Sherem is a prominent feature of the Book of Mormon, it is worthwhile to consider these mistakes and to provide some correction.

Starting Out: Obvious Indications of a Casual Approach to the Text

In examining the story of Jacob and Sherem, Riess pursues two major threads. One is the effort to tie this encounter to a pattern that appears in the Hebrew Bible, and the other is her attempt to locate the episode within René Girard's conceptual framework of cultural scapegoating (both of which I will explain in due course).

Unfortunately, Riess makes several errors in these attempts. Two are so obvious that they tell us immediately that Riess's approach to the Jacob-Sherem episode is more casual than careful. The first is Riess's report that God "struck Sherem dumb" (p. 15) in his encounter with Jacob. As the text never indicates that Sherem was struck dumb, Riess seems to be confusing Sherem with Korihor, who appears some sixty chapters later in the Book of Mormon (Alma 30). Korihor is condemned by the Lord and cursed such that he cannot speak. Sherem, on the other hand, is smitten by the Lord and collapses to the earth (Jacob 7:15) with no mention of being unable to speak.

Riess also reports that God nourished Sherem in his weakened condition following the smiting he received, but the record says nothing like this. It tells us that God smote Sherem and that he required nourishing but says nothing to indicate that God provided the nourishing.

Basic as they are, these are far from Riess's only errors. Rather, they are indicative of a casual approach to the text generally. To show this, I will consider a sample of Riess's other claims in no particular order. Doing so will permit some clarifications of the Jacob-Sherem episode.

Mormon Theology Seminar and the Neal A. Maxwell Institute; see https://mi.byu.edu/2015-mts-seminar-schedule/. The conference presentations were collected and published in Adam S. Miller and Joseph M. Spencer, eds., *Christ and Antichrist: Reading Jacob 7* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, 2017); see https://mi.byu.edu/book/christ-and-antichrist/.

Sherem and "Outmoded Theology"

In describing Sherem, Riess tells us that he dies "after a single episode of outmoded theology" (p. 9). She asserts that, although Sherem was mistaken in his religious beliefs, he was nevertheless sincere in holding them (p. 7). She says that he was "observant and pious" (p. 9), that he was "a deeply religious man" (p. 13), and that "Sherem comes into this text as a watchman over public piety, an outsider who is poised to rein in the people of Nephi from what he sees as a dangerous theological heresy" (p. 6). In speaking to Jacob, Sherem merely wants to "persuade him to embrace his point of view" (p. 7). Indeed, Riess remarks that Sherem does not anathematize Jacob in the way that Jacob anathematizes him. He just "believes Jacob has misunderstood the law and been delinquent in his duties" (p. 13). Riess thus describes Sherem's ultimate confession as a simple matter of "coming to terms" with his "theological errors" (p.15).

As depicted in the text, however, this characterization of Sherem could hardly be less accurate. Sherem's demise has nothing to do with a sincere but "outmoded theology." Jacob tells us that Sherem resorted to cross flattery of the populace to influence them; that he relied on rhetorical talent "according to the power of the devil;" that he "labored diligently" to "lead away the hearts of the people;" that he claimed to know the future even though, in challenging Jacob, he denied the future was knowable;[2] that he denied Christ; and that he arrogantly demanded a heavenly sign in challenging Jacob (Jacob 7:2–4, 7, 9, 13).

We don't have to take Jacob's word for Sherem's inauthenticity and wickedness, however. Sherem *himself* didn't think he was sincere in his beliefs and that he had merely made theological errors. When he later confessed, he described himself as having lied to God, he worried that his state before God was "awful," and he feared that he had committed the unpardonable sin (Jacob 7:17–19). Finally, the Lord slew Sherem, an extreme action if Sherem merely possessed sincere-but-mistaken religious beliefs.[3]

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2. In verse 7, Sherem asserts that no one can "tell of things to come," and yet in verse 9 he explicitly denies there "ever will be" a Christ. Thus, in challenging Jacob, Sherem denies that anyone can know the future, whereas in asserting his own claims he declares that *he* knows the future. I am indebted to Nathan Mayhew for this observation. It is a further manifestation of Sherem's fundamental dishonesty.

3. Riess denies that the Lord killed Sherem, but I will show at the appropriate point why this is a mistake.

Additionally, the claim that Sherem was guilty of only "a single incident" of his mistaken theology is a misreading of the text. Sherem had a history of preaching to the people and manipulating them to create a following (Jacob 7:2–4). Far from being limited to a single incident, the record depicts Sherem as exhibiting a pattern of cunning and deceit over time.

Riess also claims that Jacob "slanders" Sherem in the way Jacob speaks of him in this episode (pp. 12–13). Given Sherem's own confession — in addition to the Lord's slaying of him — there is actually every reason to believe that Jacob's descriptions of Sherem are true. To say Jacob slanders Sherem, therefore, would actually seem to libel Jacob.

Sherem and *Ish Elohim:* "The Man of God"

Riess's efforts to paint Sherem as sincere appear during her attempt to place Sherem in the role of the biblical *ish elohim*: the "man of God" who comes among the people in ancient times. In the three biblical stories she shares, the man of God specifically corrects the behavior of a priestly or kingly figure who is doing wrong (1 Samuel 2:27; 1 Kings 13:1; 20:28). Riess considers Sherem a parallel figure since he, too, is said to "come among the people," and he does so "as a watchman over public piety." Riess thus says that Sherem enters the scene "as the mysterious man of God whose function is to be more priestly than the priest, to save the people from the brink of ritual disaster" (p. 6).

Now, although Riess does not believe Sherem is a man of God, she thinks the connection holds because, even if he was not exactly a man of God, he was like these Old Testament figures in his devotion to the law. Pious and sincere, he was only trying to correct the Nephites' deviation from the proper worship of Yahweh. She considers him "an outsider" who wants to rescue the Nephites from what he sees as "a dangerous theological heresy" (p. 6). According to Riess, Sherem is "observant and pious" and sees the Nephites as "straying from the foundation of their religion, which is the law, and adding to it with this foreign god called the Christ." In comparing Sherem to these biblical figures, Riess says "Sherem's story begins with the very same set-up" (p. 6).

But Sherem's story does not begin with "the very same set-up" at all. We have already seen that Sherem is neither a man of God *nor* mistaken-but-sincere in his beliefs. His own words contradict Riess's view. Sherem is not similar to the *ish elohim* figures in the Old Testament up to a point, and then becomes their opposite later in the story. He is their opposite from the outset. Riess treats the Jacob-Sherem case largely

as a reversal of the biblical accounts, but her misreading causes her to overlook just how complete a reversal it truly is.[4]

Reading Jacob's Mind

Riess also engages in an interesting bit of mindreading. Because Jacob gives us Sherem's name, she reports with certainty that "Jacob *wants* us to know who this stranger is, because to name Sherem is to have power over him" (p. 7; emphasis in original). There is no element of the text that indicates this motivation in Jacob, however. It is Riess's extrapolation. She offers no argument for the claim, though, and rests her case on simple assertion. All we can really gather from the assertion is what Riess sees as the most logical reason for the naming — it is apparently why Riess would mention Sherem's name if she were in Jacob's place. This tells us nothing about Jacob; it tells us only about Riess. Presumably, at least in order to be consistent, she would attribute the same motivation to Alma's naming of Nehor and Korihor (Alma 1 and Alma 30). Again, however, such attribution would be without a whisper in the text supporting such a motivation and would reveal more about Riess than about Alma.

Sherem's Death:
The Absence of an Explicit Declaration of Cause

Part of Riess's theory lies in her denial that the Lord killed Sherem (p. 15). It is true that the text never actually says something as declarative as, "Sherem died because God struck him down." However, the narrative thread proceeds uninterrupted from God's smiting Sherem so that he falls to the earth, to his requirement for nourishing, his announcement of his imminent death, his dying words, and his death itself (Jacob 7:15–20). This thread is not sufficient for Riess, however. She seems to want an explicit declaration of the cause of Sherem's demise.

This is an odd analytical standard; by the same logic, we would be unable to say the First Vision occurred because Joseph Smith prayed. All

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4. One difficulty in reading Riess on this score is her inconsistency. She tells us early on that Sherem is not the "man of God" who appears in the biblical episodes, "but something else entirely" (p. 1). But then she writes repeatedly of how similar Sherem is to these figures in terms of his devotion to the law, his religious nature, his sincerity, his concern about heresy, and his devotion to the proper worship of Yahweh — all of which contradict her own claim that Sherem is "something else entirely." A contradiction of this sort introduces confusion, making it more laborious than it should be to figure out what she is really trying to say and more difficult than it should be to represent her claims accurately.

the record tells us is that Joseph determined to pray, that he subsequently knelt in prayer, that he was then overcome by forces of darkness, that he struggled to pray, and that the Father and Son appeared to him (JS–History 1:13–17), but nowhere in the account are we told that "the Father and Son appeared to Joseph because he prayed." We are not even told it was because he was praying that spiritual darkness overtook him.

The same is true of the martyr Stephen. The record reports that an angry crowd took him before the "council," that he preached to them, that he announced seeing the Father and Son, that they then "ran upon him," that they took him out of the city, that they stoned him, and that he died ("fell asleep," Acts 6–7). Nowhere does the text say it was because he announced his vision that they "ran upon him." It doesn't even say he died because they stoned him.

Similarly, by Riess's standard we could not say the vision in D&C 76 came to Joseph and Sidney because they were involved in translating the Bible, that Nephi's vision of the tree came because he was pondering what he had heard from his father Lehi and desired to know more, or that the City of Enoch was translated because of the people's righteousness. None of these stories includes a straightforward declaration of cause and effect. Instead, all we get is a simple narrative thread that identifies a sequence of events and an outcome; rather than a didactic declaration at the end, the cause-and-effect elements are built into these accounts in the very way their authors structure them. Recognizing these elements, we arrive at the *prima facie* reading of the text. In the absence of textual elements that suggest these were not the causes of the relevant effect, we take the plain meaning of the text as determinative. Thus, Joseph's prayer triggered the First Vision, Stephen's teachings triggered his stoning, his stoning caused his death, and so forth.

The Sherem story would appear to be no different. There is a straight, uncomplicated narrative line between Sherem's smiting, his weakened condition, his announcement of his imminent demise, his dying words, and his death. There are no contravening events — no other variables in the account — that make us question the cause of his death, just as there are no other variables that make us question what triggered the First Vision or what caused Stephen's death. In each case, the obvious elements of cause and effect are embedded in the narrative thread itself.

Riess is correct to note no declarative statement of cause and effect in Sherem's case (p. 15). But if she wants to insist this is anything other than trivial — that such a declarative statement is required to determine cause-and-effect relationships — then she must either apply this standard

to every other scriptural story that does not include such an explicit declaration or explain why Sherem's case is exceptional and calls for such a declaration when the others do not. Riess attempts neither. She simply assumes this standard for identifying cause-and-effect relationships in Sherem's case — an assumption that is convenient but empty. The plain meaning of the text is that God killed Sherem, and despite her attempt, Riess gives us no reason whatever to imagine otherwise.

Sherem's Death: His "Recovery"

However, there seems to be another reason Riess denies that God killed Sherem — namely, her belief that he *recovered* from his smiting. She speaks of God striking Sherem and then says "he recovers some days later" (p. 14). The inference is that even though God caused the smiting, God cannot be the cause of Sherem's death if Sherem recovered from it — the two events are disconnected in Riess's view. Thus, she says that although God struck Sherem down, this smiting was "a reckoning, but not a death" (p. 15).

While Riess does not make an explicit defense of this disconnection, there are two clues in her discussion (p. 15) that indicate why she might believe this. One is her report that God nourished Sherem in the aftermath of his smiting. If this is true, it makes sense that Sherem would return to normal health. The other is her claim that Sherem's smiting took the form of being struck dumb — since he was later able to speak, this would also be indicative of a recovery. Both readings would seem to support the conclusion that Sherem returned to normalcy sometime after his initial smiting.

There are three central problems with this conclusion, however.

Sherem's Advance Announcement of His Death

First, and most importantly, Riess completely overlooks Sherem's advance *announcement* of his death. Sherem said to the people, "gather together on the morrow, for I shall die," and "I desire to speak unto the people before I shall die" (Jacob 7:16). This declaration seems to completely undercut Riess's belief that Sherem recovered. After all, if Sherem were healthy, there would be no reason for him to talk about *dying*, much less to know that he would die the very next day.

Sherem's announcement of his imminent death makes perfect sense on the *prima facie* reading of his demise, of course. The account simply tells us that God smote Sherem, that he fell to the earth, that he required nourishing, that he desired to speak to the people "on the morrow" before

dying, that he spoke to the people, and that he immediately expired upon finishing his words (Jacob 7:15–20). This is all a single, continuous thread indicating that Sherem was dying and he knew it.

God Did Not Nourish Sherem

Apart from Sherem's own acceptance of his impending death, the suggestion that God nourished Sherem also fails. As we saw at the outset, the text never makes this claim. The absence of this claim is not dispositive, of course, since, as already discussed, cause-and-effect relationships do not require explicit declaration if they are clearly manifested in the narrative thread itself. But that's just the point — the idea that God nourished Sherem is *not* manifested in the narrative thread itself. Riess does not even try to show that it is. Her claim of God's nourishment is asserted out of thin air. And because it is vacuous in this way, it cannot then support *another* claim — that Sherem recovered from the smiting he received. That God nourished Sherem cannot be taken as evidence for Sherem's recovery if God in fact did not nourish Sherem.

Sherem Was Not Struck Dumb

It is also a mistake to claim that Sherem was struck dumb. The text never says this, nor is it manifested in the narrative thread itself. It was true of Korihor but not of Sherem. As mentioned previously, Riess appears to have confused the two stories. The point, therefore, is the same here as above: that Sherem is not dumb at the end of the story cannot be taken as evidence of his recovery if he was not struck dumb in the first place.

Riess's claim that Sherem recovered from his smiting, therefore, is unsupported by the text. It follows that such a recovery cannot be used as proof that his death was not a result of his smiting at the hand of God. Literally everything indicates that it was.

Sherem's Death: The Search for Other Causes

We are left, then, with what was clear from the text all along: God slew Sherem. Since this is the case, one of Riess's subsequent exploratory threads is entirely moot — namely, the quest to figure out who really killed Sherem. Although her effort is extraneous, it is nevertheless useful to consider since it teaches us more about the consequences of being casual in approaching the scriptural record.

The "Surrendering" of Sherem's Life Force

One possibility Riess suggests for Sherem's death is that he simply "surrendered his life force," that he was somehow in control of his own death and thus ended his life voluntarily (p. 15). In support of this view, she notices the description of Sherem's passing: "and it came to pass that when he had said these words he could say no more, and he gave up the ghost" (Jacob 7:20). She observes that "giving up the ghost" is how the Savior's (voluntary) death is described (Mark 15:37–39). For reasons I will mention later, she thinks the story of Sherem's death serves "much the same function" as the Savior's, and thus thinks that the similarity in language is more than a "literary coincidence" (p. 15).

This idea faces multiple problems, however. Most significantly, the Savior could surrender his life force because he was in full control of it: no one *could* take it from him. He was in control of his own death because he was inherently immortal. He was divine. But no one else is in control of his or her life force in this way. People who are in a healthy condition cannot simply surrender themselves and expire on the spot. For Sherem to do this, as Riess suggests he did, is to assume that Sherem had the same power over life and death the Savior had. So not only is Sherem similar to the Savior in the reasons for his death (again, a topic to be addressed later), but he is also similar to the Savior in his power over death.

There are other obstacles Riess fails to notice in addition to this extravagant (some would say absurd) claim. Note, for instance, that Jacob 7:20 tells us that once Sherem had spoken, "he *could* say no more." This statement of inability clearly indicates Sherem's lack of control; he was experiencing *in*capacity. Additionally, the expression "gave up the ghost" is a common biblical expression for describing death. It occurs in far more cases than the Savior's and is used to indicate dying generally; it is never used to indicate a voluntary "surrender" of one's life outside of the recounting of the Savior's death.[5] It is even used to describe the deaths of Ananias and Herod, both of whom, like Sherem, offended God (Acts 5:5; 12:22–23). The description of Sherem's death is thus hardly distinctive, which makes the comparison with the Savior's death seem forced — even aside from the other problems with the claim.

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5. See, for example: Gen. 25:8; 35:29; 49:33; Job 3:11; 10:18; 13:19; 14:10; Lamentations 1:19.

Killing by the Nephites

Riess is no more persuasive when she suggests the Nephites themselves might have killed Sherem — either of their own volition or as animated by God's Spirit (p. 15). She is serious in considering these possibilities but provides literally no textual basis for doing so. The problem with this way of thinking, however, is that once we feel free to completely untether ourselves from the text in this way, it is hard to see why we should stop at just these possibilities. We could just as easily speculate that Sherem died by pure happenstance — from a stroke, from a lifetime of obesity, or, as one author speculates, from madness.[6] We could also speculate that he died from assassination by one of his followers, from falling into a river, or from hanging himself. If we are free to imagine any cause whatsoever, then clearly our imaginations may run free. Each of these speculations is as possible as Riess's, which is exactly why an intellectual argument that relies on mere possibility does not actually qualify as an intellectual argument.

A Sea of Suppositions

There is another problem with such freewheeling speculation. Suppose, for example, we consider seriously — as Riess does — the possibility that the Nephites killed Sherem of their own volition after he spoke to them. Well, one of the problems with this view, as we have already seen, is that Sherem knew *the day before* that he was going to die — that's why he wanted to speak the next day — which raises the question of how he knew this. If he was in a recovered and healthy condition, how did he know he was going to die the very next day? The record tells us nothing about this, but since we need to account for it in some way, we could imagine that the Nephites simply had plans to kill Sherem, and Sherem somehow learned of these plans. That would explain how he knew.

But this explanation faces two problems of its own. First, if Sherem knew the Nephites were going to kill him the very next day, then why would he appear and speak to them at all? It's hard to see why he wouldn't avoid them and just live out his days in his recovered, healthy condition. Second, the Nephites were "astonished" the next day when Sherem spoke to them (Jacob 7:21). It is not apparent how the Nephites could have plans to kill Sherem, and to kill him as planned, if they were surprised by what

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6. See Jacob Rennaker, "Divine Dream Time: The Hope and Hazard of Revelation," in Miller and Spencer, *Christ and Antichrist*, 43–54.

he ended up saying. It seems likely that any "plans" would have been changed by their "astonishment" at his words.

Now, it is possible to generate explanations to cover these problems, of course. To the first objection, we might say Sherem was brave and willing to die for the trouble he had caused. To the second, we might say the Nephites were determined to kill Sherem *no matter what* — and thus it didn't matter that they were surprised at his words. In generating such possibilities for explanation, we are limited only by our imaginations.

But notice where we are at this point in trying to explain how Sherem died. Without any indication in the record, we first speculate that the Nephites might have killed Sherem. Then, because Sherem knew he was going to die, we speculate that the Nephites must have had *plans* they then carried out, which then requires us to speculate that he must have learned about these plans somehow. Then, because Sherem went to the gathering even though he knew the crowd was going to kill him, we have to speculate that he was brave and willing to die for his sins. And then, because the Nephites killed Sherem even though he didn't say what they expected, we speculate that they were going to kill him regardless of what he said.

That's five layers of speculation, all without any indication in the text. At the bottom of it all is the false conclusion that started the need for conjecture in the first place: the mistaken view that God did not kill Sherem.

The outcome, of course, would be no different if we examined any other possible cause of Sherem's death. Every conjecture leads to the need for additional conjecture, all completely divorced from the text itself. If we pile up enough suppositions, we can suppose our way to any conclusion whatever. That's the risk Riess's approach helps us see. Once we depart from what the text says and start following the trail of our own non-textual suppositions, we find ourselves afloat in a sea of suppositions. That might be superficially satisfying for a time — and it might even tell us something about our capacity for imagination — but it is not intellectual argument and, in this case, it does not tell us anything about Jacob and Sherem.

Jacob and Conflict with the Nephites

Key to Riess's interpretation of the story of Jacob and Sherem is her assertion that Jacob was in conflict with the Nephites. She says Jacob "opens this chapter [Jacob 7] deeply at odds with his own people" (p. 10) and that he has "alienated" them by his teachings, specifically with his temple sermon in Jacob 2 and 3. There, Riess says, Jacob catalogs "all of the

people's sins — their greed and sexual transgressions and terrible pride" (p. 11). She lumps Jacob's Chapter 6 teachings in with this sermon, saying that together these chapters create a "doomsday scenario" in which the people's end ("probably by fire") "may be nigh" (p. 11). By Chapter 7, the Nephites have "largely ignored his many warnings" (p. 8), she says, adding that, "Jacob's sermonizing has fallen on deaf ears." Indeed, he may have created "an irreparable breach" in his relationship with the Nephites by comparing them unfavorably with their enemies, the Lamanites. "We can imagine," she says, "the people's anger rising against Jacob" (p.12).

But Riess's description radically misstates the reality. Note that in his temple sermon, Jacob begins by congratulating his audience. He says, "as yet, ye have been obedient unto the word of the Lord" (Jacob 2:4). He characterizes them generally as righteous, not as unrighteous. Nevertheless, wickedness is beginning to seep in. But that's just the point: it is *beginning*. Jacob says the Nephites "*began* to grow hard in their hearts" (with some of them seeking to have many wives and concubines — Jacob 1:15), that they "*began* to search much gold and silver" (Jacob 1:16; 2:12), that they "*began* to be lifted up somewhat in pride" (Jacob 1:16), that they were "*beginning* to labor in sin" (Jacob 2:5), and that (in the Lord's words) "this people *begin* to wax in iniquity" (Jacob 2:23). Jacob also describes them as being lifted up "*somewhat* in pride" (Jacob 1:16). Both Jacob and the Lord describe the Nephites' unrighteousness as incipient.

Moreover, this unrighteousness was true of only some of the Nephites. Jacob specifically distinguishes those in his temple audience who are wicked from those who are pure in heart (Jacob 2:10; 3:1–2) and speaks specifically to "you that are not pure in heart …" (Jacob 3:3). He speaks of some who have been wounded by the unrighteousness of others and of others who have *not* been wounded in this way (Jacob 2:9). Regarding riches and pride, he speaks explicitly to "some of you" (Jacob 2:13) and "those of you" (Jacob 2:20) so affected. Later, Jacob reports this of his people:

> Wherefore, we search the prophets, and we have many revelations and the spirit of prophecy; and having all these witnesses we obtain a hope, and our faith becometh unshaken, insomuch that we truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea. (Jacob 4:6)

Such a description suggests that, by Chapter 4, Jacob's people were unusually righteous, not unrighteous.

Riess is also mistaken in treating Chapter 6 as a companion piece to Jacob's sermon in Chapters 2 and 3, thinking that Jacob is applying his discussion there about "fire," "endless torment," and the end that "soon cometh" to his Nephite contemporaries. Jacob's sermon to his people actually ends in Chapter 3, though. In Chapter 4, he begins writing to his *future* readers and continues to do so in Chapter 5, where he includes a lengthy allegory about the Lord's dealings with Israel and the Gentiles over the history of the world (including the future), ending with the burning of the vineyard at the end of the Lord's work. Chapter 6 picks up at that point, emphasizing the restoration of Israel in the last days, the burning of the world with fire at the end, and the torment of the wicked following the day of judgment. None of this is part of Jacob's sermon to his people, nor is it intended for his people. It is written to the people of the last days. It is a mistake, therefore, for Riess to conclude from it that "chaos is encroaching and the people's end may be nigh" (p. 11).

It is simply not the case, then, that the Nephites as a group were wicked or that, at the time of Sherem, they were in opposition to Jacob. Indeed, contrary to Riess's claims that Jacob's teachings had fallen on deaf ears and that the people didn't "evince any change until after Sherem's death" (p. 8), the record indicates that Jacob's teachings were actually successful. The people enjoyed remarkable miracles, and Chapter 7 itself begins "some years" after Jacob had written Chapter 6 (Jacob 7:1). Moreover, the wickedness that existed at this time is attributed to Sherem himself; it is not depicted as pre-existing him. All we are told of Nephite unrighteousness at this time is that Sherem "did lead away many hearts" (Jacob 7:3), and later, when we learn of the Nephites' repentance, this repentance appears specifically to be among those *who had followed Sherem* (Jacob 7:23). So Riess's picture of a generally wicked population in opposition to Jacob — and repentant only because of Sherem — is inaccurate. The unrighteousness identified in Chapter 7 is, to all appearances, limited to those who followed Sherem in the first place. *They* were those who repented.

The Relationship between the Nephites and Lamanites

Riess also mischaracterizes the relationship between the Nephites and the Lamanites. She says Jacob blurs the difference between these two peoples when, early in his temple sermon, he announces that the Lamanites are superior to the Nephites (pp. 11–12) and then later sharpens the difference between them when he refers back to the old story of Lamanite aggression (p. 16).

This view of Jacob's narrative rests on a false distinction, however, since the Nephites and Lamanites were fundamentally different in their styles of unrighteousness from the beginning. Whereas the Nephites struggled with pride and riches and personal morality, they never attacked the Lamanites militarily. Over nearly a thousand years of history, virtually every recorded engagement in war between the two peoples was instigated by the Lamanites.[7] So Lamanite unrighteousness was fundamentally different from Nephite unrighteousness: it consisted in frequent military aggression, and it did so from the start.[8] Whatever the Lamanites' other sins might have been — and we are told they too

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7. The single example we have of Nephite aggression against the Lamanites is a rogue action conducted without legitimate Nephite leadership. The incident occurred very late in Book of Mormon history ("in the three hundred and sixty and third year"), at the time Mormon was refusing to lead them (Mormon 4:1–4). In all other recorded conflicts — over the entire Book of Mormon history — the Lamanites, not the Nephites, were the aggressors. Captain Moroni once threatened to become an aggressor (Alma 54:12), but he never followed through on his threat, even when he had occasion to do so (see, for example, Alma 55:20–24). The Nephites also employed offensive *tactics*, but they were always just that: like the Allies' invasion of Normandy in WWII (along with a thousand other examples), they were offensive initiatives conducted in a war of defense against those who were attacking them. They started no wars of their own. The difference between the two societies is displayed even in those cases when Nephite dissenters led the Lamanites into war against the Nephites. Examples include Amlici (Alma 2), the Amalekites and Amulonites (Alma 24), the Amalekites (Alma 27), the Zoramites and Amalekites (Alma 43–44), Amalickiah (Alma 46–51), Ammoron (Alma 52–62), Coriantumr (Helaman 1), and other unnamed Nephite dissenters who were highly instrumental in Lamanite aggression (Alma 63:14–15, Helaman 4, and Helaman 11). Despite all these examples of Nephite dissidents agitating Lamanites into attacking the Nephites, however, there are no examples of Lamanite dissidents agitating the Nephites into attacking the Lamanites. The text depicts aggression between the two societies as thoroughly one-sided.

8. In the very earliest days, Nephi himself had to fight to defend his people from Lamanite assault (Jacob 1:10; also 2 Nephi 5:14), and aggressive wars are also reported by Jacob (Jacob 7:24), Enos (Enos 1:20), Jarom (Jarom 1:6), Abinadom (Omni 1:10), Amaleki (Omni 1:24), Zeniff (Mosiah 9, 10, 19–21), and Mormon (Words of Mormon 1:13–14). This is a record of aggression that spans the first four hundred and sixty years or so of Book of Mormon history. We also know from multiple reports that the Lamanites were motivated by hatred in their assaults on the Nephites (Jacob 3:7; 7:24; Enos 1:14, 20; Jarom 1:6; Mosiah 1:14; 4 Nephi 1:39; Alma 26:9) and that they "delighted in murdering the Nephites" (Alma 17:14). Moroni also reports at one point that the Lamanites are "murdering our people with the sword," including "our women and our children" (Alma 60:17). Indeed, we learn that Moroni, and the Nephites generally, fought to prevent their wives and their children from being "massacred by the barbarous cruelty" of those who would

sought for riches, including plundering Nephites in order to obtain them (Alma 17:14) — they repeatedly invaded and attacked the Nephites. The Nephites did not do this to the Lamanites.

Thus, when Jacob talks to the Nephites about their sins, he holds up superior Lamanite family conduct as a point of comparison. But when he speaks to later generations of readers (us) specifically about the *Lamanites'* unrighteousness, he refers to their military aggression. This simply reflects what the text in general tells us about their respective forms of unrighteousness. Contrary to Riess's claim, it is not a change in Jacob's narrative.

Girardian Analysis

A central piece of Riess's analysis is her use of the Girardian framework of cultural scapegoating to explain the story of Sherem. She begins by explaining the centrality of "mimetic desire" in this intellectual approach (pp. 9–10). The theory suggests that conflict arises when a person or group identifies something of value held by another person or group and forms a desire for that item of value. In other words, it is desire born of imitation, which leads to conflict over the object that each now values. The classic way to resolve this conflict (temporarily, at any rate) is for both parties to turn their aggression toward a convenient, third-party scapegoat. They reconcile with each other (again, temporarily) as they now focus their aggression on this third entity. In classic cases, this united aggression results in the scapegoat's death. It is a death that has served a specific function, however — namely, the reconciliation of the original parties and the cessation of their aggression toward each other. In this sense, it is a sacrificial death.

Riess tries to apply this conceptual framework to the story of Jacob and Sherem. She explains, for instance, that Jacob and the Nephites are deeply at odds with each other at the time Sherem enters the picture (pp. 8, 10–12). Jacob then "accuses" and "slanders" Sherem (pp. 12–13), and Sherem loses his life (pp. 14–15). As a result of this death the people repent and turn toward God with a new devotion, Jacob himself is reunited with the people, and all of them turn their attention, unitedly, to the aggressive Lamanites (pp. 16–17). No longer are the Lamanites superior to the Nephites, as Jacob had earlier indicated, but now are demonized. "Sherem's death unites the people against a common enemy," Riess declares. He has served as a convenient scapegoat, and order is

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destroy them (Alma 48:24) and that this was one of the Lamanites' explicit aims — to "slay and massacre" the Nephites (Alma 49:7).

restored. "It's all thanks to Sherem," Riess announces, for "Sherem has to die because the people need a scapegoat in order to become united and whole, at least for a time" (p. 9).

It is worth noting that Riess believes Sherem's scapegoat role affects the rest of the Book of Mormon. She claims that Sherem's death "galvanizes the Nephite people to greater righteousness," adding that although Sherem is never mentioned again in the record, "Nephite religion changes after his sacrificial death" (p. 16). By this, she means that it changes permanently — as evidence of the religious change, she notes that the word "faith" is used in a higher proportion in the large plates than in the small plates. It is a word "that becomes more important going forward" (p. 16). So Sherem's scapegoat experience is a pivotal event in the Book of Mormon; its effect is felt all the way to the end of the record.

For these reasons, Riess draws a parallel between Sherem's death and the Savior's. She says Jesus died as "a vicarious sacrifice to save humanity" and that his death "paved the way for sinful people to reconcile with God" (p. 15). The Sherem story, she observes, "has much the same function." Sherem's death was not able to "wipe out all human sin for all time," but it was "the catalyst for a single group of people to become reconciled to God, if only for a while" (pp. 15–16).[9]

Central Difficulties

While there are surface similarities between the Jacob-Sherem story and Girard's theory of cultural scapegoating, the difficulties with Riess's analysis are both readily apparent and deep. The first and most fundamental problem is that it is entirely extraneous. After all, the only reason to look for a cause of Sherem's death in the first place — including a Girardian explanation — is if one fails to see that the text already tells us how Sherem died. Since the plain meaning of the text is that he died from God's smiting him, and since Riess gives us no reason whatever to override this plain meaning, her Girardian analysis is moot.

There are other problems with Riess's analysis as well. To begin, she never adequately explains the role of mimetic desire in this episode. She elucidates the concept at some length, but never directly applies it to this case. Exactly what item of perceived value were Jacob and the Nephites fighting over that put them at such odds, and who was imitating whom? Although these are core elements of Girard's theory, Riess never identifies them here. In fact,

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9. This reconciling effect is why Riess thinks Sherem's death is similar to the Savior's and why she thinks the phrase "gave up the ghost" in both cases is more than a literary coincidence.

we have seen that Jacob and the Nephites were *not* at odds in the way Riess reports. And it is also false to say that Jacob "slanders" Sherem. It is true that Jacob accuses him, but since Sherem effectively affirms everything Jacob says about him, Jacob's words hardly constitute slander.

It is also a mistake to describe Jacob as having a new attitude toward the Lamanites following Sherem's death. This view relies on a false distinction between the Nephites and Lamanites: there is nothing at all new in Jacob's narrative on this score. Additionally, there is no evidence from the record that anyone other than Sherem's own followers repented in the aftermath of his death. The restoration of the "love of God" and the searching of the scriptures by the people are directly tied to their hearkening "no more to the words of this wicked man" (Jacob 7:23). There is thus no basis to say Sherem's death galvanized "the Nephite people to greater righteousness" (p. 16), much less that it affected how prophets and others used the word "faith" over the next nine hundred-fifty years or so of Nephite history.

It is also important to remember that the only scriptural reference to unrighteousness at the time of Sherem is attributed to Sherem himself. *He* is the one leading away the hearts of the people. Riess wants us to see Sherem as the source of Nephite righteousness — more specifically, that the sacrificial death of this 'pious and deeply religious man' spurred the Nephites toward greater devotion to their Lord. In such a reading Sherem is both sympathetic and tragic. But the flaw in this interpretation, of course, is that — as far as the record gives any indication — Sherem was the source of their unrighteousness in the first place. This makes Sherem far from sympathetic and his death far from tragic. And finally, what all this shows is that Sherem's death was nothing like the Savior's: it did not serve any reconciling function and it was not sacrificial.

In the end, Sherem is simply not what Riess wants him to be. He is only what he himself claimed to be: a liar unto God.[10]

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10.   Riess is not the first to apply Girardian concepts to Book of Mormon incidents. Eugene England and Joshua Madson, for instance, both apply the framework. See Eugene England, "Healing and Making Peace, in the Church and the World" and "Why Nephi Killed Laban: Reflections on the Truth of the Book of Mormon," both in Eugene England, *Making Peace: Personal Essays* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 1–22 and 131–55, respectively. See also Joshua Madson, "A Non-Violent Reading of the Book of Mormon," in Patrick Q. Mason, J. David Pulsipher, and Richard L. Bushman, eds., *War and Peace in Our Time: Mormon Perspectives* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2012), 13–28. England and Madson are no more successful than Riess in their applications of Girard's theory, however. I show

Conclusion

There is nothing wrong, of course, with asking fresh questions about the story in Jacob 7. The process of questioning and letting imagination work on an initial read-through of a text can be an enjoyable way of interacting with the text and exploring possibilities. But such an approach should be the beginning point of thinking and not the final destination. A quick first-read must be followed by careful and thoughtful study. Joseph Spencer assures us that the process for gathering the essays in this book involved such careful and close reading of the text,[11] but this is far from evident in Riess's essay. She makes numerous errors that are traceable to nothing more than casual reading — claims that either find no support in the text or that are straightforwardly contradicted by it.

Before advancing propositions about a text in print, it pays to test them *against* the text. As far as I can tell, Riess failed to do this, as evidenced by the sizeable collection of errors her essay contains. One would expect an examination of the Jacob-Sherem episode to exhibit careful attention to the scriptural record, but it is hard to see how, in this case, the text is anything more than an afterthought.

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this at some length in *Even unto Bloodshed: An LDS Perspective on War* (Salt Lake City: Kofford Books, 2015), 143–47.

11. Joseph Spencer, "Introduction," in Miller and Spencer, *Christ and Antichrist*, xi.

Welding Another Link in Wonder's Chain: The Task of Latter-day Saint Intellectuals in the Church's Third Century

Nathan B. Oman

Abstract: *This is a challenging moment for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Both its efforts at retention and missionary work are less effective than they have been in the past. At this moment, what is the most important task facing Latter-day Saint intellectuals? In contrast to those who argue that faithful thinkers and writers should focus either on defending the faith or providing criticisms of the Church's failings, this essay argues that the Latter-day Saint clerisy should focus on celebrating the Restoration and finding new language in which to express what makes the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ a compelling and attractive force in people's lives. The language which we have used in the past no longer seems to be as compelling as once it was. This is unsurprising. The history of the Church shows a cyclical pattern focused on missionary work, with seasons of harvest giving way to fallow times and seasons of planting. However, over time the Church tends to transform itself in the image of its most successful messages for proclaiming the Gospel. Latter-day Saint intellectuals have an important, albeit subordinate, role in finding such messages. Pursuing the project of celebrating the Restoration need not involve either usurping the prerogatives of Church leaders nor compromising one's intellectual integrity. In this moment in the history of the Church, it is the most important project to which Latter-day Saint thinkers can turn their attention.*

> Welding another link in wonder's chain,
> Writing new chapters of a story strange,
> God's dealings with to-day…
>
> — Orson F. Whitney[1]

The present is a difficult moment for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As it approaches the end of its second century, there is much to be worried about. After two generations of exponential growth, the Church's missionary program has stalled. Despite a dramatic increase in the number of serving missionaries, the number of convert baptisms is down.[2] Likewise, the Church's admirable ability to retain those born into active Latter-day Saint families, long the envy of other denominations, seems to be atrophying. More Latter-day Saint youth are abandoning the Church as they make the transition to adulthood.[3] There is also a sense of anxiety over the Church's place in society, particularly in the United States. For much of the 20th century the saints thought of themselves as within the cultural mainstream, the exemplars of a widely shared commitment to the benignly patriarchal nuclear family. In the wake of the triumph of same-sex marriage and the proliferation of sexual identities in the opening decades of the new millennium, the ideal Latter-day Saint family has gone from being seen as a paragon to being seen by many as reactionary and threatening.[4] Similarly, the Church's all-male priesthood increases the distance between Latter-day Saints and the sexually egalitarian societies in which they often live, generating angst and alienation within the Church's own ranks, particularly among

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1. Orson F. Whitney, *Elias: An Epic of the Ages* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1904), 119.

2. See Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Mormon Growth Rate Falls to Lowest Level in 80 Years, but Ups and Downs Vary by Region," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, July 7, 2017, https://archive.sltrib.com/article.php?id=5381411&itype=CMSID.

3. See Jana Riess, *The Next Mormons: How Millennials Are Changing the LDS Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 4–7.

4. See "Attitudes on Same-Sex Marriage," *Religion & Public Life* (blog), *Pew Research Center*, May 14, 2019, http://www.pewforum.org/2014/09/24/graphics-slideshow-changing-attitudes-on-gay-marriage/; Tom Rosentiel, "Public Opinion About Mormons," *Pew Research Center* (blog), December 4, 2007, http://www.pewresearch.org/2007/12/04/public-opinion-about-mormons/; *Pew Research Center*, "Public Expresses Mixed Views of Islam, Mormonism," *Religion & Public Life* (blog), *Pew Research Center*, September 26, 2007, http://www.pewforum.org/2007/09/26/public-expresses-mixed-views-of-islam-mormonism/.

the young.[5] Finally, the Church as a hierarchical religious institution faces increased suspicion and hostility in a society where organized religion no longer commands widespread trust or respect and where the ranks of the "spiritual but not religious" are on the rise.[6]

What is the task of Latter-day Saint intellectuals in this moment? By intellectuals, I don't mean scholars working in "Mormon studies," although the groups will overlap. Nor do I mean those with ecclesiastical authority, although again the groups may overlap. Rather, I mean committed Latter-day Saints who for whatever reason feel called on to publicly discuss the course of the Restoration[7] and the place of the Church in the world. These are public discussions of the Gospel, the Church, and the Latter-day Saint tradition that are both explicitly self-reflective and self-consciously religious. In short, I am talking about what might be thought of as the role of the Latter-day Saint clerisy as opposed to academics on one hand and those charged with ecclesiastical authority on the other. What is the most important challenge facing Mormonism's chattering class?

My answer is simple: Finding new language in which to celebrate the Restoration.

This answer will strike some readers as strange. I imagine that a certain kind of intellectual is likely to respond by insisting that his or her role is to think critically. Surely, what we need is a clear-eyed

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5. See Riess, *The Next Mormons*, 91-108.

6. See "Public Sees Religion's Influence Waning," *Religion and Public Life* (blog), *Pew Research Center*, September 22, 2014, https://www.pewforum.org/2014/09/22/public-sees-religions-influence-waning-2/; Alan Cooperman and Gregory A. Smith, "The Factors Driving the Growth of Religious 'Nones' in the U.S.," *FactTank* (blog), *Pew Research Center*, September 14, 2016, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/14/the-factors-driving-the-growth-of-religious-nones-in-the-u-s/; Michael Lipka and Claire Gecewicz, "More Americans Now Say They're Spiritual but Not Religious," *FactTank* (blog), *Pew Research Center*, September 6, 2019, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/06/more-americans-now-say-theyre-spiritual-but-not-religious/.

7. According to the official style guide of the Church:

> The term "Mormonism" is inaccurate and should not be used. When describing the combination of doctrine, culture and lifestyle unique to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the term "the restored gospel of Jesus Christ" is accurate and preferred.

"Style Guide — The Name of the Church," newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org, April 9, 2019, http://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/style-guide. In this essay, I use the term "Restoration" in this sense as synonymous with the "combination of doctrine, culture and lifestyle unique to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

assessment of the Church's weaknesses and failures. Only by being honest about such things can we hope to gain the trust of the suspicious outsider and the alienated member. Furthermore, isn't it vital to expose the faults and failures of the Church so they can be corrected or – failing that – so intellectuals can at least enjoy the peace of mind (and emotional frisson) that comes from "speaking truth to power"? Another kind of intellectual will respond that mere celebration is a feckless endeavor at a moment when the Church is beset by enemies and critics from both within and without. What is needed is a defense of the Church and its doctrines. Latter-day Saint intellectuals should concentrate their efforts on constructing a rational defense of the Restoration, one that will reassure the faithful, reclaim the doubter, and refute the scoffer. Precisely because of the difficulty of this moment in the history of the Church, so goes the argument, it is more important than ever that we increase the quality of our apologetics to meet the challenges we face.

I am sympathetic to both of these responses. I think faithful critics can serve an important role in the life of the Church. Likewise, intellectual challenges to the veracity of the Restoration must be met. Faith is unlikely to flourish in a world where people are told they must crucify their minds in order to believe.[8] However, with all due respect to the skillful practitioners of both genres, I do not believe that either of them represents the most important challenge facing Latter-day Saint intellectuals. This doesn't mean these activities should cease, but it does mean that such projects should be pursued only if we are confident that the far greater challenges of celebrating the Restoration in new language has been met. Ideally both tasks should be embedded in that larger project of celebration.

Understanding why requires that we see the history of Restoration through the lens of missionary work and the absolutely central role of proclaiming the Restored Gospel to everything else that happens within the Church.

Proclaiming the Gospel and the Arc of Latter-day Saint History

In February, 1829, Joseph Smith received one his earliest recorded revelations in what has since been canonized as Doctrine & Covenants section 4. There, the Lord declares, "Now behold, a marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men" (v. 1). Speaking to those "that embark in the service of God," (v. 2) he says, "For behold the field is white already to harvest …. Ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (v. 4,5). This is the familiar injunction to proclaim

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8. I borrow this image from conversations with Daniel Petersen.

the Gospel. The timing of the revelation testifies to the centrality of this charge within the Restoration. This came before the publication of the Book of Mormon, the organization of the Church, or the elaboration of any priesthood hierarchy. In a very literal sense, the Restoration simply was people telling other people about the "marvelous work" of the Lord. From that time to the present, the work of proclaiming the Gospel has dominated the evolution of the Restoration. Repeatedly over the nearly two centuries of its life, the Church has remade itself in the image of its most effective way of articulating the "marvelous work and a wonder" (2 Nephi 26:27) of the Lord's latter-day dispensation. This has not been the only force in Latter-day Saint experience, but over the long arc of history, it has been the most potent.

We are inclined to think of history in linear terms. We move from the distant past to the near past, to the present, and on into the future. The linear view of history lends itself to stories of progress or decline. We are either marching toward the millennium, or we are marching toward the apocalypse. One can see this in the current position of the Church. For those who grew up in the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s, the dominant perception of the Church was of self-confident growth. We were expanding at a spectacular rate. Branches, wards, stakes, and temples were sprouting across the globe in places a generation or two before would have been unimaginable to a typical Latter-day Saint. Sociologists were predicting that in the coming century there would be tens of millions of Latter-day Saints, if not more.[9] The line of history pointed toward progress. Today, however, many Latter-day Saints are haunted by a declension narrative: The growth of previous years was often hollow. Baptisms are dropping. Disaffection grows. The future is bleak.

The reality is that often the history of the Church has been more cyclical than linear. During the first generation of the Restoration, missionaries reaped a massive harvest of converts in the United States and Europe, especially the British Isles and Scandinavia.[10] Those converts gathered to Zion, first in Jackson County and Nauvoo and

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9. See Rodney Stark, "The Rise of a New World Faith," *Review of Religious Research* 26, no. 1 (September, 1984): 18–27, https://rsc.byu.edu/es/archived/latter-day-saint-social-life-social-research-lds-church-and-its-members/1-rise-new-world; Rodney Stark, "So Far, So Good: A Brief Assessment of Mormon Membership Projections," *Review of Religious Research* 38, no. 2 (December, 1996): 175–78.

10. See generally James B Allen, Ronald K. Esplin, and David J Whittaker, *Men with a Mission, 1837-1841: The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the British Isles* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Co., 1992); William Mulder, *Homeward to Zion:*

later in the Great Basin kingdom of Deseret. However, over time this first great harvest of converts tapered off. The ferment of the Second Great Awakening and the missionary opportunities created by the early industrial revolution waned. Polygamy and theocracy placed the Church at war with American society and the federal government.[11] By 1901 when Lorenzo Snow, the last President of the Church who personally knew Joseph Smith,[12] died, the Church's position in the world looked very different than it had when the Lord gave the revelation launching latter-day missionary work in February 1829. Convert baptisms had slowed to a trickle.[13] While polygamy had been publicly discontinued, it had not yet been abandoned, and it would take the better part of the next decade to finally lay to rest the saints' conflict with American society.[14]

The Church that emerged in the first half of the twentieth century looked like an institution whose most dynamic days were behind it.[15] To be sure, the growth of population in the Intermountain West led to a steady if modest growth in the Church, which soon spilled beyond the borders of Deseret as young Latter-day Saints migrated to the Pacific coast and further afield in search of jobs. Missionary work continued, but it cannot be said that it was particularly successful. When compared to the dramatic mass baptisms witnessed during the 1830s and 1840s

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The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957).

11. See Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Edward Leo Lyman, *Political Deliverance: The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

12. Joseph F. Smith met his uncle Joseph Smith, Jr. as a very young child in Nauvoo. Lorenzo Snow, however, was the last President of the Church who knew the Prophet as an adult.

13. In 1901, the year of Lorenzo Snow's death, Elder Rudger Clawson reported in General Conference that the Church had 310,000 members and that in the previous year it had added 20,000 members, a number that presumably included both convert baptisms and children of record. See "72nd Semi-Annual Conference October 1901," *Conference Reports of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, The Internet Archive, updated October 12, 2011, https://archive.org/details/conferencereport1901sa/page/2.

14. See Kathleen Flake, *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

15. The best scholarly treatment of the Church in this period is Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-Day Saints, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996).

by Heber C. Kimball in Manchester, England or Wilford Woodruff in Preston, missionary work seemed almost moribund. An observer of the Latter-day Saint scene in the 1920s or the 1930s could be forgiven for thinking that the Church, if not in actual decline, could at best look forward to a static future.[16]

Then rather suddenly after World War II, something remarkable happened. What could be seen as a sleepy American denomination flung itself dramatically outward.[17] In the early 20th century, Church leaders had counseled the tiny branches of saints beyond the United States not to gather to Utah, but in 1945 there were still no non-American wards or stakes other than in the Latter-day Saint colonies of southern Alberta and northern Mexico.[18] In the second half of the century, however, Church leaders began establishing overseas stakes.[19] Missionary work was re-emphasized, becoming a standard male rite-of-passage in a way that it had not been previously. For the first time, the Church poured money into permanent buildings beyond the United States, most dramatically with the new temples in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland.[20] Missionary discussions were standardized.[21] Language

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16. For a beautifully written portrait of the Restoration at this moment by a sympathetic non-member, see Wallace Stegner, *Mormon Country*, ed. Richard W. Etulain, 2nd edition (Lincoln, NE: Bison Books, 2003). Stegner's book was originally written in the 1930s as part of the Works Progress Administration.

17. Despite the fact that the international growth of the Church after 1945 is perhaps the most influential factor on the shape of the modern Church, there are no good synthetic histories focusing on this period. Much of the story can be found in the excellent biographies of David O. McKay and Spencer W. Kimball. See Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005); Edward L Kimball, *Lengthen Your Stride: The Presidency of Spencer W. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005); see also Patrick Q. Mason and John G. Turner, eds., *Out of Obscurity: Mormonism since 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). For a succinct summary, see Nathan B. Oman, "International Legal Experience and the Mormon Theology of the State, 1945-2012," *Iowa Law Review* 100 (2015): 719–23.

18. See, e.g., James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1965), 4:165 (a 1907 Christmas letter from the First Presidency counseling the Dutch saints to stay in their own country); Clark, 5:199-200 (a 1921 letter from the First Presidency counseling the British saints to remain in the United Kingdom).

19. See Oman, "International Legal Experience," 721.

20. See Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay*, 206-9.

21. This was first done Church-wide in 1961. See "History of Missionary Work in the Church," www.newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org, June 25, 2007, http://www.newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/history-of-missionary-work-in-the-church.

instruction for missionaries was professionalized and centralized.[22] In fits and starts, through a combination of inspired vision from above and percolating trial-and-error from below, the Church developed a new model of what it meant to be a Latter-day Saint.

At the center of this message was the family. In a surprising move, Latter-day Saints took the theology of sealing, which had been at the center of plural marriage and the Church's grueling conflict with the federal government, and reinterpreted it in terms of the nuclear family of the 1950s. In the rapidly changing post-war world, which saw the fracturing of older models of extended family and community across the globe, this proved a potent message. Ultimately, the Church remade itself in the image of this message. The standardized teaching model that proved so successful for missionaries became a model for the correlated curriculum. The necessarily slimmed down Church program in the expanding international stakes of the Church increasingly exerted its pressure on the institutional structure of the Church, which simplified and centralized to conserve resources. And everywhere, the nuclear family – the heart of the Church's successful missionary message – became the center of the Church.

After a half-century of success, the model developed after World War II has largely run its course. What had proven successful in the past no longer seems to be delivering the same results. This is unsurprising. It has happened to the Church before. Periods of relative stasis and retrenchment don't mark the beginning of decline today any more than they did in the 1920s. History in this sense isn't linear. Periods of harvest give way to fallow years, which will be followed by planting and harvesting in the future. However, it is unlikely the message of those future harvests will be the same one around which the Church organized itself in the second half of the 20th century.

Consider the message that Joseph Smith articulated in his 1838 account of the First Vision. After describing the religious revivals of his youth, he wrote:

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22. Efforts to train missionaries go back to the School of the Prophets in the 1830s. In 1925, the Church established the "missionary home" in Salt Lake City where missionaries received brief instruction prior to being sent to their fields of labor. In 1961, the Church established the Missionary Language Institute in Provo, Utah, which was eventually renamed the "Missionary Training Center." See Richard O. Cowan, "Missionary Training Centers," in *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992).

> In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself: What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it? (JS-H 10)

While the First Vision did not figure prominently in 19th century missionary work, Joseph was articulating a set of questions of existential importance to his contemporaries.[23] Priesthood authority from heaven and the revival of spiritual gifts spoke powerfully to these concerns. They were pressing questions to which the Restoration was an answer. They were also, however, very historically contingent questions. For most of human history and for most of humanity, the sectarian choice between competing Christian denominations has not been an existentially important choice. Indeed, even in Joseph Smith's time, it was only an important question in North America, where religious freedom and the second Great Awakening had unleashed a torrent of sectarian diversity, and on the fringes of Protestant Europe, where such controversies retained some salience. It was not, for example, a burning question to French peasants in the mid-19th century.[24] It meant nothing to the farmers of Burma or Japan. Indeed, even within Britain, Joseph's questions were vital mainly among the dissenting sects of Scotland, Wales, and the Midlands. The Twelve and other early missionaries, for example, had very little success in London or the home counties, where the established Church of England was stronger and the diversity of dissenting sects was less salient.[25] Today, this question is largely dead. Outside of a few tiny and ever shrinking corners of American Christianity, very few people regard sectarian choice as an existentially important question.[26]

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23. The First Vision did not become an important feature of Church teachings until the administration of Joseph F. Smith. See Kathleen Flake, "Re-Placing Memory: Latter-Day Saint Use of Historical Monuments and Narrative in the Early Twentieth Century," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 13, no. 1 (2003): 69–109.

24. See Samuel W. Taylor, *The Last Pioneer: John Taylor, a Mormon Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 146–58.

25. See Thomas G. Alexander, *Things in Heaven and Earth: The Life and Times of Wilford Woodruff, a Mormon Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 96–97.

26. As one convert to the Church in the 1960s wrote:

> Because of what I'd learned from the missionaries' lesson about the First Vision, I recognized that these age-mates of mine were trapped in a nineteenth-century worldview. They thought that the "one true question" was "which church is true?" and that all the denominations

Increasingly, the post-war Church's message of traditional nuclear families is becoming as attenuated as Joseph's answer to the question of which church is right. It is not that concerns underlying such questions and answers are gone. People today are still interested in connecting with loved ones and forming strong families. Likewise, the sense of making one's way in a world glutted with existential options remains, even though people today do not articulate this concern in terms of sectarian choice. The language of the past, however, no longer speaks to these concerns in the way it once did. Indeed, to many that language increasingly seems alien, threatening, and distasteful. "The one true church" is a concept that appears to them as at best a gauche and flimsy response to the cafeteria of existential meaning on offer in modernity. At worst, it appears dangerously retrograde. Likewise, the benignly patriarchal Mormon family of the mid-20th century appears naïve, reactionary, and, in a world of heightened concerns about LGBT suicide and female empowerment, positively threatening to many. Something must change if the Church is to thrive in its third century.

We can already see changes, changes that not coincidentally began in the Church's missionary program. The canary in the mine came in 2004 when the Church scrapped the standardized discussions that had been the backbone of its successful post-war expansion. In its place the *Preach My Gospel* manual provided a much more flexible model for proclaiming the messages of the Restoration.[27] It did not, however, dramatically change the content of what the missionaries ultimately tell investigators. In the long view, *Preach My Gospel* was the beginning rather than the end of a process of finding a new model to carry the Restoration forward. We are now in the midst of that process. As it did after World War II, the Church will proceed in fits and starts as it looks for a new model of missionary success, and as in the post-war process, the messages will likely come from a combination of direction from above and trial and error from below. If we take history as our guide, however, once we find those messages they will transform the Church in their own image.[28]

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were clawing at each other with different interpretations. They somehow had been freeze-framed into Joseph Smith's era.

Steven C. Harper et al., "Round Table: Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days," *Journal of Mormon History* 45, no. 2 (April 2019): 54.

27.   See Benjamin Hyrum White, "The History of Preach My Gospel," *The Religious Educator* 14, no. 1 (2013): 129–58.

28.   Indeed, to a certain extent this is already happening. It is not accidental that after *Preach My Gospel* introduced a more flexible model of preaching the Gospel,

The Task of Latter-day Saint Intellectuals

Verbal agility is not necessary to the living of a good life. There is no special moral or spiritual virtue in being articulate. However, like any other gift, articulateness can be consecrated to the Lord and his kingdom. Latter-day Saint intellectuals ought to seriously consider how they can effectively consecrate their linguistic talents. The biggest challenge the Church faces today is to articulate what makes the Restored Gospel worth having in one's life, both for its members and for the world in general. We can no longer answer that question by saying "It reveals which church is true" or "It provides a successful way of creating a 1950s-style nuclear family." At the very least, we cannot rely on those answers if we hope to reach the majority of young Latter-day Saints and the wider world to which the Lord has commanded that we proclaim his "marvelous work." We need answers that are both compelling and comprehensible in our current historical and cultural situations.

Finding such answers is not solely or even primarily the task of Latter-day Saint intellectuals. However, for those Saints who wish to consecrate their intellectual ruminations the most important work they can is to find new language in which to celebrate the Restoration. To celebrate something is to render it attractive and important. The new language is required to make that celebration effective in a world where the power of old sermons and practices has atrophied. This is the most important thing that Latter-day Saint intellectuals today can do. It is important because it speaks to the central challenge facing the Church. In a sense, this is the challenge that has always been at the center of the Restoration: How does one become converted to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and endure to the end? It is also the most consequential project in which Latter-day Saint intellectuals can engage because ultimately the Church will be reshaped around the successful missionary messages of the future.

What exactly might this project look like? The aim of this essay is to articulate tasks and questions, rather than any particular solution or answers. However, we have been in this position before and can look to historical analogies. In the opening decades of the 20th century, Latter-day Saints were casting around for new language in which to convey the message of the Gospel. In the 19th century, the most influential articulations

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the Church's Sunday school, youth, priesthood, and Relief Society curriculums followed suit, providing a much looser framework for teachers at the ward and branch level. One suspects that the newly shortened Sunday meeting schedule was also driven in part by pressure to further simplify Church programs and ease the burdens on members beyond the thickly-membered Latter-day Saint heartland.

of the Restoration had been offered by the Pratt brothers, particularly Parley P. Pratt's wildly successful *Voice of Warning* and *Key to the Science of Theology*.[29] However, by the Progressive era the cultural situation had shifted, and the Pratts' writings had lost much of their power and saliency.

During this period three Latter-day Saint thinkers sought to offer new articulations of the Gospel. The most ambitious of these was B.H. Roberts, a polygamous general authority who came of age during the white-hot confrontations between the saints and the federal government in the 1880s. Rather than simply refighting the lost battles of the 19th century, however, Roberts embraced the task of articulating the post-polygamous meaning of the Restoration.[30] In the early 20th century, he sought to present the Gospel as a complete intellectual system that could accommodate modern philosophies such as Herbert Spencer's modernism and Darwinian evolution.[31] At the time, these were seen as vital currents of thought that could give the Restoration saliency to his readers. During the same period two younger writers, John A. Widtsoe and James E. Talmage, pursued similar projects. In his *Rational Theology*, published in 1915, Widtsoe presented the Restored Gospel as a scientifically friendly system of religion that encouraged human improvement, potent themes during the Progressive era.[32] Writing a few years later, Talmage produced *The Vitality of Mormonism*, a series of essays designed to restate the basic teachings of the Gospel.[33] Writing at the end of World War I, he also emphasized improvement and advancement. In addition, Talmage linked the Restoration to the

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29. See Terryl L. Givens and Matthew J. Grow, *Parley P. Pratt: The Apostle Paul of Mormonism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 6 ("Pratt's writings, which deeply influenced other Mormon authors, particularly his equally prolific younger brother, Orson, not only helped convert thousands to Mormonism but also shaped the Mormon theological system"); see also Breck England, *The Life and Thought of Orson Pratt* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1985).

30. Although in fairness I must note that in his multivolume history of the Church produced for its centennial, Roberts was more than willing to refight the battles of the Raid in print, defending the Latter-day Saint position. See B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, 6 vols. (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1930).

31. See B. H. Roberts, *The Truth, The Way, The Life: An Elementary Treatise on Theology*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 1994).

32. See John A. Widtsoe, *Rational Theology*, Reprint edition (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998).

33. See James E. Talmage, *The Vitality of Mormonism: Brief Essays on Distinctive Doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints* (Boston: The Gorham Press, 1919).

struggle against tyranny and the unfolding of human freedom, while at the same time deploring the violence and destruction of war.[34] All these are themes that would have been very much on the mind of readers who had just suffered through the Great War.

These works all repay careful reading, but inevitably they are products of their time. Some of their arguments and interpretations no longer seem plausible, while others simply feel dated. That, of course, is the point. The Restoration must be taught anew to each generation, and each generation will bring different concerns and language to the Gospel. Each generation will find new insights and miss certain teachings they would have done better to emphasize. Roberts, Widstoe, and Talmage each recognized that it was not enough to simply repeat what Parley P. Pratt had taught a generation or two earlier. Each, in his own way, sought to remain faithful to the Restoration. They used some language that seems familiar to a modern Latter-day Saint reader and no doubt would have seemed familiar to a mid-19th century reader. But they also spoke in ways distinctive to their times and audience. No doubt each of these works was inadequate in various ways in making the Gospel live in the lives of its readers. Indeed, B.H. Roberts' speculations were so exuberant that ultimately the Church declined to publish them.[35] For our purposes, however, what is important is their willingness to engage in the central task of finding new ways of presenting the Gospel message for a new historical situation.[36]

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34. For example, he wrote:

> I cannot look upon the frightful carnage and inhuman atrocities of the world war as a manifestation of the direct will of God. This dreadful conflict was brought on through lust of power and greed of gain. It sprang from an unholy determination to rob mankind of God-given rights, and to subject the race to autocratic domination. It is a repetition of the issue at stake in the primeval struggle, when Michael, the champion of free agency, led his hosts against Lucifer's myrmidons, who sought to rule by might. Talmage, 316-17.

This is a careful blending of Gospel and current situation designed to appeal both to the person horrified by the destruction of the war and to the one indignant at a once aggressive and now defeated Germany.

35. See James B. Allen, "The Story of 'The Truth, The Way, The Life,'" *Brigham Young University Studies* 33, no. 4 (1993): 690–741.

36. One might note that all three of these works were produced by general authorities. This is not quite true, as *Rational Theology* was written while John A. Widtsoe was still a professor at Utah State University. All three of these works, however, were written either at the instigation of the Church or for Church

The process of celebrating the Gospel today will undoubtedly look different than it did at the beginning of the 20ᵗʰ century. We will use different language and even different genres. Still, the fundamental task facing Latter-day Saint intellectuals today is essentially the same as that facing B.H. Roberts in the 1920s. For example, shortly after I became a professor, I was invited by Richard Bushman to participate in a series of private meetings of Latter-day Saint academics outside of Utah interested in the Church. In those meetings, he challenged us to identify that aspect of the Restoration we found most compelling. He then suggested that we try to articulate this in language for someone completely unfamiliar with the language of the Church. I don't think much came from our discussions, but Bushman's challenge has stuck with me over the years.[37] It strikes me as a useful exercise for any Latter-day Saint intellectual who is serious about confronting the challenges the Church faces today. It is unlikely, of course, that any such writings in themselves would matter very much, but a literature of celebration could become a resource for Latter-day Saints and something that could be part of enticing others to consider the Restored Gospel.

To celebrate the Restoration in new language today does not mean we offer some facile bit of triumphalism or a mechanical translation of common Latter-day Saint tropes into more accessible language. Triumphalism will not render the Restoration existentially important. It will not explain to the unconvinced why they would want it in their lives. What is needed is a message that makes the Church and its teachings compelling. This means its failures and faults will have to be acknowledged and charitably dealt with. No one is interested in marble perfection. Such perfection is neither believable nor compelling for many in modern society. Fortunately, the world can be generous and open to an account of the Restoration that is willing to find the divinity within its often-broken humanity. Likewise, hostile attacks and objections to the Church and the Gospel must be met. We cannot avoid responding

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publication. They were all, in that sense, "official" publications. That said, in an era before correlation the boundaries between official and unofficial publications were more porous than they are today. Intellectually, all these works are trying to articulate the Gospel for a contemporary audience, and none of them purport to speak authoritatively on behalf of the Church as an institution.

37. I did ultimately write a personal essay in response to Bushman's challenge. See Nathan B. Oman, "A Local Faith," *Brigham Young University Studies* 49, no. 2 (2010): 163–72.

to hard questions for which reasonable people can expect an answer.[38] Celebration may require defense as well as concession.

Truly celebrating the Restoration will require more than simple translation for two reasons. First, simple translation is impossible. Every retelling of a story changes the story slightly. This isn't pernicious; it is inevitable. However, we need to be conscious of the ways in which we are telling our stories about the Gospel. Are we introducing changes that are both compelling responses to the challenges of the modern world and faithful to the divinity of the Restoration? This is a difficult process, one in which people are going to make mistakes. This need not be a problem, so long as we carry out our project of celebration with charity and humility. Indeed, the more Latter-day Saint intellectuals who are involved in this project, the less important and salient the inevitable individual errors become.

Second, a compelling account of the Restoration will likely require dramatic changes. Consider the situation of David O. McKay in the early 1950s. The Church had embarked on an aggressive program of international expansion. The goal was wards and stakes beyond the United States, centered on nuclear families, bound together by the sealing power of the temple. At the time, however, this vision was in the future. Realizing it required the creation of stakes and the building of temples, remarkably enough, the Church adopted an if-you-build-it-they-will-come approach, constructing overseas temples before there were even any overseas stakes.[39] This move had a cascading series of consequences for the Church. Ecclesiastical authority moved from American mission presidents to local priesthood holders, who then became absolutely vital for the health of the Church. The emphasis on eternal families increased the importance of temples in the devotional lives of the saints. Both these shifts placed enormous pressure on the Church's practice of denying priesthood and temple blessings to those of African descent.[40] A quarter century after embarking on the journey charted by President McKay, the Church had been transformed, including the 1978 revelation on the priesthood. What made the post-war success of the Church possible

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38. The most tangible recognition of this need by the Church is the publication of the various "Gospel Topics Essays" dealing with such controversial topics as polygamy, the priesthood and temple ban on those of African descent, and the like. See The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, "Gospel Topics Essays," https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics-essays/essays?lang=eng.

39. See Oman, "International Legal Experience," 721.

40. See Kimball, *Lengthen Your Stride*, 199–208.

was a willingness to imagine a future in which the Restoration would become compelling to a huge swathe of new people, even if doing so required massive transformations in the Church.

Latter-day Saint intellectuals, as intellectuals, lack ecclesiastical authority.[41] Any future they imagine as an adjunct to their celebration of the Restoration must necessarily be left implicit or merely hypothetical. Such a faithful imagining, however, is not an invitation to simply remake the Church and the Gospel in our imaginations. The point of celebrating the Restoration is to celebrate *the Restoration*. This requires an effort to discern what is central and what is peripheral to the Gospel. The doctrine of continuing revelation always holds out the possibility of change. Indeed, just as the idea of exaltation suggests that God both loves us as we are and also desires for us a glorious transformation into something better, God can be thought of as constantly transforming the Church to better realize the Zion promised by the Lord to the saints. This, however, presents the danger to intellectuals of simply imagining a Church in our own image, one where our ideological priors are projected onto a more palatable and about-to-be-revealed version Gospel. We start as Pygmalion, falling in love with our own creation, and end in idolatry, worshipping our own graven images in a false temple. Done properly, however, imagination can be an act of faith and hope, so long as one remains open to the possibility of being mistaken and being given a very different future by the Lord.

Finally, one shouldn't overestimate the importance of the intellectual's task. First, Latter-day Saint intellectual life remains largely concentrated in the United States. This is a problem. There is the danger of mistaking the parochial concerns of American culture for more universal concerns. This is particularly important given the fact that even within the United States, Latter-day Saint intellectuals will likely skew toward affluence and high levels of education. Even when we self-consciously try to avoid this trap, American concerns inevitably occupy an outsized place in the discussions of Latter-day Saint intellectuals.[42] Second, in the future, the Church will need a more pluralistic message. Those things compelling and existentially important to people in West Africa and East Asia are likely different from those that move

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41. This doesn't mean, of course, that intellectuals cannot occupy positions of ecclesiastical authority; they can and often do. But they do not wield such authority by virtue of being intellectuals.

42. I am acutely aware that this is a criticism that could be leveled with some justice at the framing of this essay itself.

well-educated Americans. Third, while a compelling way of presenting the power of the Restoration is a necessary component of proclaiming the Gospel, it is never sufficient. Ultimately, the work of the Church belongs to the Lord. It is rightly led by His prophets and apostles, not the Latter-day Saint clerisy. In the end, God's work is carried forward more by the force of charity and the power of his Spirit than through articulate speech. At best the celebration of intellectuals can help to bring people to a place where they might be touched by those things. Without them, however, the words of Latter-day Saint thinkers will "become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (1 Corinthians 13:1).

Authority, Angst, and Wonder

Finally, there are those who will object that the task of celebration is inappropriate for an intellectual. On one hand, one might object that what I suggest here usurps the prerogatives of Church authorities. After all, direction of the Church lies in the hands of those who hold the priesthood keys for directing the Lord's work. In the words of the 5th Article of Faith, "We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer the ordinances thereof" (Articles of Faith 5). Perhaps Latter-day Saint intellectuals celebrating the Restoration are merely steadying the ark and should instead await the words of the prophets.

As noted above, there is a certain spiritual danger to this project. Intellectuals, like everyone else, are prone to pride and idolatry. Furthermore, it would be wrong for covenanted Latter-day Saints to arrogate to themselves priesthood or ecclesiastical authority to which they have not been formally called. That, however, is not what I am calling for here. Since the time of Joseph Smith, the saints have been taught that "it becometh every man that is warned to warn his neighbor" (D&C 88:81), and we are constantly encouraged to share the Gospel with others. That is ultimately what I am advocating. If missionary work means nothing more than awkwardly inviting our uninterested neighbor to church or preparing our children to serve full-time missions, then we are missing something. Rather, it should also mean throwing ourselves into the work of fulfilling the prophecy "that every man shall hear the fulness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language" (D&C 90:11). Doing this, however, requires more than learning a foreign language and ritually repeating past sermons. We must do the hard work of articulating why the fruit of the tree of life is, to use Lehi's evocative

word, "enticing" (see 2 Nephi 2:16) and do so in language fresh and compelling to our neighbors.

There is another objection from the opposite direction. In modern societies, the intellectual is supposed to stand outside of community as a critic and a gadfly. To celebrate, we might think, is to surrender our intellectual integrity. There are least two reasons for this stance. The first is the idea that to truly understand something, one must occupy the position of a disinterested observer. True understanding is objective, and we risk that objectivity by celebrating. This assumption, however, is a mistake. To be sure, there are often things that can be seen or understood only by virtue of a certain critical distance. However, it does not follow that only the position of the objective outsider is legitimate. There is always a bit of self-deception in such a stance, as no one is ever truly objective and outside of his or her own experiences. More importantly, however, there are certain things that can be seen and understood only from the inside. The beautiful stained-glass windows of a Gothic cathedral appear drab and colorless from the outside. Only by entering the building can their full glory be seen.[43]

Celebration, however, may strike even more deeply at our conception of what it means to be an intellectual. Socrates, the prototypical intellectual, was forced to drink hemlock because he questioned the inhabitants of Athens too closely, and there has often been tension between intellectuals and the cultures from which they spring.[44] At least since the time of Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the 18th century, western culture has tended to exalt the alienated intellectual, the hero of the mind driven to see beyond the appearances of things to their inner essence and in so doing to break with the past and with convention. This stance requires a certain emotional outlook, one dominated by anxiety and estrangement from community. Often, of course, alienation gives birth to thought. It is estrangement from the familiar that causes us to reflect upon it. However, it is tempting to think that angst and hostility to community are themselves requirements of intellectual respectability. On this view, there is something intellectually embarrassing in setting out to celebrate one's native tradition.

This reaction, however, is also a mistake. It is not true that understanding or insight must always spring from alienation. Indeed, if

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43. I borrow this image from a conversation with Terryl Givens.

44. See Plato, "Socrates' Defense" in *Plato: The Collected Dialogues*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 3–26.

Plato's *Crito* is to be believed, Socrates drank the hemlock only because he refused to abandon his community when given the chance.[45] His fate was tragic but marked acceptance of his native home at least as much as alienation from it. There is an alternative genealogy of intellectual life that does not rest on the supposed authority of angst. On this account, the life of the mind begins not in angst and alienation but in delight and wonder. We are driven to understand from the sheer joy of questing after truth, eternally at play amidst a fascinating world. This is the sensibility that Aristotle captured with the Greek word *thaumazo*, which he suggested constituted the primal origin of philosophy.[46] In the New Testament, the word is often translated "marvel" and "wonder" (e.g., John 5:20; Acts 7:31).[47] Similarly, when Nephi quotes Isaiah to describe the Restoration itself, he refers to it as "a marvelous work and a wonder" (2 Nephi 27:26; cf. Isaiah 29:14). There is thus a deep intellectual pedigree in both scripture and philosophy for the idea that the intellectual's task is, to use Orson F. Whitney's words, the process of "[w]elding another link in wonder's chain,"[48] the phrase he used to describe the Restoration. At this moment not only is celebrating the marvelous work of God a fit task for an "anxiously engaged" (D&C 58:27) mind, it is the most important work to which such a mind could be put.

45. See Plato, "Crito," in *Plato: The Collected Dialogues*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 27–39.

46. Aristotle writes in the *Metaphysics*:

> For it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin,?? and at first began to philosophize; they wondered originally at the obvious difficulties, then advanced little by little and stated difficulties about the greater, e.g. about the phenomena of the moon and those of the sun and of the stars, and about the genesis of the universe. And a man who is puzzled and wonders thinks himself ignorant (whence even the lover of myth is in a sense a lover of Wisdom, for the myth is composed of wonders); therefore since they philosophized in order to escape from ignorance; evidently they were pursing science in order to know, and not for any utilitarian end.

Aristotle, "Metaphysics," in *Introduction to Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon, trans. W.D. Ross (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1992), 261–62.

47. See Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10th edition (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984), 27.

48. See Whitney, *Elias*, 119.

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Jacob Did Not Make a False Prediction

Duane Boyce

Review of Adam S. Miller, "Reading Signs or Repeating Symptoms," in *Christ and Antichrist: Reading Jacob 7*, eds. Adam S. Miller and Joseph M. Spencer (Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, 2017), 10 pages (chapter), 174 pages (book).

Abstract. *The Neal A. Maxwell Institute recently published a volume on the encounter between Jacob and Sherem in Jacob 7. Adam Miller's contribution to this book is a reiteration of views he published earlier in his own volume. One of Miller's claims is that Jacob made a false prediction about the reaction Sherem would have to a sign if one were given him — an assertion that is already beginning to shape the conventional wisdom about this episode. This shaping is unfortunate, however, since the evidence indicates that this view of Jacob's prediction is a mistake. Once we see this, it is easier to avoid other mistakes that seem evident in Miller's approach.*

In a previous article, I examined some features of Jana Riess's contribution to a volume published by the Neal A. Maxwell Institute on the encounter between Jacob and Sherem in Jacob 7.[1] The errors in Riess's essay provided opportunity to clarify that confrontation. The need for clarification also arises in considering Adam

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1.   Adam S. Miller and Joseph M. Spencer, eds., *Christ and Antichrist: Reading Jacob 7* (Provo, UT: Neil A. Maxwell Institute, 2017). Riess's chapter in that volume is entitled "'There Came a Man': Sherem, Scapegoating, and the Inversion of Prophetic Tradition." My review of Riess's chapter is: "Text as Afterthought: Jana Riess's Treatment of the Jacob-Sherem Episode," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship*, 33 (2019): 123–40.

Miller's treatment of this episode, which appears in the same volume.[2] I will discuss two issues from Miller's contribution — his view of Jacob's prediction about Sherem's reaction to a sign and the wider implications that might seem to follow from his view of Jacob's prediction.

Jacob's Prediction

One of the topics Miller addresses in the Jacob-Sherem episode regards the sign given to Sherem. Miller believes Jacob made a false prediction: Jacob says that Sherem will deny a sign if it is given to him, but when Sherem actually does receive a sign, he acknowledges it and confesses his deceit and other sins because of it (vs. 14–19). The conclusion Miller draws is that Jacob's prediction was therefore false.

Miller first made this claim in his own volume,[3] and I responded to it, in somewhat condensed form, as part of a much longer review of a chapter in Miller's book.[4] I stand by what I said in that review about the inadequacies in Miller's full treatment of Jacob 7 and wish to further emphasize this specific matter, as Miller's view seems to be gaining traction in some quarters. Joseph Spencer of the Maxwell Institute, for instance, has adopted Miller's claim about Jacob's "misprediction,"[5] and so has Jeff Lindsay.[6] These examples of acceptance indicate that the idea may be on its way to becoming part of the conventional wisdom about Jacob and Sherem.

This is an important development because the claim actually appears to be a mistake. This is not insignificant. Viewing prophets accurately is essential to appreciating them and their role in representing the Lord. Although everyone recognizes that prophets are flawed, that is not a license to see flaws where they *don't* exist nor for such phantom faults to become accepted interpretations among scholars. Yet, that is

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2. Adam S. Miller, "Reading Signs or Repeating Symptoms," in Miller and Spencer, *Christ and Antichrist*, 18–27.

3. Adam S. Miller, "Reading Signs or Repeating Symptoms: Reading Jacob 7," in his book *Future Mormon: Essays in Mormon Theology* (Salt Lake City: Kofford Books, 2016), 25–33.

4. Duane Boyce, "Reclaiming Jacob," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 22 (2016): 107–29, https://www.mormoninterpreter.com/reclaiming-jacob/.

5. Joseph Spencer, "Introduction," in Miller and Spencer, *Christ and Antichrist*, ix–xvi.

6. Jeff Lindsay, "A Brighter Future for Mormon Theology: Adam S. Miller's *Future Mormon*," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 21 (2016): 121–22, https://www.mormoninterpreter.com/a-brighter-future-for-mormon-theology-adam-s-millers-future-mormon/.

the current risk with regard to Jacob. Thus, although I addressed this issue somewhat briefly in my earlier review, because of its repetition in a BYU publication and its (apparently) growing acceptance, I see value in a more complete treatment.

Three Types of Signs

The first matter to notice in getting clear about Jacob's discussion of signs is that multiple religious terms in scripture have more than one meaning. We see this with words such as "Israel," "Jew," "Gentile," "eternal," "Father," "salvation," and "faith," among others: what these words mean in one place or another depends entirely upon their context.[7] To ignore such context and to apply the same meaning to every appearance of any of these words would be fatal to any hope of actual understanding.

Understanding the meaning of the word "sign" seems to be no different. For example, the Lord speaks of signs that "come by faith, unto mighty works" and then of the signs he gives to those with whom he is *angry* — signs that he shows in "wrath" and "unto their condemnation" (Doctrine and Covenants 63:10–11). The Lord uses the word "sign" in both instances, but the word indicates two very different actions on his part. Clearly, not all signs are the same.

Once we recognize this difference, we can look at the scriptural record to see if there are general patterns to the ways the word "sign" is used. My study suggests there are three such broad patterns. Appreciating these different categories can help us understand what happens between Jacob and Sherem.

Signs that Testify Universally

One use of the word "sign" is evident in the confrontation between Alma and Korihor (Alma 30). Alma declares to Korihor that the cosmos itself serves as a testimony of God and his work (Alma 30:44)[8] and says that the long history of prophets' testimonies does the same (Alma 30:44). He

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7. Except perhaps in the case of "faith," the differences in how these terms are used in scripture are very familiar to Latter-day Saints. For an introduction to how "faith," too, is used differently at different times, see my article "Faith as a Holy Embrace," *The Religious Educator,* 13, no. 2 (2012): 107–27, https://rsc.byu.edu/es/archived/volume-13-number-2-2012-faith-holy-embrace.

8. He says that "all things" serve as a testimony of God and his work, including "the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form." All of these "witness that there is a Supreme Creator" (Alma 30:44). In Alma's mind, the cosmos itself is a sign that testifies of God. This would seem to be why the Lord said in a revelation that "the Spirit enlighteneth every man *through* the world" (D&C 84:46): because

reports that he personally has all these as a testimony of God and of the coming of Christ and says that Korihor, too, has them "as a testimony unto you that [Alma's teachings] are true" (Alma 30:41).

That Alma considers all these matters to be "signs" is evident in what happens next. Korihor demands a sign, and Alma says simply: "Thou hast had signs enough" (Alma 30:44). Alma considers Korihor's demand for an additional sign to be dishonest because he already has plenty of signs at his disposal. Indeed, he says Korihor believes, based on all the testimonies available to him, but he is "possessed of a lying spirit" (Alma 30:42). He is resisting "the spirit of truth" (Alma 30:46) and indeed has "put off the Spirit of God" (Alma 30:42), which is why Korihor rejects all the signs that are available to him.

Signs like those mentioned by Alma serve primarily to testify. Everyone can view the heavens and the workings of nature, and everyone who wants to can examine the scriptural testimonies of Christ and his Father; such testimonies are available generally. Samuel the Lamanite spoke of similar universal signs and of their testifying function. He prophesied of signs that would precede the Savior's birth as well as those that would attend his death, and he taught that they would be given specifically so the people might believe (Helaman 14:12, 20–29); they would serve as a divine testimony to everyone.[9] If they believed, he said, they would repent and be saved, but if they did not, it would be to their condemnation. "Whosoever perisheth, perisheth unto himself," he observed (Helaman 14:29–30). Testifying signs thus give observers a choice — either to respond to them or to resist them.[10]

Signs that Follow Belief

Perhaps the most common use of "sign" refers to miracles intended specifically for those who accept the Lord. The scriptures tell us that such miraculous gifts "follow" those who believe. They include healing

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the cosmos is the work of God, it inherently carries a spiritual testimony of God to those who "hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit" (D&C 84:46).

9. Other passages that speak of signs for such events include: Matthew 2:1–2; 1 Nephi 19:10; 2 Nephi 26:3; 3 Nephi 11:2.

10. The same is true of the signs that will appear before the Second Coming of the Savior. These range from the appearance of the Book of Mormon, to the establishment of Zion, to various upheavals and wonders right up until the Lord appears. See, for example: Joel 2:30–31; 3:15–16; Revelation 11:3–12; 3 Nephi 21:1-7; JS–Matthew 1:4, 36; D&C 29:14–16; 34:7–9; 45:39–42; 77:11, 15; 88:84–97. All of these, in their way, testify of God and of his works and give people a reason to consider, believe, and repent.

the sick, casting out devils, speaking with a new tongue, restoring sight to the blind, and, in general, performing "many wonderful works" (D&C 35:8; 84:64–72; Mark 16:17–18; Mormon 9:24). Regarding such miraculous gifts, Jacob wrote of his time that "we truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea" (Jacob 4:6).

Divine signs of this sort are not, as a general principle, available to those who do not accept the Lord. The Savior said to the early Saints that he would show signs to those "who believe on my name" (D&C 35:8). He later said that "faith cometh not by signs," but instead "signs *follow* those that believe" (D&C 63:9). The purpose of such signs is not to turn doubters into believers, but for the "profit and for salvation" of those who already believe (D&C 84:73). The gifts of the Spirit, which are addressed at length three times in scripture (1 Corinthians 12; Moro. 10; D&C 46), would seem to be among the miraculous signs that attend believers, and they are given "for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do" (D&C 46:9).

Because such signs follow those who believe, faith is a precondition for experiencing them. Indeed, it is such a strong precondition that both Mark and Matthew tell us the Lord could "do no mighty work" in his home area — aside from a few healings — because of the people's "unbelief" (Mark 6:5–6; Matthew 13:58). Similarly, following one miraculous outpouring of the Spirit while among the Nephites, the Lord said that he had never seen such faith among the Jews, "wherefore I could not show unto them so great miracles, because of their unbelief" (3 Nephi 19:35). Ether, too, taught that if people have no faith "God can do no miracle among them" (Ether 12:12). Indeed, so closely is faith tied to signs/miracles that Mormon tells us the absence of miracles among a people is one of the indicators of unbelief among them (Moroni 7:37–38). His son Moroni later says the same (Mormon 9:20; Moroni 10:24).[11]

At times, of course, unbelievers are present when believers experience the signs intended for their blessing. This was often the case in the Savior's earthly ministry. For those who did not already accept

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11. To say that the Lord "could not" perform miracles under such circumstances does not indicate that he was personally incapable of doing so. Rather, it seems to be an instance of the principle that a blessing comes to us only by our obedience to the law upon which that blessing is predicated (D&C 130:21). If miracles are predicated on satisfying a divine law regarding faith, and if the degree of our faith doesn't satisfy that divine law, then the Lord can't — consistent with that law — perform miracles for us. It is not a matter of inability; it is a matter of maintaining consistency with the divine principles he has established.

him, these miracles served as "testifying" signs.[12] They provided an intellectual basis for observers to begin considering divine claims. Many at the time of the Savior asked with sincerity: "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" (John 9:16). Ultimately, however, accepting the Lord is a spiritual matter, not an intellectual one, and that is why the signs were intended for those who already believed; others were merely looking on.[13] The Lord knew many of them would never believe, since they sought the honors of men and not the honor of God in the first place (John 5:44). Nevertheless, these onlookers had these miracles to testify to them and to provide a starting place for their belief, if they so chose. Indeed, Jacob had declared centuries earlier that any other nation *would* accept the Savior and repent based on the miracles he would perform during his earthly ministry. Nevertheless, he foresaw that because of their "priestcrafts and iniquities," the people of Jerusalem would "stiffen their necks against him, that he be crucified" (2 Nephi 10:3–5).

Signs that Condemn

Finally, the word "sign" can refer to the Lord's condemnation of the wicked. The Lord said to Joseph Smith that he shows signs to those who merit his anger, but that he does so "in wrath unto their condemnation" (D&C 63:7, 9, 11, 12). This is consistent with his earlier declaration that in the absence of faith he will not show "great things," except "desolations upon Babylon" (D&C 35:11). These passages seem to indicate that the

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12. On one occasion Jesus said to the Jews who sought to stone him for blasphemy: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him" (John 10:37–38). He had made the same point earlier, saying that "the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me" (John 5:36). On another occasion the Savior also appealed to works (John 14:10–11), but this incident was different in two ways. First, the Lord was speaking to the disciples who were with him at the last supper and who thus already believed in him. Second, the intent was to make a doctrinal point. It was not just to show that Jesus was divine and had the Father in him, but to show that he was the *personification* of the Father: for all intents and purposes, whoever had seen him had seen the Father.

13. That acceptance of the Lord is ultimately spiritual, not intellectual, is evident in many ways in scripture. On one occasion during his earthly ministry, for instance, the Savior was asked to provide a sign, just as Moses had provided with manna. But the Savior did not provide one. He pointed to himself as the only sign: "I am the bread of life," he declared (John 6:30–35). And later he said simply: "My sheep hear my voice … and they follow me" (John 10:27). Convincing power is found in the voice of the Spirit, not in outward manifestations that appeal to the intellect.

Lord does not show the "following belief" kinds of signs to the wicked, to those who are subject to his anger. Those miracles are intended specifically to bless those who already accept and follow him. The wicked, rather, receive miracles that express his wrath and condemn those who are (spiritually) of Babylon.[14]

The Case of Korihor

This seems to be the case with Korihor. As mentioned earlier, Korihor had plenty of experience with "testifying" signs, and Alma said that although Korihor actually believed, he rejected these signs because of his "lying spirit." Having "put off" the Spirit of God, Korihor had become an instrument of Satan, who was now using him to "destroy the children of God" (Alma 30:42).[15]

Korihor thus insisted on seeing signs in addition to those he already had before him. But the Lord specifically condemns such sign-seeking, calling those who demand them "evil" and "adulterous" (Matthew 12:39; 16:4; Luke 11:29). Demands for signs are seen as "temptings" of the Lord (Isaiah 7:10–12; Mark 8:11; Luke 11:16; Alma 30:44), and in our day he has said that "he that seeketh signs shall see signs, *but not unto salvation*" (D&C 63:7). He added that, "signs come by faith, not by the will of men, nor as *they* please, but by the will of God" (D&C 63:10). He has also said that his children are not to seek signs "that they may consume it on their lusts" (D&C 46:9). We are not to seek miracles to satisfy curiosity, pleasure, or pride; we are not to feed our

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14. Some signs of this sort also serve a "testifying" function. As we saw earlier, Samuel the Lamanite taught the Nephites that if they did not respond righteously to the signs, they would serve for their condemnation. The same was true of the Egyptians in Moses' day, when the Lord performed dramatic miracles prior to the Egyptians' releasing the children of Israel from bondage (Exodus 7–12). The Lord said he would "multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt" and that "the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord" (Exodus 7:3, 5). This was true even of the drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea: by this "the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord" (Exodus 14:4, 18). But these signs and wonders were hardly to the blessing of the Egyptians. Untold numbers suffered and died because of them. In their case, the signs came not only to testify, but, because of their hardness, to condemn them. One can imagine that the miracles employed to protect the city of Enoch from its enemies similarly testified of the Lord to those assailants. These miracles included the earth's trembling, mountains fleeing, rivers turning out of their course, and a mass of land arising "out of the depth of the sea" (Moses 7:13–15).

15. Alma was correct in all of this, of course. Korihor later admitted that he had known the truth and that he had taught falsehoods because he had been deceived by Satan and because what he taught was "pleasing unto the carnal mind" (Alma 30:53).

arrogance by placing a demand on God. To those who seek such things, he said, "it shall turn unto your condemnation" (D&C 88:65).

Korihor approached Alma arrogantly, placing a demand on God for a sign. And by "sign," he obviously meant the pleasant kind of miracle that follows those who believe — healing, speaking with tongues, and the like. He certainly wasn't demanding a sign that would *punish* him. But Alma refused Korihor's demand. Korihor didn't qualify for such signs: far from being a humble believer, he was strident in his rejection of Christ. Alma thus said that if Korihor continued to insist on a sign, the only sign he would receive would be a smiting from God. Since Korihor continued, he was struck dumb. Rather than receiving a pleasant miracle for the purpose of blessing him — which is what Korihor was demanding — he received a disabling miracle for the purpose of condemning him (Alma 30:45–50). Korihor's demand turned to his condemnation.

So in the end Korihor did receive a sign. It just wasn't drawn from the category of signs he had in mind.

Temporary Repentance

Of note in this incident is that neither Alma nor the Lord would remove this curse, even after Korihor confessed his sins and implored Alma to remove it (Alma 30:52–55). Instead, Alma declared that if the curse were removed, Korihor would simply return to his old ways "and again lead away the hearts of this people" (Alma 30:55). Apparently, he believed that Korihor's lying spirit would cause him to continue as he had before, despite experiencing the power of God. Alma thus left the matter to the Lord ("it shall be unto thee even as the Lord will," Alma 30:55), and the Lord *didn't* remove it.

This seems to indicate that the Lord knew Korihor was not going to change. Korihor is hardly alone, however, in being unchanged despite claims of repentance. Laman and Lemuel relented, and even repented, more than once after experiencing divine manifestations, and yet their repentance never lasted (1 Nephi 3:28–31; 7:16–21; 17:48–55; 18:6–21). Indeed, they continued to seek Nephi's life until Nephi and his followers finally fled from them in the New World (2 Nephi 5:1–7). Pharaoh, too, relented multiple times following the miracles the Lord performed in his presence, including determining to free the children of Israel — and yet each time he quickly re-hardened his heart and rescinded his decision (e.g., Exodus 8:8–15; 9:27–35; 12:31; 14:5). In one case, Pharaoh confessed to sinning "against the Lord your God, and against you" and asked for forgiveness, and then quickly reverted to his previous hardness of heart (Exodus 10:16–20). This was his pattern and it wasn't going to change.

Korihor, then, is not alone in being unchanging despite his appearance of repentance. Korihor had a "lying spirit" and, evidently, removing his curse was not going to change that, despite his claim of repentance.

Why Jacob's Prediction Was Not False

Understanding these three broad categories of signs in scripture helps us consider the confrontation between Jacob and Sherem. The encounter begins with Sherem confronting Jacob and denying Christ, to which Jacob responds by testifying of Christ and of matters that he knows "by the power of the Holy Ghost" (Jacob 7:6–12).

At this point, just as Korihor does with Alma, Sherem challenges Jacob to show him a sign "by this power of the Holy Ghost, in the which ye know so much" (Jacob 7:13). Now, it is relevant that Jacob has written in his record of dramatic miracles, saying, "we truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea" (Jacob 4:6). In speaking to Sherem, Jacob also refers to numerous divine experiences by saying, "I have heard and seen" (Jacob 7:12). When Sherem demands a sign, he speaks from this context.

Yet, these miracles all fall in the "following belief" category of signs. They are for the benefit of those who already accept the Lord, and are based on their faith in him. They are not for Sherem, who vocally and insistently denies him and who has no faith in him. It is in this context that Jacob refuses to give Sherem the sign he demands. He says: "What am I that I should tempt God to show unto thee a sign in the thing which thou knowest to be true?" (Jacob 7:14) He then predicts that Sherem would deny the sign he is asking for in any case, because, as he told Sherem earlier, "thou art of the devil" (Jacob 7:14). (Sherem himself later admits to such an association (Jacob 7:18–19).)

After making this prediction, however, Jacob changes the subject. He has said he won't supply the miracle Sherem is demanding, but then he says, "nevertheless, not my will be done." He is personally unwilling to give Sherem a sign, but if the Lord is willing to give him one, so be it. He thus adds that "if God shall smite thee, let *that* be a sign unto thee" (Jacob 7:14).

This is the second time Jacob uses the word "sign," but we have now shifted to a different category of signs altogether — now Jacob is talking about "smiting." Jacob wouldn't comply with Sherem's demand for a "following belief" type of sign (say, with "the waves of the sea" or "mountains" or "trees"); he could not, for Sherem did not satisfy the precondition of faith required for that type of sign. Nevertheless, if the Lord wanted to deliver a different kind of

sign to Sherem — a condemning type of sign — then so be it. Of course, that is exactly what happened.

Jacob's prediction, then, seems far from false. He simply made it in the context of a certain category of signs — the kind of sign Sherem himself was expecting and even demanding. Once the context shifted to a different kind of sign, however — one that was entirely distinct in its nature, its purpose, and the character of its recipients — this prediction became moot. The prediction was not false; it simply no longer applied because the context in which Jacob had made it no longer existed.

We cannot fault Jacob for a prediction made in one context regarding a specific category of signs when the sign Sherem received occurred in a completely different context and came from a completely different category of signs. If we overlook this difference and instead conflate the various types of signs the Lord provides, we are destined to reach a false conclusion about Jacob's prediction. But if so, the error is ours, not Jacob's.

A Secondary Matter: Sherem's Repentance

An additional difficulty in Miller's approach is the likelihood that Sherem's repentance was not genuine and lasting in any event. Miller's argument assumes that Sherem's repentance was real and deep, but there is actually strong reason to doubt this. As we have seen, Laman, Lemuel, and Pharaoh all appeared to repent, and yet their changes were not lasting. The same was true of Korihor. Alma believed Korihor's repentance was temporary at best and that, if his curse were removed, he would simply return to his old ways — and the Lord appears to have believed the same thing.

This provides ample precedent for doubting Sherem's repentance as well. Not only are there multiple examples of temporary repentance in the scriptural record, but Jacob called Sherem a "wicked man" to the very end, and the Lord himself refused to heal him — just as he refused to heal Korihor. Miller fails to address all this, a significant oversight since Miller believes Jacob's prediction was false precisely because he assumes that Sherem changed when Jacob said he wouldn't. This assumption is not hard to doubt, however, and, although it is a secondary matter, Miller's failure to address it is an additional weakness in his argument.

Once we appreciate the different categories of signs in the scriptural record, and that the confrontation between Jacob and Sherem referenced two of these categories (not just one), we can reject the claim that Jacob made a false prediction. There is also reason to question the permanence

of Sherem's change in any event. Despite musings and academic momentum to the contrary, the idea of Jacob's false prediction seems clearly to be an error and should be rejected.

A Look at Some Implications

Getting the facts straight about Jacob's prediction is valuable for its own sake. It is better to be correct in our reading of prophets than incorrect. But it is also valuable because of its wider implications. After all, if we decide that Jacob was wrong about Sherem's reaction to a sign, we might conclude that he could also have been wrong about Sherem in other ways. For example, we might come to agree with Miller that Sherem was sincere in his beliefs and that Jacob was actually un-Christlike in the way he behaved toward him. These might seem like possibilities to us if we think that Jacob has already been shown to be wrong about Sherem's reaction to a sign.[16]

This pattern of thought fails in two central ways, however. First, it now seems clear that Jacob was not wrong in his prediction about Sherem — and no other aspects of the account follow from a false prediction by Jacob if his prediction was not, in fact, false. Second, the text itself belies Miller's other claims. I have addressed this matter at greater length previously,[17] but two aspects are worth brief mention here as well.

Sherem as "Sincere"

Consider Miller's assertion that Sherem was sincere in his beliefs, even if mistaken. On one hand, this is countervailed by Jacob's description of Sherem as a crass flatterer of the people, as an instrument of the devil, as determined to overthrow the doctrine of Christ, and as a "wicked man" (Jacob 7:1–4, 23). But we don't have to take Jacob's word for all this: Sherem effectively says the same of himself. In his subsequent confession, he admits that he "lied unto God," he believes that his situation before God is "awful," and he fears that he has "committed the unpardonable sin" (Jacob 7:19). Sherem does not describe himself as having been merely sincere-but-mistaken; he describes himself as having been a liar *to God*.

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16. This line of thinking is present in Jeff Lindsay's review of Miller's first writing on Jacob. See Lindsay, "A Brighter Future for Mormon Theology: Adam S. Miller's *Future Mormon*," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 21 (2016): 121–22, https://www.mormoninterpreter. com/a-brighter-future-for-mormon-theology-adam-s-millers-future-mormon/.

17. Boyce, "Reclaiming Jacob."

We don't even have to take Sherem's word for this, however. The Lord's own estimation of Sherem is clear in the sign he gave him — the type of sign specifically intended to condemn the wicked and that ended in Sherem's death.[18] To consider Sherem sincere overlooks the ways that Jacob, the Lord, and Sherem himself affirm the exact opposite.

Jacob as "Un-Christlike"

The assertion that Jacob was un-Christlike toward Sherem also overlooks features of the scriptural record. For example, the text holds that Jacob is able to confound Sherem because he is filled with the Spirit (Jacob 7:8). Since the Spirit is the instrument of Christ (e.g., John 16:13–14; 2 Nephi 32:3), it would seem implausible for Jacob to have the Spirit "poured" into his soul and simultaneously be un-Christlike in his actions. The significant presence of the Spirit in Jacob should at least raise a serious question about Miller's claim.

But more importantly, Miller's comments assume a standard of "Christlike" behavior that would appear to exclude Christ himself. The Lord has spoken far more forcefully to sinners and hypocrites than Jacob speaks to Sherem, for example.[19] The Lord has also destroyed countless wicked people over the history of the earth,[20] and he will destroy countless more at his Second Coming.[21] He will also commit the wicked to a condition of deep suffering for their sins that, for some, will last throughout eternity.[22] And in the case of Jacob and Sherem, whereas Jacob is merely unsympathetic toward Sherem, the Lord smites and kills him.

The conclusion from all this would seem to be that if Jacob is un-Christlike, then so is the Savior: by the standard Miller presupposes, Christ himself fails to qualify as Christlike. Miller certainly does not believe this, but it is the logical conclusion of what he says. The standard he uses to criticize Jacob is thus simply mistaken.

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18.   Jana Riess denies that God killed Sherem, but I show why this is an obvious mistake in my review of her paper. See Boyce, "Text as Afterthought," 127–31.

19.   See Matthew 23:13–33 and D&C 19:15–20 for just two instances.

20.   See Gen. 7:21–22; Moses 7:34; Exodus 9, 12, 14; 3 Nephi 9:3–12.

21.   See Malachi 4:1; Isaiah 11:4; 13:9; 1 Nephi 22:15, 23; 2 Nephi 23:9; 30:10; D&C 1:13; 29:9, 17-21; 45:50; 63:34; 133:50–51.

22.   See, for example, Revelation 21:8; 2 Nephi 9:16; 28:23; D&C 19:15–18; 43:33; 63:17; 76:30–49.

Conclusion

Despite good intentions, it is important to be careful in our approach to understanding prophets. Because they are chosen by the Lord and because they represent him, what we come to think about prophets can have deep and enduring consequences. What we believe about them matters, which means that thinking carefully matters. And when we think carefully it seems completely evident that Sherem was not sincere in his beliefs, that Jacob was not un-Christlike toward him, and that Jacob did not make a false prediction.

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The Joseph Smith Papers Project Stumbles

John Gee

Review of *The Joseph Smith Papers, Revelations and Translations, Volume 4: Book of Abraham and Related Manuscripts*, eds. Robin Scott Jensen and Brian M. Hauglid (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2018), 381 pages.

Abstract: *Volume 4 of the Revelations and Translations series of the Joseph Smith Papers does not live up to the standards set in previous volumes. While the production values are still top notch, the actual content is substandard. Problems fill the volume, including misplaced photographs and numerous questionable transcriptions beyond the more than two hundred places where the editors admitted they could not read the documents. For this particular volume, producing it incorrectly is arguably worse than not producing it at all.*

The Joseph Smith Papers Project has developed a well-deserved reputation for excellence in every aspect of publication. Fantastic photographs, faithful transcriptions, helpful notes, and top-quality paper and bindings have all been standard issue. This is a tremendous heritage to live up to, and each new volume comes out with eager anticipation.

The volume under review, Volume 4 of the Revelations and Translations series, contains a number of documents that have been known to historians for at least fifty years, but many of them have never been properly published and have never before been officially published. The volume begins with a lengthy introduction that attempts to set the documents into historical context. This is followed by the individual documents with accompanying short introductions. The documents are organized into groups: Egyptian papyri (pp. 3–24), Notebooks of Copied Egyptian Characters (pp. 25–41), Copies of Egyptian Characters (pp. 43–52), Egyptian Alphabet Documents (pp. 53–109),

Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language (pp. 111–90), Book of Abraham Manuscripts, circa July–circa November 1835 (pp. 191–242), Book of Abraham Manuscripts, circa February–circa 15 March 1842 (pp. 243–93), and Facsimile Printing Plates and Published Book of Abraham (pp. 295–335). Reference material at the end of the volume includes Book of Abraham Chronology for the Years 1835 and 1842 (pp. 338–40), Works Cited (pp. 341–49), and Comparison of Characters (pp. 350–80). References for the Introduction are given as footnotes, but references in the other sections are gathered as endnotes at the end of each section. This makes references difficult to locate, although that may not be a bad thing. Readers should carefully note that the list of works cited is not a comprehensive bibliography on the volume's subject matter and is thus missing several major works.

On the surface, this volume appears to conform to the standards of the previous volumes, but in the details that is not the case. There is much in the volume with which one could and perhaps should quibble. I will not be able to spend much time on the numerous questionable editorial decisions or scholarship evident in the volume. I will, however, note that the editors chose to completely relabel the documents from their historical names, which will sow much confusion in discussions, but they provided no concordance of other major labels for the documents, as is standard in scholarly editions. Instead, I will simply list a sample of known problems in the volume.

I have previously done a letter-by-letter transcription of the documents based on high-resolution photographs and personal examination of the original documents utilizing the transcription standards used by ancient historians[1] rather than those of the modern American historian that the Joseph Smith Papers used. The practices of the two types of historians differ in a number of particulars but might be generalized by saying that ancient historians prioritize what the scribe actually wrote on the document while American historians prioritize the perceived scribal intent. For this volume of the Joseph Smith Papers, the alternative, ancient standard is arguably preferable for the following reasons:

- Many debates about the documents revolve around scribal practices but these debates are poorly served by American historian standards where the discussion of scribal practice is

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1. I use the term *ancient historians* to encompass a variety of disciplines dealing with ancient languages like Akkadian, Egyptian, Greek, and Coptic which share similar transcription practices.

infrequent and are better served by the ancient historian standards where discussions about scribal practice are commonplace.

- Many of the groups of letters in the documents are clearly not English and one cannot argue that one is following scribal intent if one cannot understand what is being written and, thus, what the scribe's intent was. In the documents in this volume of the Joseph Smith Papers the scribes' intent and the authors' intent are hotly debated. Transcribing according to the scribes' intent is begging the question and subtly predetermining the outcome of the debate.

- The stated audience of the Joseph Smith Papers is scholars, not lay members of the Church. Presumably a scholar should not be spending too much time puzzling over the spelling of "behod" in context, but perhaps I have spent too much time working with documents having non-standard spelling and other scholars find unusual orthography to be a serious obstacle.

- Interesting and perhaps important aspects of the documents may be glossed over by using the standards of the American historian. For example, the Book of Abraham manuscripts in Willard Richards's hand may have served as the printer's manuscript, but Richards's handwriting is difficult to read and this may explain why there are numerous unnoted retouchings of letters in an unknown hand throughout the manuscripts to make words legible.

Space does not allow listing all the problems in the volume nor even all the problems I know of (though others using differing standards may not consider them errors by their standards), so a smattering from each section will have to suffice. I will address each section, in turn.

Introduction

The volume's Introduction is a fair summation of the current state of research as far as American historians are concerned. The problem with this sort of general introduction in an area where much active research is being done is that it is bound to become out of date quickly. This introduction probably will not age well. An indication of this is that it has something of a split personality. For example, "the Egyptian-language manuscripts created by Smith and his associates while they worked with the papyri from July through about November 1835 give the only firsthand, contemporaneous evidence of how they understood the

Egyptian language" (pp. xxiv–xxv). "But most of the Book of Abraham is not textually dependent on any of the extant Egyptian-language documents. The inverse is also true: most of the content in the Egyptian-language documents is independent of the Book of Abraham" (p. xxv). So the only firsthand, contemporaneous evidence for the translation process is independent of — and thus irrelevant to — the Book of Abraham and its translation. There is a problem with the editors' logic here that may be the result of many revisions during the volume's development.

Papyri

There are more competent treatments of the papyri than presented here. The placement and grouping of the fragments on pp. 6–7 are incorrect and should not be followed.[2] On p. 9, the fragments are presented in the wrong order; the photographs should be switched, as the lower one comes first on the papyrus. On p. 16, the text claims, "The right half, known to scholars as fragment IV, measures, at its largest, 11½ × 8 inches (29 × 20 cm), with a backing of the same size." Unfortunately, on the facing page (p. 17) there are no right and left fragments. Also, scholars know the piece as Joseph Smith Papyrus IV or P. Joseph Smith IV, not as "fragment IV." If scholars know the papyrus fragment as something, why did the editors decide not to follow suit? Likewise, "The upper left half, known to scholars as fragment II, measures 5⅛ × 10½ inches (13 × 27 cm), with a backing measuring 4⅝ × 10½ inches (12 × 27 cm)." There is no left fragment, and if it were placed correctly, it would not be "upper."[3]

Notebooks of Copied Egyptian Characters

If the editors' assumptions about the translation process were correct, one would have expected that Joseph Smith and others would have copied characters before they started providing translations. The perceptive reader is left to puzzle over the placement of these two sections, but since the editors do not actually know the chronological order of the

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2. For competent placement, see Michael D. Rhodes, *Books of the Dead Belonging to Tschemmin and Neferirnub: A Translation and Commentary* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2010), 8. This placement is more detailed than the one in John Gee, *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2000), 12–13.

3. For comparison, see: P. Berlin P. 3008, P. Dublin MS 1669, P. Paris Louvre N. 3086 + P. St. Petersburg 2565, P. Paris Louvre N. 3089, P. St. Petersburg 3531, P. Turin 1833, P. Cincinnati 1947.369 + P. Cologny CV + P. Denver 1954.61 (formerly An 178), P. Detroit 1988.10 + P. Eggebrecht, P. Grabung Anch-Hor Reg.Nr. 873, P. Leiden T 16 (AMS 41), P. London BM EA 9902, P. London BM EA 10097.

documents or the actual relation of one set to another, or even if the various sets are correctly grouped, one order is as good as another. We can, however, look at the transcriptions. Selecting one page at random, we find the following errors: On p. 35, sideways sum, for "◊ 22 ½" read "22 ½." There is no illegible character in the final line of the sum (the final numbers are the total after a subtraction); it belongs to the writing that is supposed to be the next line. The next line does not read "H Dayton"; it looks more like "H Daytal," but *daytal* is such an obscure word that we would not expect to find it here even though the context might fit it. The photograph provided is inadequate to resolve the issue. In the lower section, for "Translation" read "Translatean" which is what is actually written on the document.

Copies of Egyptian Characters

The editors date the copying of Egyptian characters to early July based on their assumptions rather than any evidence. The only reference to transcribing Egyptian characters in Joseph Smith's journals is 26 November 1835, which unfortunately does not match with the editors' date for these documents.[4] So the editors' theory inexplicably takes precedence over the only historical evidence we have. The document on p. 47 is upside down; this has been corrected in the online version. The document on p. 49 is upside down in comparison to the photograph of the same document on p. 9. This might confuse some readers. The editors doubtless meant to draw attention to the characters copied in ink rather than the papyrus fragments, although this is not explicitly stated.

Egyptian Alphabet Documents

This date provided for the Egyptian Alphabet documents by the editors does not match that provided by Joseph Smith's journals, which indicate a specific date for these documents (1 October 1835).[5] Earlier editors of the Joseph Smith Papers assigned this date to the document,[6] so one would expect a note explaining the change from previous conclusions in the Joseph Smith Papers Project.

Again, transcription is an issue in this section. For this section, we pick one page at random (p. 58) and note the following transcription errors:

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4. *The Joseph Smith Papers: Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2008), 110–11.

5. Ibid., 67.

6. Ibid., 67 n. 46.

- Line 7: For "{◊\B}ethcho" read "Bethcho." There is no overwriting on the character although there is some touch-up. The scribe attempted to write the B with a loop at the bottom as on the previous line but needed to do so with two strokes of the pen, the second of which is slightly smeared.

- Line 7: For "fi{◊\f}th" read "fi{a\f}th"

- Line 9: For "injoym{◊\e}nt" read "injoym{e\a}nt"

- Line 11: For "resides" read "reside<s>"

- Line 12: For "Kah-tu-ain-tr{◊\i}eth-" read "Kah-tu-ain-tra<eth> -"

There are also worrying problems in the description of the documents. The editors state that the documents contain "hieratic and unknown characters in unidentified handwriting (likely JS and possibly Cowdery)" (p. 55). I grant that the editors can specify the English handwriting on documents but there is no way of knowing who wrote the Egyptian characters on the document, so the proposed scribal identifications are simply guesswork or speculation on the part of the editors.

Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language

This document has long been claimed to be the key document for the understanding of Egyptian by Church leaders in Kirtland. The authorship of the document is unknown. The transcriptions here are also a problem. Again, we pick a page at random (p. 134–35).

- Line 5: for "government," read "government." The punctuation is a period, not a comma.

- Line 7: for "desendent from" read "desendemt fron"

- Line 14: for "another" read "anothr"

- Line 15: for "{it\a}nd" read "{it\A}nd"

- Line 16: for "above, more" read "above, mor<e>"

- Line 19: for "possessions" read "possession<s>"

- Line 20: for "possession" read "possessian"

- Line 27: for "I{◊◊\at}a" read "I{to\at}a"

- Line 32: for "Hoe-oop" read "H{a\o}e-oop"

- Line 33: for "dominion" read "dom<i>nion"

Book of Abraham Manuscripts

The manuscripts of the Book of Abraham have been published before by one of the editors. Unfortunately, these documents are also plagued by transcription problems. Again, we use a random page, p. 261, which contains the following transcription discrepancies:

- Line 1: For "Behold Potiphars" read "Behod Potiphas"
- Line 9: For "descendant" read "{d\<d>}escendant"
- Line 10: For "canaanites" read "canaanite<s>"
- Line 11: For "{s\⟨S⟩}prang" read "{S\⟨s⟩}prang"
- Line 12: For "canaanites" read "c<a>naanites"
- Line 13: For "~~prerevd~~" read "~~prerved~~"
- Line 15: For "~~Zep-tah~~" read "{G\Z}~~ep-tah~~"
- Line 16: For "~~Egeptah~~" read "~~Egeptah~~<us>"

Out of 147 words on the page, 9 (6%) can be transcribed differently. Each of the next two pages numerically has even more.

Footnotes

The footnotes on the volume are sometimes suspect. The editors claim that "the volume was used extensively when JS and his associates published Facsimile 2 and its accompanying explanation in March 1842" (p. 113). The endnote cited (p. 185 n. 20) refers the reader to p. 276. On p. 276, the editors assert, "No evidence indicates that JS studied any of the hieroglyphs from the hypocephalus in his 1835 effort to understand the Egyptian language. However, the explanation of Facsimile 2 is clearly related to that effort, since some of the entries in this document borrow heavily from the Grammar and Alphabet volume." One could argue that the effort flows the other way around. This is an example of an unexamined and unsupported assumption of the editors. At no point do the editors provide an argument or justification for their assertion.[7] It also contradicts the assertions of the editors in the Introduction, cited above.

Comparison of Characters

Throughout the volume, the editors decided to give their own numbering to the Egyptian characters in the margin. There are already standard

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7. This point was brought to my attention by my colleague Kerry Muhlestein.

Egyptological (Gardiner) numbers for most of these characters; it is a pity that the editors did not use the standard scholarly conventions. The problematic nature of this appendix is illustrated on p. 370 in the character labeled 3.11a,b. The first, second, third, and sixth character are the same two characters (C98+A21A) from Joseph Smith Papyrus I. The fourth and fifth in the list come from Joseph Smith Papyrus XI and are not the same characters (V2+Z3).

Presuppositions

Everyone approaches a text with certain presuppositions that inform how they understand the text. It would have been nice if the editors had been more explicit about theirs. As it is, the text often leaves the reader to intuit what the presuppositions of the editors were. Certain statements allow one to reconstruct some of the editors' presuppositions. Reconstructing presuppositions can be hazardous, but authors can avoid others reconstructing their assumptions by making them explicit.

The editors assert that Joseph Smith and his associates "assumed that the Egyptian language contained a series of complex systems and symbols, each of which held multiple meanings" even though the editors cannot "explain comprehensively the ways in which earlier concepts regarding the Egyptian language — such as the notion that each character represented multiple ideas — may have been inherited, used, or understood by Joseph Smith" (p. xvii). They also assert that "these attempts [by Joseph Smith and his clerks] are considered by modern Egyptologists — both Latter-day Saints and others — to be of no actual value in understanding Egyptian" (p. xxv). They claim that Joseph Smith "was certainly unequipped to translate the scrolls as a scholar would" (p. xxii). The assumption seems to be that Joseph Smith got all his ideas about Egypt from his environment except correct ones. Not all of the ideas about ancient Egypt circulating in Joseph Smith's day were wrong. For example, hieroglyphic signs in the time period when the Joseph Smith Papyri were produced frequently have multiple meanings. To be able to sort the issues out requires a firsthand knowledge of the intellectual content and context which, in this case, means a knowledge both of Egyptian and how it was understood in Joseph Smith's day. Unfortunately the editors demonstrate no firsthand knowledge of works by Samuel Sharpe, Gustav Seyffarth, Jean-François Champollion, or others, so they cannot set the work of Latter-day Saints like W. W. Phelps in its proper historical context.

One of the assumptions is that the authorship of the documents included in the volume belongs to Joseph Smith. In fact, the authorship of the documents is disputed, something the volume never acknowledges. Others have put forth historical arguments that W. W. Phelps, not Joseph Smith, authored many of the documents published in the volume. These arguments are ignored. The volume should have followed the standard practice of the Joseph Smith Papers Project and put most of the documents in an appendix as disputed. For instance, in a forthcoming Joseph Smith Papers volume a much-quoted letter from Joseph Smith to Nancy Rigdon is placed in an appendix because the editors cannot prove that it is not a forgery. The same procedure should have been followed here. If the policy is that only those documents known to be authored by, in the handwriting of, or in the possession of Joseph Smith should be included in the papers, then only the Joseph Smith Papyri, Egyptian Alphabet A, and the Book of Abraham manuscripts should have been placed in the volume and the rest should have been relegated to an appendix. This, however, did not happen.

Another of the assumptions is revealed in the organization of the volume. Although the editors state that "the sequence of the creation of the Kirtland-era Book of Abraham manuscript and the various manuscripts of the Egyptian-language project is unknown" (p. xxv), readers can easily assume a chronological order in their presentation of the material. For them the chronological order of the documents is first the papyri, next the notebooks of characters, then the pages of characters, then the Egyptian alphabet, then the Grammar and Alphabet, then the Book of Abraham manuscripts, and finally the published editions of the Book of Abraham. The organization of the volume, while logical, implies the ordering of the documents favored by critics of the Church but this order is not necessarily supported by the dates given by the editors. If the documents of disputed authorship had been placed in an appendix, this would have solved the problem.

This order is assumed and not demonstrated. This is the way the editors would go about producing a translation: get a document, obtain some grammars, and after studying the grammars, produce a translation. But this is not the way that ancient languages are deciphered, and it was not the way that Champollion deciphered Egyptian. There is no particular reason to assume that it was the way Joseph Smith translated, since it was definitely not the way the Book of Mormon was produced.

The editors' assumption about the order of translation is manifest in a number of ways. For example, the Egyptian Alphabet documents

seem to parallel Abraham 1:24–25, 31. One could argue either that the Abraham verses were produced from the Egyptian Alphabet documents or that the Egyptian Alphabet documents were produced from the Book of Abraham. Because of their theories about the translation process, the editors assume the former. The fact that five verses are missing in the Egyptian Alphabet documents makes it harder to account for their appearance in the Book of Abraham than if the Book of Abraham were used to produce the Egyptian Alphabet.

The source of the characters in the manuscripts also presents a problem. The characters in the margins of the Book of Abraham manuscripts come from Papyrus Joseph Smith XI. The characters in the Egyptian Alphabet documents and the Alphabet and Grammar come from Papyrus Joseph Smith I. Because to the editors the characters are meaningless marks on the page, they pay no attention to their origin or the implications of their origins, which explains why they lump different characters from different sources indiscriminately together in their appendix and misplace some of the photographs. If the Egyptian Alphabet documents were the direct source of the Book of Abraham, we would expect that the characters would coincide and have the same source, but they do not. Because the characters do not match, the efforts to match up characters in the Egyptian Alphabet documents and the Book of Abraham manuscripts have to be seen as independent efforts. It also suggests that both efforts are attempts to match a previously existent Book of Abraham with different papyri rather than stumbling attempts to decipher a particular Egyptian text.

Furthermore, the editors' presuppositions dictate what can be counted as evidence. Thus, when the editors state that "there is no evidence before early 1842, however, that JS had translated more Book of Abraham material than what survives in the extant Kirtland-era manuscripts" (p. 243), they are ignoring a great deal of evidence that others have adduced for precisely the idea that Joseph Smith had translated more of the Book of Abraham than that at that time.[8] They are also ignoring both the evidence of the manuscripts and the journals. Joseph Smith's Kirtland period journals record him

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8. See Kerry Muhlestein and Megan Hansen, "'The Work of Translating': The Book of Abraham's Translation Chronology," in *Let Us Reason Together: Essays in Honor of the Life's Work of Robert L. Millet*, ed. J. Spencer Fluhman and Brent L. Top (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, and Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2016), 139–62; John Gee, *An Introduction to the Book of Abraham* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, and Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2017), 16–19.

translating on 7 October 1835, 19 November 1835, 20 November 1835, 24 November 1835, and 25 November 1835. This is a minimum of five sessions. In Nauvoo, there is only a day and a half of translation. According to the editors, in Kirtland, only Abraham 1:1–2:18 were dictated, while in Nauvoo, Joseph Smith translated Abraham 2:19–5:21 — a greater amount of text in only a quarter of the time. Even with the editors' naturalistic presuppositions, this requires a stretch in credulity.

In these cases, the editors are driven by their presuppositions and theories, regardless of evidence to the contrary.

Conclusions

Given the constraints of space, this is only a sample of the types of problems and errors found in the volume.

It may seem that some of these matters are mere trifles. I disagree. The bedrock of the work on the Joseph Smith Papers Project is the transcription of the documents. Especially in these manuscripts where so many of the words in the documents do not purport to be English and the editors have no idea what the language may be, accurate transcriptions are essential. It is thus disappointing that there are so many problems with the transcriptions. It is incredibly easy to make transcription errors in a document in one's own language when one is doing a quick first draft in a limited time when visiting an archive. Throw in bad handwriting and a foreign language, and the difficulties multiply. But the authors have been working on this volume for seven years. One expects better. The 213 unique instances in the documents where the editors admitted they could not read what the scribes wrote[9] is an indication of the difficulty in reading the documents and how often the challenge of transcription defeated the editors. Though some of these instances would defeat any responsible scholar, some of them can be read.

Furthermore, many of the arguments about the translation of the Book of Abraham rest on scribal practices, habits, and tendencies. To study these properly requires much greater care in transcribing the

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9. The instances of problems reading what scribes wrote is pervasive across documents: Notebook of Egyptian Characters (2), Egyptian Alphabet A (11), Egyptian Alphabet B (16), Egyptian Alphabet C (22), Egyptian Counting (3), Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language (101), Book of Abraham Manuscript A (9), Book of Abraham Manuscript B (15), Book of Abraham Manuscript C (13), Book of Abraham Manuscript and Explanation of Facsimile 1 (13), Explanation of Facsimile 2 (5), and Book of Abraham Manuscript 8 (3).

documents and much higher standards in document transcription than evidenced in the work shown here.

Anything the editors say about Egyptian language, papyri, or characters is beyond their skill and training. It is regretable that although The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints counts several faithful Egyptologists among its membership, the editors deliberately chose not to involve them in any serious way. It is true that two of that number were given a month to peer review the volume and some of their suggestions were accepted, but no photographs were included in what was reviewed, nor did the Egyptologists see the appendix on the Egyptian characters. One might argue that this series is about nineteenth-century religious history, but this volume, in particular, is about early Latter-day Saint leaders' involvement with Egyptian characters. The volume editors cannot adequately deal with early Latter-day Saints' interaction with those characters without some understanding of those characters of their own.

In sum, this volume does not display the care one has come to expect from the Joseph Smith Papers Project. The editors may have followed the general guidelines of the Joseph Smith Papers Project, but the material in this volume is not like the other material in the series and would have benefited by adapting the guidelines to the nature of the material. While it is great to have good-quality images of the documents finally available to the public, the transcriptions and notes are often inadequate to the needs of the ongoing debates about the documents. One still needs to be extremely careful using the material. This means that other than legal access to the photographs, neither the serious researcher nor the lay person is in a better position than they were before the volume was published. As the online version will be updated to reflect new information, it may become, over time, the preferred version to use.

[*Editor's note: This review was edited by the author, after initial publication, to address multiple requests for clarification. In part, these clarifications came after a substantive conversation between the author and principal figures in the Joseph Smith Papers Project.*]

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The Language of the Spirit
in the Book of Mormon

Noel B. Reynolds

Abstract: *This study provides students of the Book of Mormon with the first comprehensive analysis of the many ways in which the word "spirit" is used in that volume of scripture. It demonstrates how the titles "Holy Ghost," "Spirit of God," "Spirit of the Lord," "Holy Spirit," and "the Spirit" are used interchangeably to refer to the third member of the Godhead. It also shows that the Holy Ghost was understood to be a separate being. The analysis is thoroughly integrated with scholarly studies of references to the spirit (rûah) in the Hebrew Bible. The functions of the Holy Ghost are also identified and explained.*

Students of Restoration scriptures and practices usually begin their studies of the Holy Ghost and its functions from the perspective of the New Testament; the revelations received by Joseph Smith for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; or even from other Christian traditions, theologies, and practices. As another fundamental Restoration scripture, the Book of Mormon has not always been easy to reconcile with that approach because of some passages that do not fit modern language and categories easily. The following study takes a different approach. It begins with a systematic study of the references to the Spirit and to the Holy Ghost in the text of the Book of Mormon and proposes an analysis of this Nephite discourse that is coherent and consistent throughout that text and that benefits from comparisons with Old Testament conceptions.

While some have taken the position that Joseph Smith must have inserted New Testament phraseology and concepts into the text to make it more appealing to Christian readers of his time, I do not agree with that and will not undertake any intertextual analyses involving

the New Testament.[1] The Book of Mormon presents itself as written by Israelites educated in Jerusalem in the late seventh century BCE and by their descendants, who claimed a version of the Old Testament as their scriptural heritage. Accordingly, this essay focuses on the text of the Book of Mormon with some comparisons with the Old Testament with the help of scholars who have produced relevant studies of that text.

The Spirit in the Old Testament and in the Book of Mormon

The analysis that follows shows a much more explicit and developed Nephite understanding of the Spirit of the Lord and the functions of that spirit in the world than we would expect from reading the Old Testament alone. But the Hebrew Bible also turns out to provide a productive context for illuminating Book of Mormon language of *the spirit*. Wilf Hildebrandt's exhaustive 1995 study of Old Testament usage facilitates my comparison with the Book of Mormon text.[2] Hildebrandt's study is especially helpful because he rejects the approach of predecessors who looked at the Old Testament through the lens of the New. Rather, he argues,

> the understanding of *rûah* as "spirit" must be sought in the context of how the relationship between god and humanity is conceived and presented in the ancient Near East. Rather than reading back into the OT literature our NT views and pneumatology, we must come to the material afresh, with an OT perspective if possible.[3]

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1. One current presentation of such a theory can be found in the Claremont dissertation, now published as Nicholas J. Frederick, *The Bible, Mormon Scripture, and the Rhetoric of Allusivity* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2016). A helpful review that addresses those issues can be found in Jeffrey D. Tucker, "Nicholas J. Frederick. The Bible, Mormon Scripture, and the Rhetoric of Allusivity," *BYU Studies,* 56, no. 3 (2017): 198–201.

2. Wilf Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995). Most scholarly treatments of this topic are short surveys designed to pave the way to much more intensive analyses of New Testament material. Hildebrandt was also chosen to write the article "Spirit of Yahweh," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets*, eds. Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 747–57, which provides a useful 10-page summary of key points from the 1995 monograph.

3. Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God*, 3. For a clear endorsement of this approach from a recent evangelical perspective, see David Firth, "The historical books," in *A Biblical Theology of the Holy Spirit*, eds. Trevor J. Burke and Keith Warrington (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014), 12–13.

While recognizing that most Ancient Near Eastern (hereafter ANE) cultures used *rûah* or some related term to refer to *wind* or *life-breath*, he points out that only the Hebrew Bible also uses the term to refer to the spirits of God or men.

> There is no evidence that the root [*rh*] has the meaning "spirit" or "Spirit," in the OT sense, outside of the Hebrew canon. Ancient Near Eastern texts do not use *rûah* to indicate that gods have spirits or that the *rûah* is an extension of a god. Nor does the term refer to aspects of the human spirit. Therefore, although Israel has many similarities with the cultural environment of the ancient Near East, the term *rûah* has a unique development of its lexical range of meanings in the OT. The OT is the only ancient literature that develops this term to portray a people's experience with their God.[4]

While Hildebrandt goes on appropriately to explore and develop a wide range of issues related to *spirit* in the Hebrew Bible, this paper uses his findings primarily to assess the extent to which Nephite understandings related to the Holy Ghost may reflect pre-exilic biblical culture. In the opening chapter of his book, Hildebrandt presents a long list of examples of different ways in which the concept of the Spirit of God is used in the Old Testament. An exhaustive study of all such examples will not be necessary to demonstrate that the Nephite prophets shared much of the traditional Hebrew cultural understanding while adding insights gleaned from their own experiences and revelations.

The Spirit of God

The term *rûah* occurs 389 times in the Old Testament, and Hildebrandt counts 107 of those as direct references to the Spirit of God or Spirit of the Lord. In addition to these references, he recognizes "numerous allusions, emblems, symbols, images, and figurative expressions [that] denote the work and movement of *spirit* or *the Spirit of God* in the Hebrew canon."[5] In her 2010 Marquette PhD dissertation, Lynne Hilton Wilson calculated that the Book of Mormon uses *Spirit of the Lord* 4.5 times as

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4. Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God*, 5.

5. Ibid., 2, emphasis added. In a more recent study, Richard E. Averback, "The Holy Spirit in the Hebrew Bible and its Contributions to the New Testament," in *Who's Afraid of the Holy Spirit?*, eds. David B. Wallace and M. James Sawyer (Dallas: Biblical Studies Press, 2005), 16–18; produced a slightly different count, with 378 mentions of *rûah*, 94 of which he interpreted as personal references "to the third person of the Trinity."

often per 100 words as does the New Testament and 3.75 times as often as the Old Testament.[6]

Hildebrandt has helpfully categorized the direct references into four groups.[7] Examples for each of these can be readily supplied from the Book of Mormon as they surface naturally in the Nephite account without any obvious reference to their Old Testament parallels. I list each of those four categories below, together with selected Book of Mormon examples for each.

1 . The Creation of the Universe and Humankind

While the large number of Book of Mormon references to the Lord's role in the creation are mostly framed to teach humankind's dependence on him, there are a few passages that reflect the Old Testament understanding that the creation was accomplished through the Spirit of God. In his final sermon to his people, King Benjamin appears to invoke the ANE notion of creation of life by the breath or spirit of God: "If ye should serve him who hath created you from the beginning and art preserving you from day to day by lending you *breath* that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, … and yet would ye be unprofitable servants" (Mosiah 2:21).[8] We get a unique twist on the role of the Spirit of God in the creation of man when the Lord showed himself to the brother of Jared and explained: "All men were created in the beginning after mine own image. Behold, this body which ye now behold is *the body of my spirit*. And man have I created after *the body of my spirit*" (Ether 3:15–16). It may also be noted that the missionaries Ammon and Aaron were able to connect with their Lamanite converts by explaining that their belief in a Great Spirit that created all things is another version of the Nephite teaching that God created all things.[9]

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6. See the article reporting her dissertation findings in Lynne Hilton Wilson, "A New Pneumatology: Comparing Joseph Smith's Doctrine of the Spirit with His Contemporaries and the Bible," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (2012): 143.

7. The categories Hildebrandt formulates in *An Old Testament Theology*, p. 27, are derived from the examples he reviews on pp. 12–27. Transcription preferences vary among Hebraists, but to avoid confusion for readers, I will use only *rûah* in this paper, even when a quotation may have used something different.

8. Throughout this paper, quotations from the Book of Mormon text, including spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, will be taken from the most accurate critical text available — Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). Italics are not from the critical text but may be added for emphasis of words or phrases that are key to the discussions in this paper.

9. See Alma 18:24–28; 22:10–11. Without more information, it is not possible to determine how closely this relates to Old Testament or to Nephite cultural

2. The Establishment of and Subsequent Provisions for the People of God

The initial establishment of the Nephites as the Lord's covenant people under the leadership of Lehi and Nephi provides clear and extensive examples of their reliance on the Spirit of the Lord in that process, but later restorations provide additional examples. It begins with the initial visions in which Lehi was "overcome with the Spirit" and carried away in a vision and "filled with *the Spirit of the Lord*" (1 Nephi 1:7–14). When Lehi needed divine help to obtain the cooperation of his reluctant oldest sons, he was again "filled with the Spirit" before they could be convinced to return to Jerusalem for the plates of brass, which contained the words of the holy prophets that had "been delivered unto them by *the Spirit and power of God*" (1 Nephi 2:14; 3:20). Nephi tells how he "was *led by the Spirit*, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do," step by step in retrieving those plates, and how Lehi "was *filled with the Spirit*" when he received them (1 Nephi 4:6; 5:17). Later, Nephi's aggressive role in taking the lead of the founding generation is deeply resented by his older brothers. The patriarch Lehi defends Nephi and confirms the necessity of their obeying their younger sibling with this explanation:

> It must needs be that *the power of God* must be with him, even unto his commanding you that ye must obey. But behold, it was not him, but it was *the Spirit of the Lord* which was in him which opened his mouth to utterance, that he could not shut it (2 Nephi 1:27).

In these and other ways, the Spirit of the Lord works first through Lehi and then through his son Nephi to establish a new covenant like the one given to Abraham before them, which would identify their descendants as a covenant people of the Lord.

Given the history of Israel, Lehi and Nephi undoubtedly saw a clear type in their experience. Just as "God led the nation by the *rûah* through the leadership of Moses" out of Egypt and through 40 years of trials in the wilderness, so "Joshua was a man in whom was the *rûah* (Numbers 27:18)," and "the presence of the Spirit with Joshua provided him with wisdom and skill to function as a leader and administrator during the conquest period."[10] In numerous direct ways, Lehi is presented in the Book of Mormon as another Moses in bringing his people out of an apostate Jerusalem across the sea to a new promised land. And just as the Old Testament presents Joshua as another Moses, the Nephite text

understandings.

10. Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God*, 109.

does the same with Nephi. In both texts, the presence of the Spirit in these men's lives is credited for their success in establishing the Lord's covenant people in their promised lands.[11]

3. The Kingdom of God is Established and Promoted on Earth through … Spirit-appointed Individuals Who Are Enabled and Motivated for Their Tasks by the Spirit of God[12]

When Nephi's brothers refused to provide the labor necessary to build a ship and tried to drown Nephi in the sea, he was filled with the Spirit of God, and "they durst not do this lest they should wither before me, so powerful was *the Spirit of God*. And thus it had wrought upon them" (1 Nephi 17:52). The prophet Abinadi challenged the wicked king Noah and his council, thereby inspiring Alma and others to flee and form the church that would provide the impetus for the reorganization and revitalization of the entire Nephite people. He was protected as he attacked their wicked ways: "the people of king Noah durst not lay their hands on him, for *the Spirit of the Lord* was upon him" (Mosiah 13:5). The great successes of the sons of Helaman in their mission to reclaim the Lamanites were explained by reference to the way in which the Spirit of the Lord did work upon them (Mosiah 28:3).

4. Through the Spirit, Prophets Are Called, Inspired, Transported, Motivated, and Used by the *Rûah* to Accomplish Their Difficult Tasks

The accounts of the Nephite prophets are replete with examples of how they were inspired, motivated, and protected by the Spirit of the Lord. And just as the Spirit of the Lord transported Elijah from place to place in his service, so a later Nephi was transported to safety and from preaching to preaching:

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11. For the parallel comparison of Lehi and Nephi with Moses, see Noel B. Reynolds, "Lehi as Moses," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 9, no. 2 (2000): 26–35; and "The Israelite Background of Moses Typology in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005): 4–23.

12. In his own briefer treatment of this general topic, Anthony C. Thiselton advances this same category of manifestations of the Spirit of God, seeing it as "the most characteristic gift of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament." He further clarifies that "the gift of the Spirit is given to individuals only to promote *the welfare of the community* of Israel .… Although there are gifts for an individual at a particular moment in time, their ultimate function and purpose relate to the good of the community in a permanent way." Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit — In Biblical Teaching through the Centuries, and Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2012), 9.

But behold, the power of God was with him; and they could not take him to cast him into prison, for he was *taken by the Spirit* and conveyed away out of the midst of them. And it came to pass that thus he *did go forth in the Spirit* from multitude to multitude declaring the word of God (Helaman 10:16–17).

Similarly, Samuel the Lamanite's preaching and prophesying incited wicked Nephites to try to kill him. "But *the Spirit of the Lord* was with him, insomuch that they could not hit him with their stones neither with their arrows" (Helaman 16:2). Alma teaches the people of Gideon "according to the Spirit of God which is in me" (Alma 7:5), including the things which "the Spirit hath said . . . unto me" (Alma 7:9. Cf. vs. 8 and 13).

The Spirit(s) of Men

Another large and related topic that will not be undertaken in this paper focuses on the Nephite concepts related to the spiritual dimension of men and how these might relate to the culture of ancient Israel. Like the Old Testament writers, the Nephites used three principal terms when referring to matters of the human spirit — *spirit, heart*, and *soul*. For the most part, the hundreds of examples of Nephite usage seem to follow the Hebrew Bible patterns with each of these.[13] But some variations arise, most obviously in the teachings of Jacob and Alma, which deserve closer examination than can be included here.

Names or Labels that Refer to the Holy Ghost

It is instructive to look at the various names or labels used to refer to the Holy Ghost. There are seven such names addressed in the following five sections.

The Holy Ghost

Holy Ghost is clearly the preferred name for this divinity in the English Book of Mormon, occurring 94 times throughout the text. It occurs in the writings of the first generation of Nephite prophets 31 times, and is reported by Nephi to be the name the Son used twice in his explanations of the gospel to Nephi during the great vision received at the first camp

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13. For early examples for *heart* and *soul* see 1 Nephi 15; 2:11; 8:12; 11:23. For an extended exploration of the identity of heart and spirit in the Hebrew Bible, see John R. Levison, *Filled with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007), 29–31 and 65–67.

in the wilderness.[14] It occurs eight times in the first half of the Book of Alma But it is used most intensively (32 times) in the chapters containing the teachings of Jesus when he visited the Nephites after his resurrection. That intensity carries over into the final three books written by Mormon and his son Moroni — occurring 23 times.

The Spirit of God and the Spirit of the Lord

While we cannot know with certainty what Nephite or Hebrew words lie behind the 1829 English translation, it should be recognized that English translations of the Hebrew Bible do differentiate these labels according to the underlying Hebrew or Aramaic terminology. *Spirit of the Lord* is the standard translation for the 27 occurrences of *rûah yhwh,* and *spirit of God* is used for the Hebrew *rûah ʾĕlōhîm,* which occurs 15 times, and its Aramaic equivalent, which occurs five times. Bible translators and commentators do not usually find a substantive difference in meaning between the two labels and point to cultural differences of time and place to explain this textual variation.[15] As will be seen below, this convention for Bible translation may not apply to the English Book of Mormon.

In some of these Book of Mormon passages, *the Spirit of God* is transparently interchangeable with the even more frequently used phrase *the Spirit of the Lord*. The phrase *the Spirit of God* occurs 20 times and most notably in the writings of Nephi, Alma, and Mormon.[16] Shortly after telling how in his great vision he "beheld the *Spirit of God*, that it wrought upon other Gentiles," Nephi reports that he "beheld the *Spirit of the Lord*, that it was upon the Gentiles" (1 Nephi 13:13, 15). Alma displays the same terminological indifference in using both these names for the Holy Ghost, as can be readily seen when reading the references in the previous footnote (#16) and the account describing Ammon's teaching of

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14. 2 Nephi 31:12, 14. In the same passage, Nephi demonstrates that he has adopted this terminology in his own teaching and summarizing of the gospel or doctrine of Christ. See 2 Nephi 31:8, 13, 17, 21; and 2 Nephi 32:2, 3, 5.

15. Objection to this standard assumption in Old Testament interpretations has been raised by Daniel I. Block in his article, "Empowered by the Spirit of God: The Holy Spirit in the Histographic [*sic*] writings of the Old Testament," *Southern Baptist Theological Journal* 1 (Spring 1997): 42–61, where he points out that "in many instances it is difficult to tell whether the *rûah* spoken of is *the* Holy Spirit or another spirit at Yahweh's disposal" (p. 43). See the examples he provides on p. 51. (The author and journal editors probably intended to use *Historiographic* in the title.)

16. Cf. 1 Nephi 14:12, 13; 17:47, 52; 19:12; Alma 5:46, 47; 7:5; 9:21; 13:4; 18:16; 24:30; 30:42; 38:6; 61:15; Helaman 5:45; 3 Nephi 7:21, 22; Moroni 10:8-9.

the Lamanite king. Ammon is described as "being filled with the *Spirit of God*," and then he sees "the *Spirit of the Lord* poured out according to his prayers upon the Lamanites" (Alma 18:16; 19:14). In his teaching of his sons, Alma tells Shiblon that "it is the *Spirit of God* which is in me which maketh these things known unto me." And then he tells Corianton what "the *Spirit of the Lord* doth say unto me" (Alma 38:6; 39:12). Finally, it should be recognized that Moroni's listing of the spiritual gifts that was cited in the previous paragraph to demonstrate the interchangeability of *the Spirit of Christ* and *the Spirit of God* in his writing was introduced by Moroni's comprehensive statement that all these things are given to men "by *the power of the Holy Ghost*," suggesting these other names are alternative ways of referring to the Holy Ghost:

> [He] will manifest the truth of it unto you by *the power of the Holy Ghost*. And by *the power of the Holy Ghost* ye may know the truth of all things. And whatsoever thing is good is just and true .… And ye may know that he is by *the power of the Holy Ghost*. Wherefore I would exhort you that ye deny not *the power of God* .… And again I exhort you, my brethren, that ye deny not the gifts of God, for they are many and they come from the same God (Moroni 10:4–8).

The name *the Spirit of the Lord* occurs twice as often as *the Spirit of God* in the text and is even more obviously an alternate name for the Holy Ghost. As will become evident in several of the discussions below, the same functions are assigned to both, and in a number of its occurrences *the Spirit of the Lord* is explicitly linked to *the Holy Ghost*. However, one series of these references appears to be an exception and requires separate treatment. Examples of explicit equivalence include the following:

1. In his own late prophecies, Nephi foretells a future struggle for the souls of men between the devil and *the Spirit of the Lord* in which a future generation of the Nephites will yield to the devil, in contrast to a generation of the Gentiles who will much later be convinced "that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God … by the power of *the Holy Ghost*" (2 Nephi 26:12-13).

2. In the opening page of the Book of Mormon, Lehi is "filled with the Spirit of the Lord" as he reads from a book in his vision. Similarly, "the Spirit of the Lord" came upon

Benjamin's listeners, "and they were filled with joy." In seven similar passages, it is the Holy Ghost that fills recipients.[17]

3. After Benjamin's sermon, the people tell him "the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent" has wrought a mighty change in their hearts. In Moroni's addendum to his father's abridgment, he speaks of both the converted Lamanites and of all Nephites baptized into the church as having been wrought upon and changed or cleansed by the Holy Ghost.[18]

4. Seven times, the text speaks of *the Spirit of the Lord* being in a person as an explanation for spiritual events and changes. Four other passages point to *the Holy Ghost* being in someone to explain similar events.[19]

5. Ammon reported "seeing *the Spirit of the Lord* poured out … upon the Lamanites" as they were converted. Similarly, in his visit to the Nephites, Jesus prophesies of a distant future "pouring out of *the Holy Ghost*" upon the Gentiles.[20]

6. Ammon also had reported how he and his brother missionaries preached the word of God at all the synagogues and assemblies of the Amlicites and the Lamanites as "they were *led by the Spirit of the Lord.*" In his final addendum describing the manner of managing Nephite worship in the church, Moroni describes the conduct of their meetings: "For as the power of *the Holy Ghost led* them whether to preach or exhort or to pray or to supplicate or to sing, even so it was done."[21]

7. The writings of Nephi and the Book of Mosiah speak several times of *the Spirit of the Lord being upon someone* as a way of explaining how they were blessed as a convert or magnified as a servant of God. In six other passages, Nephi, Jesus Christ, and Mormon speak of *the Holy Ghost being upon someone* with similar effects.[22]

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17. Cf. 1 Nephi 1:12 and Mosiah 4:3 with Alma 8:30; 36:24; 3 Nephi 12:6; 19:13; 26:17; 30:12; and Moroni 8:26.

18. Cf. Mosiah 5:2 with Ether 12:14 and Moroni 6:4.

19. Cf. 1 Nephi 15:12; 2 Nephi 1:27; 4:12; Words of Mormon 1:7; Mosiah 2:36; Alma 11:22; and Ether 12:2 with Alma 39:6; Ether 12:41; Moroni 3:4, and 7:32.

20. Cf. Alma 19:14 and 3 Nephi 20:27.

21. Alma 21:16; Moroni 6:9.

22. Cf. 1 Nephi 13:15; 2 Nephi 21:2; Mosiah 43; 13:5, and 18:13 with 1 Nephi 11:27; 12:7, 2 Nephi 31:8; 3 Nephi 19:13, 20:27; and Mormon 1:14.

While the foregoing examples are not intended to provide an exhaustive list of phrasings in the Book of Mormon text where *Holy Ghost* and *Spirit of the Lord* are used interchangeably, they are more than sufficient to demonstrate that the writers of this text across the full Nephite dispensation were not signifying meaningful differences by invoking one or the other term. Some writers may have preferred one or the other phrasing, but others have used both in their writings. The argument of the paper to this point is that the potential for different interpretations for *Spirit of God*, *Spirit of the Lord*, and *Holy Ghost* is not substantial and that the three titles do appear always to have the same referent in this text.

The Holy Spirit

Only two other names are used formally as accepted equivalents of *Holy Ghost*. At the end of the Nephite dispensation, Moroni provides the only Book of Mormon instance of the New Testament name *Comforter* for the Holy Ghost: "And because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the *Holy Ghost*, which *Comforter* filleth with hope and perfect love" (Moroni 8:26). *Holy Spirit,* more frequently used as an alternative name, occurs 16 times. Three of these make the equivalence of the names explicit. Nephi uses both in explaining the effect of the Holy Ghost on the human heart:

> "For when a man speaketh by the power of the *Holy Ghost*, the power of the *Holy Ghost* carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men. But behold, there are many that harden their hearts against the *Holy Spirit*, that it hath no place in them." (2 Nephi 33:1–2).

Jacob equates rejection of the *Holy Ghost* with quenching the *Holy Spirit*.[23] And Alma substitutes *Holy Spirit* for *Holy Ghost* in a standard listing of the three divinities in a reference to the scene of the final judgment: "the bar of Christ the Son and God the Father and the *Holy Spirit* — which is one Eternal God —" (Alma 11:44). Thirteen other references by Nephi, Jarom, Benjamin, Alma, and Mormon are consistent with these but do not make explicit that they are using the name *Holy Spirit* as an alternate to *Holy Ghost*.[24] Given the translation history, it is not possible to determine how many Nephite terms lie behind these

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23. Jacob 6:8.
24. 1 Nephi 2:17; 2 Nephi 2:28; Jarom 1:4; Mosiah 3:19; Alma 5:46 (twice), 5:54, 7:16, 11:44, 13:28, 18:34, 31:36; Helaman 5:45; and Moroni 8:23.

three English titles in the translation. But clearly Nephites did not use the various titles to indicate a belief in a multiplicity of divinities.

The Spirit

Probably self-evident for most readers is that the abbreviated term *the Spirit* (with or without capitalization) also occurs as a way of referring to the Holy Ghost. By my count, this shorthand label is used 105 times throughout the text — more than any of the other titles. This count does not include the ambiguous occurrences in 1 Nephi 11–14 that will be discussed separately. It does include 28 occurrences in phrases such as "the spirit of revelation" or "the spirit of prophecy" that Skousen chose not to capitalize.[25] But it seems usually to be a shorthand reference to the Holy Ghost, for the context and phrasing is almost always similar or identical to the contexts and phrasings of the other terms discussed above.

The Spirit or Light of Christ

At the end of his late appendages to his father's abridgment, Moroni inserts a sermon that Mormon had given at some previous assembly of the Nephite faithful. On that occasion, Mormon introduced unprecedented terminology when he taught:

> For behold, my brethren, it is given unto you to judge, that ye may know good from evil. And the way to judge is as plain, that ye may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night. For behold, *the Spirit of Christ* is given to every man that they may know good from evil.

> Wherefore I shew unto you the way to judge. For every thing which inviteth to do good and persuadeth to believe in Christ is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ. Wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God (Moroni 7:15–16).

Both here and in the closing chapter where Moroni himself uses the phrase one more time, it seems they are both using *the Spirit of Christ* as an alternate name for the Holy Ghost. As Mormon told the people, the Spirit of Christ was "sent forth by the power and gift of Christ," echoing language used

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25. All editions of the Book of Mormon have had to deal with the fact that the original manuscript did not include capitalization except for proper names. Skousen does explain his rationale for capitalizing references to deity but does not deal explicitly with the choice not to capitalize many occurrences of *the spirit*. These would seem to be occurrences where the text is not obviously referring to a person. See his prefatory discussion in Skousen, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text*, xli.

throughout the Book of Mormon in reference to the Holy Ghost.[26] In the same passage, Mormon went on to employ yet another synonymous phrase:

> And now my brethren, seeing that ye know the light by which ye may judge, which light is *the light of Christ*, see that ye do not judge wrongfully; for with that same judgment which ye judge, ye shall also be judged.
>
> Wherefore I beseech of you, brethren, that ye should search diligently in *the light of Christ* that ye may know good from evil. And if ye will lay hold upon every good thing and condemn it not, ye certainly will be a child of Christ (Moroni 7:18–19).

But this "light of Christ" is also described as performing functions usually attributed to the Holy Ghost in Nephite discourse.[27] Moroni's only invocation of *the Spirit of Christ* comes in his discussion of the spiritual gifts given to them by "the Spirit of God," which he concludes by saying, "And all these gifts comes by the Spirit of Christ" (Moroni 10:8–17).

Functions of the Holy Ghost

Through the course of the Book of Mormon, several distinguishable functions for the Holy Ghost are identified. From the opening pages, the Holy Ghost plays a central role in bringing revelations and prophecies to the Nephite prophets and in softening their hearts that they might believe. In particular, the Holy Ghost brings the testimony of Christ and witnesses of the Father and the Son. The Holy Ghost also plays a powerful role in the conversion process as it brings the remission of sins and a spiritual rebirth to those who will sincerely repent. In such examples, the Spirit is "poured out" on its recipients.[28] And as the new converts take up the path that leads to eternal life, they are told it is the Holy Ghost that "will shew unto you all things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:5) as they "endure to the end."

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26. For example, see 1 Nephi 10:17, 13:35–37; 2 Nephi 28:26; Jacob 6:8 and 3 Nephi 29:6, which refer to "the gift of God," "the gift of the Holy Ghost," or "the gift and power of the Holy Ghost."

27. Mormon's lone reference does not provide much leverage for an engagement with the discussions of "the light of Christ" that have evolved in modern Latter-day Saint discourse and that are summarized in C. Kent Dunford, "Light of Christ," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 834.

28. Cf. Mosiah 4:20, 18:10–13, 25:24; Alma 8:10, 16:16, 19:14; Helaman 6:36; and 3 Nephi 20:27.

Guiding the Faithful and Enduring to the End

Nephi described the gospel process in dialogical terms. The process begins with an invitation to repent, to abandon one's current path in life, and to take up the covenant path. That invitation may come from a variety of possible agents and may be accompanied by a spiritual witness. The recipient can respond in one of two ways — by humbling him or herself, repenting, and choosing to be baptized or by hardening his or her heart and rejecting the invitation. The person who responds positively and sincerely is promised the remission of sins, which the Father then sends "by fire, and by the Holy Ghost." As Nephi explains, that person has thereby entered into "the straight and narrow path" that leads to life eternal but can realize that goal only by "enduring to the end." Walking that path then requires continuing the dialogue in daily obedience to the guidance provided by the Holy Ghost — which, as Nephi explains in the previous quotation, "will shew unto you all things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:5). The Holy Ghost or the Spirit is promised as a divine presence to illuminate that covenant path and to guide choices that will enable the new convert to stay on that straight and narrow path and reach its promised end successfully.

The Remission of Sins

Although the weight of traditional Christian teaching links baptism directly to the remission of sins in a mechanical way, Book of Mormon writers never say that baptism can wash away sins.[29] Rather, Nephi in his original teaching of the doctrine of Christ as taught to him by the Father and the Son states clearly that the remission of sins comes through the reception of the Holy Ghost and after baptism by water. And at the very end of the Nephite dispensation, Moroni describes the practice and experience of the Nephite church in the same way:

> For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water, and *then cometh a remission of your sins by fire, and by the Holy Ghost.* And then are ye in this straight and narrow path which leads to eternal life (2 Nephi 31:17–18).

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29. Significant New Testament scholarship rejects that standard view. See, e.g., James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 15–17, where he states flatly that "the very idea of a rite which effected forgiveness was wholly foreign to the prophetic genius of the OT" — before going on to show why he sees that idea as problematic for the New Testament as well.

> And after that they had been received unto baptism and were *wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost*, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ (Moroni 6:4).

While it may be true that much Latter-day Saint discourse follows the standard Christian interpretation on this point, the Book of Mormon never wavers in linking the remission of sins uniquely to the Holy Ghost. Baptism of water is consistently characterized as converts witnessing to the Father that they have repented and are willing to take the name of Christ upon themselves and keep his commandments as a preparation and prerequisite for the remission of sins.[30] The decision to be baptized belongs to the convert. The decision to accept the repentance of the convert as sincere belongs to the Father. The spiritual experience associated with the remission of sins goes by many descriptive titles, including *the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost* and *spiritual rebirth*.

Born of the Spirit

In the original account of his conversion experience, it was reported that Alma$_2$ stood and spoke:

A I have repented of my sins and have been *redeemed of the Lord*.
B   Behold, I am *born of the Spirit*.
C   And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that *all mankind*,
C*   yea, men and women — *all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people* —
B*   must be *born again*, yea, *born of God*,
A* changed from their carnal and fallen state to a state of righteousness,
     being *redeemed of God*,
     becoming his sons and daughters (ballast line) (Mosiah 27:24–25).

In this remarkable chiasm, Alma captures most of the essential elements that came to be associated with the Nephite and Lamanite experience of spiritual rebirth. The last two-thirds of this short rhetorical unit quotes what Alma heard the Lord saying to him and shows us the general principles from which Alma extracted the succinct two-clause description of his own experience. He quotes the Lord saying each element to him twice in parallel lines — providing simultaneously both emphasis and elaboration on each of the points that echo Alma's opening lines. Other Nephite conversion experiences will also include references

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30. For an extended discussion of this point and the relevant scriptural references, see Noel B. Reynolds, "Understanding Christian Baptism through the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 51, no. 2 (2012): 5–17.

to repentance, remission of sins, and the role of the Spirit in their being born of God or just born again. Alma has also infused this brief account with the gospel covenant context by informing his readers how he had finally accepted the divine invitation in his "carnal and fallen state" to repent and enter the true path (covenant), allowing the Lord, now his kinsman redeemer by covenant, to raise him to a state of righteousness as his son by covenant.[31]

One additional message built into this brief account is the Lord's explanation that Alma's particular experience is available universally to all men and women — all kindreds, tongues, and people — as the way each can be individually redeemed to a state of righteousness, becoming thereby a covenant son or daughter of the Lord. While the Old Testament repeatedly shows how God establishes and maintains his covenant with Israel as a people through the power of the Spirit, this Book of Mormon account brings the covenant analysis down to the level of individuals and explains the direct role of the Spirit in their experiences as they take on the covenant offered to them by Jesus Christ. In several parallel events reported throughout the Book of Mormon, people are described as groups having the Spirit poured out upon them or as individuals being born again in a conversion event. In these cases, the Holy Ghost is also described as bringing joy and relief from spiritual suffering as it also brings the remission of sins.

Nephi had reported his own original conversion in far less dramatic or theologically developed language, describing how after observing the rebellion of his older brothers against his father's revelations, he had prayed "to know the mysteries of God." The result was that the Lord "did visit me and did soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father … the things which the Lord had manifested unto me *by his Holy Spirit*" (1 Nephi 2:16–17). Later, after receiving his own version of the great vision given to Lehi, Nephi was able to explain this process in terms of the gospel taught to him by the Father and the Son: "For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water, and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire, and by the Holy Ghost" (2 Nephi 31:17).

The most expansive and theologically developed account of this spiritual rebirth is recorded in the chapters that report King Benjamin's

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31. For a detailed discussion of this covenant language in an Old Testament context see Noel B. Reynolds, "Covenant Language in Biblical Religions and the Book of Mormon" (working paper, July 17, 2019), which will be available online at https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ until it is published in final form.

final sermon to his people. After he taught them about the coming of Christ and his atonement and the inevitable consequences of their sins, the people had fallen to the earth,

> for the fear of the Lord had come upon them. And they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth, and they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins and our hearts may be purified, for we believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God, who created heaven and earth and all things, who shall come down among the children of men. And it came to pass that after they had spoken these words, *the Spirit of the Lord came upon them*, and they were *filled with joy*, having received *a remission of their sins* and having *peace of conscience* because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ, which should come, according to the words which king Benjamin had spoken unto them (Mosiah 4:1–3).

After Benjamin went on to explain the requirements of faithful obedience to Christ for the rest of their lives, he urged them to always remember this experience by which they "have come to *the knowledge of the glory of God*, … have *tasted of his love* and received a *remission of [their] sins*," which in turn had caused "such *exceeding great joy* in your souls." He then promised them that if they would remember these things daily "standing steadfastly in the faith,"

> ye shall *always rejoice* and be *filled with the love of God* and always retain a *remission of your sins*; and ye shall *grow in the knowledge of the glory of him* that created you, or in *the knowledge of that which is just and true* (Mosiah 4:11–12).

Benjamin again turned to an exposition of the many changes they would need to make in their lives if they would serve the Lord faithfully (Mosiah 4:13–30). And again, the people responded, telling him they believed "all the words which [he] had spoken," saying,

> And also we know of their surety and truth because of *the Spirit of the Lord* Omnipotent, which hath *wrought a mighty change in us or in our hearts*, that we have no more disposition to do evil but to do good continually. And we ourselves also through *the infinite goodness of God* and *the manifestations of his Spirit* have great views of that which is to come .… And we are *willing to enter into a covenant* with our God to do his will and to

be obedient to his commandments in all things that he shall command us all the remainder of our days (Mosiah 5:2–3, 5).

In his response, Benjamin reiterated the covenantal structure of this experience in which they have been "spiritually begotten" as "children of Christ":

> The *covenant* which ye have made is a *righteous covenant*. And now because of the covenant which ye have made, ye shall be called *the children of Christ*, his sons and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath *spiritually begotten* you, for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore ye are *born of him* and have become his sons and his daughters (Mosiah 5:6–7).

Other less developed examples of this spiritual experience are reported throughout Nephite history.[32] In most of these, the role of the Spirit is mentioned prominently for bringing humility and meekness, the remission of sins, peace of conscience, joy, love, and the knowledge of the glory of God. From Mormon's historical perspective, these events of actual encounters with the Holy Ghost in the lives of the people seem to take precedence over those occasions when the gift of the Holy Ghost may have been formally conferred on new converts after baptism. Mormon summarizes all this in his final comments at the end of the Nephite dispensation:

> And the firstfruits of repentance is baptism. And baptism cometh by faith unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments bringeth *remission of sins*; and the remission of sins bringeth *meekness and lowliness of heart*. And because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh *the visitation of the Holy Ghost*, which Comforter *filleth with hope and perfect love*, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God (Moroni 8:25–26).

These accounts of spiritual rebirth describing the experiences of individuals who have engaged the gospel of Jesus Christ by repenting and covenanting with him to obey his commandments throughout their lives have little direct parallel in the Old Testament. The Nephite accounts speak repeatedly of converts who are "filled with the Spirit," or "filled with joy." At their baptism, Alma's converts "came forth out of the water rejoicing, being filled with the Spirit" (Mosiah 18:14).

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32. See Enos 1:1–8; Alma 19:6, 12–14, 29–34; 22:13–18; 36:5, 16–26; and Helaman 5:42–49.

The persecutors of Nephi and Lehi in their prison were transformed by a divine intervention. And after repenting and calling upon God, "they were filled with that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory. And behold, *the Holy Spirit of God* did come down from heaven and did enter into their hearts. And they were filled as if with fire" (Helaman 5:44–45). After the Lamanite king described his vision of his Redeemer, he sank down with joy, "being *overpowered by the Spirit*," which caused the queen, Ammon, and the other Lamanites in their presence to sink down as well, being "*overpowered with joy*" Alma 19:13–14). That joy is explained variously as a response to the remission of sins which has been received, to the knowledge of Christ's atonement and promises of redemption, or to a knowledge of the eventual resurrection. As a well-known class of events, they clearly informed the Nephite understanding of the Spirit of the Lord and the effect it could have in the lives of the people of the Lord.

The Spirit Will Be Poured Out from Heaven to Restore the Covenant People

The Old Testament prophets repeatedly spoke of a future when Israel would be restored to its former blessings as the Spirit would initiate a transformation in his covenant people.[33] These prophecies "portray metaphorically the blessings brought by the Spirit just as the rain brings about the fructification and fertility of the earth." From the time of Moses, the *rûah* was associated "with the pouring out of oil in the ritual of anointing."[34] Hildebrandt summarizes these prophecies of a time when Israel will be restored to the covenant: The Spirit will transform both the barren land and the human hearts. But "in order to experience the restoration and renewal prophesied, however, the people were called on to respond in repentance, faith, and covenant loyalty."[35]

In the Book of Mormon this same language also appears repeatedly but usually with reference to real-time events in the lives of Nephite writers. Jacob records that the Lord God "poured in his Spirit into my soul," thereby enabling him to confound the words of Sherem (Jacob 7:8). Benjamin explained the great spiritual experience of his repentant people in terms of

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33. See, e.g., Isaiah 32:15, 44:3, Ezekiel 38:29; Joel 2:28-9.

34. Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God*, 92. See Exodus 28:41 and 1 Samuel 10:1.

35. Ibid., 91. See Herbert M. Wolf, "The Transcendent Nature of Covenant Curse Reversals," in *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison*, ed. Avraham Gileadi (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 319–25, for a useful and contextualized analysis of these prophecies.

the Lord pouring out his Spirit upon them, causing that their hearts should be filled with joy (Mosiah 4:20). Similarly, Alma₁ asked his new converts,

> What have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have *entered into a covenant with him*, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may *pour out his Spirit* more abundantly upon you? (Mosiah 18:10)

Then as he performed the first baptism, Alma prayed, "O Lord, *pour out thy Spirit upon they servant,* and once "*the Spirit of the Lord was upon him*," he performed the baptism, saying, "Helam, I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God, as a testimony that ye have entered into a covenant to serve him until you are dead as to the mortal body; and *may the Spirit of the Lord be poured out upon you*" (Mosiah 18:12–13).

There are many more examples. Faced with spiritually defiant apostates in Ammonihah, Alma₂ sought "God in mighty prayer, that he would *pour out his Spirit* upon the people … that he might baptize them unto repentance" (Alma 8:10). As Alma and Amulek subsequently undertook to establish the church throughout the Nephites' land, "the Lord did *pour out his Spirit* on all the face of the land for to prepare the minds of the children of men, or to prepare their hearts to receive the word" (Alma 16:16). Similarly, the missionary Ammon rejoiced to see "*the Spirit of the Lord poured out* according to his prayers upon the Lamanites," demonstrating to him that "his arm is extended to all people" (Alma 19: 14, 36). Later, when the Nephites were dwindling in unbelief, "the Lord began *to pour out his Spirit* upon the Lamanites because of their easiness and willingness to believe in his word" (Helaman 6:36).

The Spirit of Prophecy and the Spirit of Revelation

While it is evident to readers of the Old Testament that both prophecy and revelation have a spiritual source and character, the Nephite prophets are frequently explicit in attributing divine communications to "the power of the Holy Ghost."[36] In the Hebrew Bible, it is "not until the exilic and postexilic

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36. 3 Nephi 29:6. Cf. 1 Nephi 10:17–22; 2 Nephi 26:12–13. Old Testament studies have produced quite a range of interpretations of the role of the spirit in revelation and prophecy since Hermann Gunkel first overturned the apple cart and challenged a long history of interpretation grounded in standard Christian theology. See Hermann Gunkel, *The Influence of the Holy Spirit: The Popular View of the Apostolic Age and the Teaching of the Apostle Paul*, trans. Roy A. Harrisville and Phillip A. Quanbeck II (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979). Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel: From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, trans. and ed. Moshe Greenberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 97–101, does an

period" that "prophecy is viewed in retrospect as wrought by the spirit."[37] As Alma undertakes the work of revitalizing the Nephites spiritually, he offers his own experience to support his teachings and to show others how they may acquire the same spiritual knowledge he has been given:

I   They are *made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God*. Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself.

   A   And now I do know of myself that they are *true,*

   B   for the Lord God hath made them *manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit*;

   C   and this is *the spirit of revelation* which is in me.

II.   And moreover I say unto you that as it has thus been *revealed unto me* that the words which have been spoken by our fathers are true,

   C*   even so according to *the spirit of prophecy* which is in me,

   B*   which is also by the *manifestation of the Spirit of God*,

   A*   I say unto you that I know of myself that whatsoever I shall say unto you concerning that which is to come is *true* (Alma 5:46–8)

In this compound and parallel account, Alma testifies both to the truth of the revelations given to him personally and to the truth of those received and written by "our fathers." All were manifestations of "the Holy Spirit of God," and are therefore true. He refers to the spirit in this function as both "the spirit of revelation" and as "the spirit of prophecy which is in me." Key terms in this statement point to the structure of a recurring discourse in the Book of Mormon about spiritual knowledge.

The frequently occurring phrases *the spirit of prophecy* and *the spirit of revelation* are arresting because they do not occur in the Old Testament and appear to be original formulations introduced by Nephite prophets of the first generation. Nephi taught that "the words of Isaiah … are plain unto all they that are filled with *the spirit of prophecy*" before going on to offer his own "*prophecy according to the Spirit* which is in

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excellent job of distinguishing Israelite understandings of the spirit and its action from the Greek understanding of mantics and spiritual frenzy, two understandings which had been conflated in some biblical scholarship.

37.   F. W. Horn, "Holy Spirit," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, trans. Dietlinde M. Elliott (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:263.

me" (2 Nephi 25:4). Nephi defined the break-off group that followed him as those that "believed in the warnings and the *revelations of God*; wherefore they did hearken unto my words" (2 Nephi 5:6). His brother Jacob reports twice that the Nephites in his day had "many *revelations* and *the spirit of (much) prophecy*" (Jacob 1:6, 4:6).

This seemingly redundant linkage of *revelation* and *prophecy* shows up repeatedly, and by the third Nephite century may have acquired a common biblical rhetorical form that occurs a dozen times throughout the text. In the seven-sentence transmittal note written in the sixth Nephite generation, Abinadom again links the two, but in a way that indicates the preservation of some distinctiveness of meaning: "And I know of no *revelation* save that which has been written, neither *prophecy*" (Omni 1:11).

By the time of Alma in the sixth Nephite century, these two terms are regularly conjoined in the common rhetorical figure of *hendiadys*. In the late 20th century, scholars came to appreciate the frequent appearance of this figure in the Hebrew Bible, leading some to claim that Hebrew literature reflects its use more intensively than does any other ancient literary tradition. In *hendiadys*, two related nouns or verbs are conjoined — usually by *and* — in identical grammatical forms or structures. While modern readers might simply see these as synonyms or appositions, this rhetorical figure invited ancient readers to see these conjunctions conveying a single, more complex concept that incorporates the full range of meaning of both terms. In another paper I have shown that the Nephites used this rhetorical technique extensively in their discourse about repentance.[38] Here is a list of these conjunctions of the spirit of *revelation* and *prophecy* in the Book of Mormon:

1. "According to the spirit of *revelation* and *prophecy*" (Alma 4:20)
2. "According to the spirit of *revelation* and *prophecy*" (Alma 8:24)
3. "Having *the spirit of prophecy* and *the spirit of revelation*" (Alma 9:21)
4. "They had *the spirit of prophecy* and *the spirit of revelation*" (Alma 17:3).
5. "According to the spirit of *revelation* and *prophecy*" (Alma 23:6)
6. "According to the spirit of *prophecy* and *revelation*" (Alma 43:2)
7. "Denying the spirit *of prophecy* and *of revelation*" (Helaman 4:12)

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38. See Noel B. Reynolds, "The Language of Repentance in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 29, 2020 (forthcoming), which is available online temporarily as an unedited working paper, Brigham Young University, Provo, 2018, 27–28, https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/facpub/2325.

8. "To disbelieve in *the spirit of prophecy* and in *the spirit of revelation*" (Helaman 4:23)
9. "That had the spirit *of revelation* and also *of prophecy*" (3 Nephi 3:19)
10 "Worketh *by revelation* or *by prophecy*" (3 Nephi 29:6)
11. "There is no *revelations* nor *prophecies*" (Mormon 9:7)
12. "And also by the spirit *of prophecy* and *of revelation*" (title page)

Two of these *hendiadyses* are found in speeches of Alma, and the rest occur in narratives provided by Mormon as abridging editor or his son Moroni in the title page. A similar logic occurs in two other passages by Alma and Mormon respectively, in which larger parallel constructions accomplish the same conjunction of language and meanings. The most elaborate is the passage quoted above — Alma 5:46–47. The second is Mormon's description of Alma's preaching to the people of Gideon, which puts the revelations of the fathers and of Alma himself into a parallel construction with the spirit of prophecy.

> And Alma went and began to declare the word of God unto the church which was established in the valley of Gideon, according to *the revelation of the truth of the word* which had been spake by his fathers and according to *the spirit of prophecy* which was in him — according to the testimony of Jesus Christ the Son of God, which should come for to redeem his people from their sins — and the holy order by which he was called.[39] (Alma 6:8)

The most convincing explanation for the Nephites' rhetorical conjunction of *revelation* and *prophecy* rests in a comparison of the Hebrew vocabulary that could underlie each of these terms. The Hebrew word for *revelation* derives from the verb *to reveal* (*gālâ*), which in this context refers to the self-revelation of the Lord to men. *Prophecy* (*nebû'â*), on the other hand, can refer either to the teachings or commandments the Lord gave to prophets for communication to his people or to the predictions of future events featuring principally the future coming and atonement of Jesus Christ, as in Alma 6:8 quoted above, but also describing what might follow from the community's obedience or failures to obey the revealed instructions. By joining these terms in the rhetorical figure of *hendiadys* or

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39. In this passage Alma explicitly equates the spirit of prophecy with "the testimony of Jesus Christ the Son of God, which should come for to redeem his people." As already explained in this paper, one of the primary functions of the Holy Ghost in Nephite scripture is to "witness of the Father and the Son" (2 Nephi 31:18). Most Book of Mormon prophecies focus on the coming Christ. Alma's specification is echoed by Joseph Smith in Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938), 160.

in other typical Hebrew parallel structures, the Nephites are claiming any use of one term implicitly brings with it the meaning of the other. Jesus Christ has revealed himself to many prophets — giving them a preview of his ministry and atonement — and teaching them his gospel, which they in turn were instructed to teach to the people. These same prophets have also been shown what will happen to the people as they accept or reject the gospel in present and future generations.

This explanation works well in accounts of Nephite prophets of their experience with the divine. Beginning on the first page of the Book of Mormon, Lehi has a vision of God on his throne and is commanded to warn the people to repent, with attendant accounts of the disasters that await the unrepentant. Immediately after Nephi's account of Lehi's great vision, Nephi tells us that his father shared these prophecies with his sons and taught them "concerning the gospel which should be preached among the Jews" (1 Nephi 10:11). Similarly, Nephi has a vision of Christ and receives prophecies to share with his people — as well as the gospel or doctrine of Christ, which shows all people how they can get on the straight and narrow path that leads back to God.[40] Alma claimed to have seen a heavenly scene identical or similar to the one described by Lehi. Nephi explains that he includes excerpts from the writings of his brother Jacob and Isaiah in his own account because, like himself, they have both seen the Lord.[41] For the Nephites, prophecy comes through those to whom the Lord has revealed himself in vision, by his voice, or through manifestations of the Holy Ghost.

The Mysteries of God

The Nephites also display a developed discourse about the *mysteries of God* that will be "revealed" or "unfolded" to the faithful — a discourse that seems to be more assumed than explicated in the Old Testament. In the opening sentence of his writings, Nephi contextualizes his writing project, explaining that he had been "highly favored of the Lord in all [his] days" because he had received "great knowledge of the goodness and *the mysteries* of God" (1 Nephi 1:1). While the term *mystery* in the Greek New Testament may often refer to religious rituals, in the Book of Mormon it refers consistently to the things of God that can be known only by revelation.

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40. See the full discussion in Noel B. Reynolds, "The Gospel According to Nephi: An Essay on 2 Nephi 31," *Religious Educator* 16, no. 2 (2015): 51–75.

41. 2 Nephi 11:2–3.

> [A]fter I Nephi having heard all the words of my father concerning the things which he saw in a vision and also the things which he spake *by the power of the Holy Ghost*, … I Nephi was desirous also that I might see and hear and know of these things *by the power of the Holy Ghost*, which is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him .… And the way is prepared for all men from the foundation of the world if it so be that they repent and come unto him. For he that diligently seeketh shall find, and *the mysteries of God* shall be unfolded to them by *the power of the Holy Ghost* (1 Nephi 10:17–19).

Jacob also described "the depths of *the mysteries* of [the Lord]" as "unsearchable" and recognized that "it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. And no man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him" (Jacob 4:8). The Nephite prophets mention at least 30 times these mysteries, secrets, words, or things of God that can be "revealed," "unfolded," "made known," or "made manifest" to men.[42] These revelations and prophecies come "by the power of the Holy Ghost" to those who demonstrate faith and have repented of their sins, and who diligently seek. As Alma explained, "There is none that knoweth these things save it be the penitent. Yea, he that repenteth and exerciseth faith and bringeth forth good works and prayeth continually without ceasing, unto such it is given to know the mysteries of God. Yea, unto such it shall be given to reveal things which never have been revealed" (Alma 26:21–22).

Other Issues Related to the Holy Ghost

There are other issues related to the Holy Ghost which we should also consider. I will address these in the following sections.

The Power of the Holy Ghost

We have only one clear example in the Old Testament of a prophet claiming to exercise his responsibility by virtue of this spiritually given power. In Micah 3:8 we read: "But truly I am *full of power by the spirit of the Lord*, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin."[43] In contrast, the Nephite writers

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42. Examples of this usage include 1 Nephi 1:1, 2:16, 10:17–19; 2 Nephi 27:10–11, 22, 30:16–18; Jacob 4:8–9, 15–18; Jarom 1:2; Mosiah 1:2–5, 2:9, 8:17, 19–20; Alma 5:46–48, 10:5, 12:9–11, 26:21–22, 37:4, 10–12, 40:3; Mormon 5:8–9.

43. While this shows a compatibility between our Old Testament and the Book of Mormon usage, the Nephites would not have known about late prophets like Micah from the plates of brass.

explicitly cite *the power of the Holy Ghost* 29 times as the means by which they were cleansed from sin, received divine knowledge or were able to perform certain functions. Nephi sets the pattern by pointing to this power as the means through which men can see, hear, and know the mysteries and precepts of God, which are "unfolded to diligent seekers by "*the power of the Holy Ghost*." Further, "angels speak by *the power of the Holy Ghost*," and Jesus Christ will manifest himself to the Gentiles and to all believers by the same power.[44] Jacob explains the effectiveness of inspired speaking, saying that "*the power of the Holy Ghost* carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men." But he recognizes that this power does not overwhelm their agency when he laments that "there are many that harden their hearts against the Holy Spirit, that it hath no place in them." In so doing, they "deny the good word of Christ and *the power of God and the gift of the Holy Ghost* and quench the Holy Spirit" (Jacob 6:7–8). When Jacob confronted Sherem with his own testimony of the atonement of Christ, Sherem demanded "a sign by this *power of the Holy Ghost*" and was rendered dumb. This led him to confess publicly "the Christ and *the power of the Holy Ghost*" while admitting he had been deceived "by *the power of the devil*" (Jacob 7:12–13; 17–18).

Alma explained the future coming of Christ into mortality by saying "the virgin … shall be overshadowed and conceive *by the power of the Holy Ghost*" (Alma 7:10). Nephi had earlier quoted "the Lamb" as telling him the saints of the last days would be able "to bring forth Zion at that day" because they would "have *the gift and the power of the Holy* Ghost," which could enable them to "endure to the end" (1 Nephi 13:37). Prophesying again of those same future developments, Jesus told the Nephites that these same teachings "which I shall declare unto you hereafter of myself and *by the power of the Holy Ghost* … shall be made known unto the Gentiles" (3 Nephi 21:2). Mormon closed his summary of Christ's teachings to the Nephites with warnings to the future Gentiles: "Yea, woe unto him that shall deny the revelations of the Lord and that shall say: The Lord no longer worketh by revelation or by prophecy or by gifts or by tongues or by healings or *by the power of the Holy Ghost*" (3 Nephi 29:6). In his closing sermons Mormon reported one of his own revelations: "The word of the Lord came to me *by the power of the Holy Ghost*" at the same time that he recognized the Spirit was no longer striving with the apostate Nephites, who were "seeking to put down all power and authority which cometh from God, and they are denying the Holy Ghost" (Moroni 8:7–8, 28). But he also recognized that for the faithful, "the Holy Ghost may have a place

44. See 1 Nephi 10:17–19; 2 Nephi 26:12–13, 28:26, 32:2–3.

in their hearts according to *the power* thereof," and that the "meek and lowly in heart" can "confess that Jesus is the Christ" "*by the power of the Holy Ghost*" (Moroni 7:32, 36, 44).

In his own final addendum to his father's abridgment, Moroni gathered up some key ordinances and practices of the Nephite church while showing various ways in which they invoked the power of the Holy Ghost. Priests and teachers were ordained "*by the power of the Holy Ghost* which was in them.*" New converts who were received unto baptism "were wrought upon and cleansed *by the power of the Holy Ghost.*" And the church conducted its meetings "after the manner of the workings of the Spirit and *by the power of the Holy Ghost*, for as *the power of the Holy Ghost* led them whether to preach or exhort or to pray or to supplicate or to sing, even so it was done" (Moroni 3:4, 6:4, 9). Finally, Moroni promised all readers of this book that if they would "ask God, the Eternal Father, with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ," he would "manifest the truth of it unto you *by the power of the Holy Ghost.*" Further, he explained, "*by the power of the Holy Ghost* ye may know the truth of all things .… And ye may know that he is *by the power of the Holy Ghost*" (Moroni 10: 4–7).

Clearly, *by the power of the Holy Ghost* was a stock phrase invoked repeatedly by a wide range of Nephite writers. And it could be used to qualify a long list of specific activities. Men, angels, and the Lord himself are described as speaking by this power. It also produces revelations and the knowledge of the truths and mysteries of God and gives divine precepts to men. It can soften hearts and carry these truths "unto the hearts of the children of men" (Jacob 6:1). It will enable men to bring forth Zion and endure to the end. It made possible the mortal conception of Christ. It can work upon and cleanse newly baptized converts. It can shape the conduct of worship meetings "after the manner of the workings of the Spirit" (Moroni 6:9). It can enable faith and the confession that Jesus is the Christ.

This flexibility of application fits well with the Hebrew word used in the one Old Testament mention of the power of the spirit quoted above from Micah 3:8: "But truly I am full of *power by the spirit* of the Lord." A similar idea may lie behind the angel's message to Zerubbabel that the temple would be rebuilt "not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit" (Zechariah 4:6, NIV) and Isaiah's warning against seeking the help of Egypt: "The Egyptians are mere mortals and not God; their horses are flesh and not spirit" (Isaiah 31:6, NIV).

While more than 20 different Hebrew terms have been translated into English as *power* in the Hebrew Bible, *kowach* is translated that

way 37 times, in comparison to 11 times for the nearest competitor. The meaning of *kowach* also makes it a promising candidate for the Hebrew term that may lie behind this Nephite phrasing. In its 126 Old Testament occurrences, it refers generally to the capacity to act and can be applied in very different linguistic situations. "It can be understood both in physical and figurative terms," and it does not appear to be derived from cognate languages.[45] Further, "it is a poetic word as it is used most frequently in the poetic and prophetical literature."[46] "In a static sense, *koah* [kowach] suggests the capacity to endure, as of a stone (Job 6:7), but more commonly it expresses potency, capacity to produce .… By extension the word comes to connote general ability to cope with situations (Deut 8:17–18; I Chr 29:14; Ezr 10:13; etc.)."[47] But "the word is frequently used in connection with God." The more salient examples refer to his creating of the earth and to his delivering his people from Egyptian bondage.[48] And without "the enabling power of Yahweh's spirit, human might and strength are incapable of accomplishing the work of God in the world."[49] It was Isaiah who asked, "where is he who set *his Holy Spirit* among them, who sent *his glorious arm of power* to be at Moses' right hand, who divided the waters before them" (Isaiah 63:11b). As Hildebrandt concludes his discussion on this point,

> God exercised great power through the Spirit by leading the people through the divided sea. This phenomenon was recorded for the sake of each generation to indicate the power of Yahweh. It is the foundational event for the nation. Just as creation is brought into reality by the Spirit for all humanity, so in the exodus event the Spirit brings Israel through the sea and establishes the people of God in Canaan. Through the *rûah*, Israel is born, delivered, established, nurtured, and sustained (cf. Isa 43:5).[50]

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45. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1980), 436–37, hereafter cited as *TWOT*. See also Willem A. VanGemeren, ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 5 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997). Hereafter cited as *NIDOTTE*. The more recent *NIDOTTE* does mention ANE cognate forms found in Aramaic and some others (2:621).

46. James Strong, "Hebrew and Aramaic Dictionary," in *The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 128.

47. *TWOT*, 437.

48. Robin Wakely, s.v. "חכ (kōah)," *NIDOTTE*, 2:624.

49. Ibid., 2:625.

50. Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology*, 71-72. See the longer discussion on pages 67–72.

Power and Authority

Closely related to the passages referring to *the power of the Holy Ghost* are fifteen additional passages referring to *the power and authority* that comes from God or is given by God and is evident in the preaching and conduct of the Nephite prophets. For example, the account of Abinadi's final appearance before King Noah and the council of priests bent on his destruction ends by Abinadi pointing to their inability to

> lay their hands on him, for the *Spirit of the Lord* was upon him. And his face shone with exceeding luster even as Moses' did while in the mount of Sinai while speaking with the Lord. And he spake with *power and authority from God.* (Mosiah 13:5–6)

As I will show in another study, the phrase "power and authority" is used throughout the Book of Mormon as a *hendiadys* that connotes the capacity to perform some deed legitimately and can be used with equal effect in a religious or political context, where it can be stated either positively or negatively.[51] But in many of these it is used explicitly or implicitly to refer to the power of God exercised through his Spirit.[52]

The Gift and Power of God

Frequently the Nephite prophets characterized the power of God or of the Holy Ghost as a gift. In the closing lines of the record, Moroni did this twice, stating first that should the day come "that *the power and gifts of God* shall be done away among you, it shall be because of unbelief." Then, in the very next sentence, he asserts that anyone who does good "shall work by *the power and gifts of God*" (Moroni 10:24–25). In the title page of the record, which may have been the very last thing he wrote, Moroni used this same terminology again. Referring to the record itself, he assured his readers that it will "come forth *by the gift and power of God* unto the interpretation thereof," and then, at the end of the same long sentence, he repeated that it will "come forth in due time by the way of Gentile, the interpretation thereof *by the gift of God*" (Title page). This phrasing echoes the early account written by Nephi as he described his own reaction to the words of his father's description of his great vision, "which he spake by the power of the Holy Ghost." "And it came to pass

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51. See Noel B. Reynolds, "*Hendiadyses* in the Book of Mormon" (working paper, June 2019).

52. Additional examples include Words of Mormon 1:17, Mosiah 13:6, Mosiah 18:17, 26, Mosiah 27:14; Alma 5:3, 17:3; Helaman 5:18, 6:5, 11:18; 3 Nephi 7:17, 12:1; and Moroni 8:28.

that I Nephi was desirous also that I might see and hear and know of these things by *the power of the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God* unto all those who diligently seek him" (1 Nephi 10:17).

In the Book of Mormon as a whole, there are at least 15 passages in which the gift and power of God, of the Holy Ghost, of Christ, or of the Lamb are linked in similar phrasings.[53] But they also seem to be saying the same thing. Divine power can be given to men to do good — the Lord's work. It can also be noted that the repeated linkage of the two nouns *power* and *gift* in many of these statements appears to constitute a common Nephite *hendiadys* that signals divine power working through the men to whom it is given for God's purposes. For example, Nephi prophesied that his record would "come forth unto the Gentiles by the *gift and power* of the Lamb" and promised that "blessed are they which shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have *the gift and the power* of the Holy Ghost" (1 Nephi 13:35, 37). The same phrasing does not occur in Old Testament.

Conferring the Gift of the Holy Ghost

In his final listing of the practices of the Nephite church, Moroni makes it clear that they did continue the practice of conferring the gift of the Holy Ghost on new members, just as Christ had authorized his 12 disciples to do when he visited the Nephites and reestablished the church.[54]

> The words of Christ which he spake unto his disciples, the twelve whom he had chosen, as he laid his hands upon them. And he called them by name, saying: Ye shall call on the Father in my name in mighty prayer. And after that ye have done this, ye shall have power that on him whom ye shall lay your hands ye shall give the Holy Ghost. And in my name shall ye give it, for thus do mine apostles. Now Christ spake these words unto them at the time of his first appearing. And the multitude heard it not, but the disciples heard it. And on as many as they laid their hands fell the Holy Ghost (Moroni 2:1–3).

There is no mention of this ordinance in the Nephite church before the coming of Christ, and there are likewise no accounts of events in which the ordinance was performed after that. But we do read in the first description of Nephite baptisms how Alma's baptismal prayer included

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53. In addition to those already cited in the text, see 1 Nephi 13:35, 37; 2 Nephi 28:26; Jacob 6:8; Omni 1:20; Mosiah 8:16; 3 Nephi 29:6; Moroni 3:4, 7:16.

54. See the account in 3 Nephi 18:36–37.

the following blessing: "and may the Spirit of the Lord be poured out upon you" (Mosiah 18:13). That inclusion in the baptismal prayer may have eliminated the need for a separate ordinance to bestow the Holy Ghost on newly baptized persons. We do have the single occasion when Alma and his select group of mostly experienced missionaries undertook their mission to the apostate Zoramites. After praying for the people and the missionaries, "he clapped his hands upon all they which were with him. And behold, as he clapped his hands upon them, they were filled with the Holy Spirit" (Alma 31:36). But this does not seem to be the same thing as bestowing the gift of the Holy Ghost on new converts.

The Holy Ghost as a Separate Divine Being

One question that can be asked about the nature of the Holy Ghost is whether he is a separately identifiable divine being or whether he is the shared mind of the Father and the Son — as Sidney Rigdon taught the Kirtland saints.[55] While numerous passages could be read either way, there are 16 passages in the Book of Mormon that seem to require that he be understood as a separate, divine being. Six passages make a point of the fact that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost witness or bear record of one another in a way that clearly treats them as separate beings, each with his own agency. Three of these occur in key passages where Christ is being quoted while presenting his gospel or doctrine.[56] Two others also quote Jesus during his visits to the Nephites.[57] The sixth is a late reminder from Moroni based on these earlier statements.[58] In a similar seventh version, Moroni announces the importance of three witnesses and points to fact that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost all bear record of God's word (gospel):

> And in the mouth of three witnesses shall these things be established; and the testimony of three and this work [the Book of Mormon] — in the which shall be shewn forth the power of God and also his word, of which the Father and the

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55. See Larry E. Dahl and Charles D. Tate, Jr., eds., "Lecture 5," in *The Lectures on Faith: In Historical Perspective* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 1990), 83–89. Despite ongoing efforts to attribute these Kirtland lectures to Joseph Smith, it is now clear that they were written by Rigdon and published at his instigation. See Noel B. Reynolds, "The Case for Sidney Rigdon as Author of the 'Lectures on Faith," *Journal of Mormon History* 31, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 1–41.

56. 2 Nephi 31:18; 3 Nephi 11:32, 36.

57. 3 Nephi 16:6, 28:11.

58. Ether 12:41.

Son and the Holy Ghost beareth record — and all this shall stand as a testimony against the world at the last day (Ether 5:4).

Even more impressively, eight other passages point independently to different contexts in which the person of the Holy Ghost is understood to be a separate divine being. In his extended account of his great vision, Nephi quotes "the voice of the Son" telling him that "He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost like unto me" (2 Nephi 31:12), pointing to separate and related roles of the three divinities. At the conclusion of the same passage, which is the first and possibly most important exposition of the gospel or doctrine of Christ in the Book of Mormon, Nephi describes it as "the only and true doctrine of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (2 Nephi 31:21). In a later discourse, Jesus Christ had given the Nephites precise wording to be used in the ordinance of baptism, which also referred to the three divinities individually by name: "Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (3 Nephi 11:25). One of the last things Jesus told the Nephites enriches our understanding of the roles and relationships of the three divinities: "And the Father giveth the Holy Ghost unto the children of men because of me" (3 Nephi 28:11). In a unique account, Mormon mentions future adulations of the Holy Ghost in God's heavenly kingdom. Speaking first of Jesus Christ he says:

And he hath brought to pass the redemption of the world, whereby he that is found guiltless before him at the judgment day hath it given unto them to dwell in the presence of God in his kingdom, to sing ceaseless praises with the choirs above unto the Father and unto the Son and unto the Holy Ghost, which is one God, in a state of happiness which hath no end (Mormon 7:7).

And finally, just as Nephi in 2 Nephi 31:21 assigned some ownership of the doctrine of Christ to the Holy Ghost, Moroni, in his closing writings also does the same thing with divine grace:

And now I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father and also the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, may be and abide in you forever (Ether 12:41).

In light of these passages, Nephi's twice-stated vision of the Holy Ghost descending upon Jesus at the time of his baptism could also be read as another evidence of the Nephite understanding of the separateness of the three divinities.

The Unity of the Three Divinities

It may seem puzzling that some of the very passages which list the separate names of these three divinities — while pointing to some of their different functions and roles — also affirm that they are a unity in some unexplained way. In the same sentence cited above, in which Nephi assigned ownership of the doctrine of Christ to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, he went on to comment: "which is *one God* without end" (2 Nephi 31:21). Similar statements are repeated in the second key account of the gospel or doctrine of Christ, which Jesus presented to the assembled Nephites when he first appeared to them after his resurrection: "I say unto you that the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost *are one*; and I am in the Father and the Father in me, and *the Father and I are one*" (3 Nephi 11:27). And then, only a few lines later, Jesus expands this statement to include the Holy Ghost and affirms to the Nephites that "the Father and I and the Holy Ghost *are one*" (3 Nephi 11:36). Taken with other passages in the Book of Mormon that make similar statements, it is possible to raise questions about potential theological inconsistencies.

While the Nephite prophets never seemed to worry about the theology, repeated phraseologies may point to understandings that rendered these questions non-problematic for them. In this regard it may be helpful to note that numerous passages throughout the Book of Mormon speak of the Spirit or the Holy Ghost being *in* the faithful. In the recorded prayer of Jesus to the Father during his visitation to the Nephites, Jesus speaks helpfully of his relationship to the Father in the same way. In that prayer Jesus asks the Father to give the Holy Ghost "unto all them that shall believe" in the words of his disciples. He then goes on:

> And now Father, I pray unto thee for them, and also for all they which shall believe on their words, that they may *believe in me*, that I may be *in* them as thou Father art *in* me, that *we may be one* (3 Nephi 19:23).

While it is not explained here what it might mean for Jesus to be *in* his believers or for the Father to be *in* Jesus, that seems key to understanding how they are one and how they expect the faithful to become one with them. It does not seem to suggest a oneness that compromises individual identity.[59]

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59. Royal Skousen has provided an enlightening review of all relevant passages in the text and an explanation of textual changes made in different editions. See Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon: Part 1 — 1 Nephi 1–2 Nephi 10*, 2nd ed. (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2005), 235–38.

Nephi and the Spirit of the Lord

There is one obvious exception to the foregoing which has puzzled readers for generations. In an aside Nephi tells his readers that "the course of the Lord is one eternal round," because in all ages when men will repent and seek God diligently, "the mysteries of God shall be unfolded to them by the power of the Holy Ghost" (1 Nephi 10:19). In that context, Nephi then describes the circumstances of the great vision he received while staying in their first camp in the wilderness. He reports being "caught away in *the Spirit of the Lord* … into an exceeding high mountain" and being asked by *the Spirit* what he desired (1 Nephi 11:1–2). Reassured by Nephi's declaration of belief in his father's words, "*the Spirit* cried with a loud voice, saying: Hosanna to the Lord, the Most High God, for he is God over all the earth, yea, even above all. And blessed art thou Nephi because thou believest in the Son of the Most High" (1 Nephi 11:6).

In due course, Nephi is shown the vision of the tree of life his father had seen, prefaced by "the Spirit [saying] unto [Nephi]: 'Look'" (1 Nephi 11:8). As Nephi's description of this conversation progresses, he describes himself and *the Spirit* asking and answering questions to each other. At the end, Nephi offers the following clarifications:

> For I spake unto him as a man speaketh, for I beheld that he was *in the form of a man*, yet nevertheless I knew that it was *the Spirit of the Lord*, and he spake unto me as a man speaketh with another (1 Nephi 11:11).

Readers have long debated the nature of *the Spirit* or *the Spirit of the Lord* in this story.[60] One thing is clear: Nephi was perfectly comfortable using both names for the same being — going back and forth between the two titles in his report. But what is unique in this passage is the obvious suggestion that this being may actually have been the premortal Jesus Christ. From a literary perspective, the disappearance of this spirit guide from the story at the very moment Jesus Christ appears in the vision Nephi is watching might support that conclusion. In another

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60. A parallel debate has long occupied theologians of the Old Testament, who have struggled to understand incidents involving the appearance of "the angel (*mal'ak*) of the Lord" or "of God." A number of these passages seem to be saying that the angel was the Lord himself and do not yield easily to other interpretations. See the helpful discussion in Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1967), 2:23–29. Also see Stephen F. Noll, s.v. "*mal'āk*," *NIDOTTE*, 2:941–43.

remarkable passage, more than a thousand years before his own birth, the Lord showed himself to the Brother of Jared and explained:

> Behold, this body which ye now behold is the body of my spirit. And man have I created after the body of my spirit. And even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh (Ether 3:16).

Nephi received his great vision more than three decades before he penned the version we have in the small plates. As was demonstrated above, it is clear that he understood that Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost were different beings and that he used *the Spirit of the Lord* interchangeably with *the Spirit*, *the Spirit of God,* and *the Holy Ghost*. It can occur to readers that the story of receiving this vision may have been told in this way to help readers understand that these connections and distinctions were still being clarified for Nephi through these experiences in real time. All his encounters with the divine before this vision spoke of the Spirit or the Spirit of the Lord. In relating the prophecies and revelations of his father Lehi in those early chapters, he moves on to use *the Spirit of God* and *the Holy Ghost* — all of which have been introduced before Nephi's account of his own great vision in chapter 11. Only in the middle of this vision does he become clearly and personally aware of the Son of God as a premortal spiritual being.

Conclusions

In the Book of Mormon, the Holy Ghost is regarded both as a divine being who in some important sense is one with the Father and the Son and who can be in human beings when they are under his influence and as the means by which the power of God is manifest in the lives of people. The full set of spiritual labels used by the Nephites (Holy Spirit, Spirit of God, Spirit of the Lord, spirit of prophecy and revelation, the Spirit, etc.) seem always to apply to this same being. The means by which the Holy Ghost's influence is made manifest is never explained but is always represented as being clearly recognizable — particularly as it opposes the power or spirit of the devil. It witnesses to men and women of the divinity of the Father and the Son, softens their hearts to receive his gospel, inspires the speech of the prophets, brings the remission of sins to those who will respond to the gospel invitation through repentance, and shows the faithful all things they should do to endure to the end and qualify for eternal life.

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What Did the Interpreters (Urim and Thummim) Look Like?

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Stan Spencer

ABSTRACT: *The interpreters were a pair of seer stones used by Book of Mormon prophets and provided to Joseph Smith for translating the Nephite record. Martin Harris described them as two white, marble-like stones that could be looked into when placed in a hat. Joseph Smith described them as spectacles with which he could read the record and later as two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow. Others described them as smooth stones, diamonds, or glasses. Reconciling these various descriptions and determining the actual appearance of the interpreters requires an assessment of the credibility of each source and an understanding of how the interpreters were used in translating. It also requires an understanding of how words such as* glasses, transparent, *and* diamonds *were used in Joseph Smith's day, particularly in reference to seer stones. An assessment of the various descriptions of the interpreters in light of these factors lends support to both Martin Harris's and Joseph Smith's accounts. By these accounts, the interpreters were smooth, mostly white, perhaps translucent stones set in a long metal frame. Although they superficially resembled eyeglasses, the stones were set much too far apart to be worn as such. They were not clear like eyeglasses but were transparent in the sense that they, like other seer stones, could be "looked into" by a person gifted as a seer of visions.*

Joseph Smith used the term *the Urim and Thummim* to refer to the both the "interpreters," a pair of seer stones he obtained for translating the Book of Mormon, and his own seer stones, which he used for the same purposes and in the same manner.[1] There is no mystery regarding the description of the single seer stone that Joseph Smith used to translate most of the Book of Mormon — we have pictures. It is brown, banded, opaque, oblong, and about two inches in length. The other seer stone

Joseph Smith sometimes used in his revelatory work has also been described quite well. It is about the same size as the brown one, but white, translucent, and egg-shaped.[2]

Historical descriptions of the interpreters, on the other hand, vary widely. Martin Harris described them as "white, like polished marble, with a few gray streaks," set in a silver frame about eight inches long.[3] An account attributed to Lucy Mack Smith describes them as "smooth three-cornered diamonds set in glasses."[4] Orson Pratt described them as "two transparent stones, clear as crystal."[5] It is the image of clear eyeglasses suggested by the latter two descriptions that has most inspired the imaginations of artists and Sunday school teachers. Martin Harris's odd description of the interpreters cannot, however, be easily dismissed. He saw the interpreters, whereas Lucy Mack Smith only handled them through a cloth. Pratt did neither. In addition, Martin Harris's description was personally dictated and then checked for accuracy, while the description attributed to Lucy Mack Smith was likely composed by someone else.[6]

This article is an attempt to derive an accurate image of the interpreters from scripture and descriptions of the instrument in the most authoritative historical accounts. Each account will be assessed for credibility and its meaning evaluated in light of the local culture and language of the time.

Descriptions of the Interpreters in Scripture

The interpreters are described by Mormon as two seer stones fastened together:

> And now he translated them by the means of those two stones which were fastened into the two rims of a bow … And whosoever has these things is called seer, after the manner of old times. (Mosiah 28:13, 16).

When first obtained by the Jaredites, the interpreters were simply "two stones" (Ether 3:23, 28). Although both passages, in referring to the interpreters as "stones" without mention of any clarity or gem-like quality, may be seen as supporting Harris's account, they are not inconsistent with the other accounts.[7]

A seer "after the manner of old times" was a "see-er" of visions.[8] This meaning of *seer* accords with the way the stones were used, as noted by Ammon:

> I can assuredly tell thee, O king, of a man that can translate the records; for he has wherewith that he can *look*, and translate all records that are of ancient date; and it is a gift from God. And the things are called interpreters, and no man can *look in* them except he be commanded, lest he should *look for that he ought not* and he should perish. And whosoever is commanded to *look in* them, the same is called *seer*. (Mosiah 8:13)

The statement that the stones could be looked into suggests they were clear; yet even Harris, in speaking of the interpreters as white, marble-like stones, uses similar language: "I never dared to *look into* them."[9] Apparently, seer stones need not be clear to be "looked into." Moreover, if the interpreters were clear like eyeglasses, we might expect them to be looked *through* rather than into. Because of their ambiguous language, these passages are ultimately of little help in evaluating the disparate nineteenth century descriptions of the interpreter stones.

Use of Stones in Translating the Book of Mormon

All of the most authoritative accounts of the translation of the Book of Mormon have been reviewed in a previous article: "Seers and Stones: The Translation of the Book of Mormon as Divine Visions of an Old-Time Seer."[10] These consist of a few firsthand accounts by Joseph Smith and individuals who likely saw him translate, along with several accounts by other individuals to whom he apparently described the translation process. A few of these accounts are presented or summarized below.

In Joseph Smith's reference to the translation in the earliest manuscript of his history, he says, "the Lord had prepared spectacles for to read the book."[11] This accords with the description of the translation process in the Book of Mormon itself: "thou shalt read the words which I shall give unto thee" (2 Nephi 27:20). Near the end of his life, in a letter he wrote to the *Times and Seasons*, Joseph Smith quoted Mormon 9:32–34 and then stated:

> Here then the subject is put to silence, for "none other people knoweth our language," therefore the Lord, and not man, had to interpret, after the people were dead.[12]

According to these accounts, Joseph Smith's part in translating the Book of Mormon was not a matter of interpreting but of reading a text that God provided.[13] In his other published statements, Joseph Smith gave little additional information, indicating only that he translated

"[t]hrough the medium of the Urim and Thummim … by the gift, and power of God."[14]

David Whitmer provided the most detailed account of the process of translation. In a pamphlet he published in 1887, he testified that he was "an eye-witness to the translation of the greater part of the Book of Mormon" and shared his understanding of the translation process and testimony of its divine nature:

> I will now give you a description of the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated. Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of *something resembling parchment would appear*, and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would *read* off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by *the gift and power of God*, and not by any power of man. ...
>
> God gave to Brother Joseph *the gift to see* the sentences in English, when he looked into the hat in which was placed the stone. Oliver Cowdery had the same gift at one time.[15]

According to Whitmer, then, "the gift and power of God" by which Joseph Smith translated was nothing more than the "gift to see the sentences in English." In this, Whitmer's account is consistent with 2 Nephi 27:20 and Joseph Smith's accounts quoted above.[16]

David Whitmer did not observe Joseph Smith translating until he began using a single seer stone.[17] Joseph Smith's brother William and Joseph Knight knew of the translation from an earlier period, when Joseph Smith was using the interpreters. Except for the instrument used, their descriptions of the translation process agree quite well with David Whitmer's. In a pamphlet he published in 1883, William Smith wrote,

> [H]e translated them by means of the Urim and Thummim, (which he obtained with the plates), and the *power of God*. The manner in which this was done was by *looking* into the Urim and Thummim, which was placed in a hat to exclude the

light, (the plates lying near by covered up), and *reading* off the translation, which *appeared* in the stone *by the power of God*.[18]

Joseph Knight was a close friend of Joseph Smith, who remained true to him and the church he established throughout his life. He was present at the Smith home when Joseph Smith first obtained the plates and interpreters. He also provided material support for the translation and visited Joseph Smith several times during the translation period. He likely would have been permitted to observe Joseph translating. In his history of Joseph Smith's early life, Joseph Knight describes Joseph Smith's reaction to obtaining the interpreters and gold plates and how he used the interpreters in translating.

> But he seamed to think more of the glasses or the urim and thummem then he Did of the Plates for says he I can *see any thing* they are Marvelus Now they are writen in Caracters and I want them translated Now he was Commanded not to let no one see those things But a few for witness at a givin time.

> … Now he Bing an unlearned man did not know what to Do. then *the Lord gave him Power* to Translate himself then ware the Larned men Confounded, for he By the means he found with the plates he Could translate those Caricters Better than the Larned. Now the way he translated was he put the urim and thummim into his hat and Darkned his Eyes then he would take a sentence and it *would apper* in Brite Roman Letters then he would tell the writer and he would write it.[19]

The other firsthand accounts by those who saw Joseph Smith translate or heard him describe the process are consistent with these descriptions. These accounts indicate that he would place either the interpreter stones or one of his own seer stones in a hat, pull the hat to his face to exclude the light, and then read the English text that miraculously appeared. The text is described as appearing "in the hat" (Whitmer's 1881 account), "in the stone" (William Smith's 1883 account), or on "parchment" that "would appear" (Whitmer's 1879 and 1887 accounts).[20] None of the most authoritative accounts claim the text appeared on the surface of a stone, as is sometimes assumed. The different descriptions of where the text appeared are all consistent with a visionary experience.[21] In David Whitmer's 1887 statement quoted above, he portrays the translation as an imaginative (though not *imaginary*) vision in which Joseph read the scriptural text from something like parchment.[22] This is reminiscent of how the founding scripture of the Nephite nation was revealed to

the seer Lehi. Lehi read the scriptural text from a book (likely a roll of papyrus or leather) that he saw in imaginative vision (1 Nephi 1:8–13, 16–17; 6:1).[23] Ezekiel (Ezekiel 2:8–10) and John (Revelations 10) had similar visionary experiences. Isaiah, Amos, and Micah also "saw" the words of the Lord (Isaiah 1:1–2; Amos 1:1–3; Micah 1:1–6). As the word *seer* implies, seer stones were traditionally used for facilitating visions — perhaps as aids to faith or objects of mental focus — and Joseph Smith used both his individual seer stones and the interpreter stones for that purpose.[24] It makes sense that a translation obtained by the use of seer stones would be revealed in vision.[25] As portrayed in the Book of Abraham, the biblical Urim and Thummim by which God revealed his word anciently was itself a visionary instrument.[26]

We know that Joseph Smith's brown seer stone was completely opaque, as were most seer stones of his time, yet these were used in the same manner as the interpreter stones. Thus, there is no obvious reason for the interpreter stones to have been clear, as Pratt described them. Moreover, in the interior of a hat pulled "closely around his face to exclude the light" in a room lit only by candle or lamplight, the stones would probably not have been seen, much less seen *through* in the normal sense. This doesn't mean the interpreters could not have been clear, but only that clarity in the stones was not needed for the stones to function as visionary aids.

Martin Harris: "White, Like Polished Marble"

The most detailed description of the interpreters is from an 1859 statement by Martin Harris:

> The two stones set in a bow of silver were about two inches in diameter, perfectly round, and about five-eighths of an inch thick at the centre; but not so thick at the edges where they came into the bow. They were joined by a round bar of silver, about three-eighths of an inch in diameter, and about four inches long, which, with the two stones, would make eight inches. The stones were white, like polished marble, with a few gray streaks. I never dared to look into them by placing them in the hat, because Moses said that "no man could see God and live," and we could see anything we wished by looking into them; and I could not keep the desire to see God out of my mind.[27]

This account of the interpreters and how they were used is particularly strong. Martin Harris was one of only four individuals (including Joseph Smith) chosen to see the interpreters (D&C 17:1) and thus qualified to describe their visual characteristics. The account was dictated by him and read back to him to check for errors in transcription.[28] Few if any of the other witness descriptions of the interpreters received this degree of verification. As it relates to the translation of the Book of Mormon, Harris's account is corroborated by scripture and by other authoritative accounts, as quoted and summarized above. It agrees with these accounts in indicating that the interpreters were used, not by wearing them like eyeglasses, but by placing them in a hat. It agrees with these accounts and with Mosiah 8:13 in indicating that the interpreters were used by looking into them rather than through them or at their surfaces. It agrees with Mosiah 8:13 in suggesting the stones might be used to see or look for things that one "ought not." In addition, the account is specific, with the most detailed and precise description of the interpreters of any surviving account.

A translucent alabaster stone matching Harris's description of "white, like polished marble, with a few gray streaks"[29]

Harris describes the interpreter stones as white and marble-like with gray streaking. He provides relatively precise measurements and shape characteristics — the stones were perfectly round, slightly convex disks, about two inches in diameter and five-eighths of an inch thick at the center.

The only other detailed description of the interpreters attributed to Martin Harris is somewhat less credible. Edward Stevenson heard Martin Harris speak at a Sabbath meeting on August 4, 1870. In a letter he wrote to the editor of the *Deseret Evening News* eleven years later, Stevenson reported his recollection of what Harris had said:

> Martin said further that the seer stone differed in appearance entirely from the Urim and Thummim that was obtained with the plates, which were two clear stones set in two rims, very much resembled spectacles, only they were larger.[30]

Stevenson's account differs from Harris's detailed description in calling the interpreters "clear stones." Note, however, that these are not presented as Harris's words. They are Stevenson's words and represent his memory and understanding of ideas Harris had been trying to convey eleven years earlier. If Harris spoke of looking *into* the stones as he did in his 1859 account, especially after having compared them to spectacles, Stevenson may have just assumed the stones were clear, and that assumption may have influenced his memory and choice of words.

The Interpreters as "Spectacles"

Set in metal frames, the interpreters as described by Harris would have superficially resembled spectacles but would have been much too large to be worn as such. According to the measurements he provided, the stones were set about twice as far apart (six inches, center to center) as would be needed to align with the eyes. Stevenson's account agrees that the interpreters were too large to be used as spectacles. The extraordinary size of the "spectacles" is also attested by descriptions attributed to David Whitmer and William Smith that will be discussed below, as well as by other sources. For example, the earliest known account of Joseph Smith's method of translating mentions both the extraordinary size of the "spectacles" as well as how they were used. This account was published in August 1829 by Jonathan A. Hadley, editor of the *Palmyra Freeman*, soon after Martin Harris and perhaps Joseph Smith came to him, seeking a publisher for the Book of Mormon. Hadley reported that Joseph Smith had found a "huge pair of Spectacles" with the engraved

gold plates and that "[b]y placing the spectacles in a hat, and looking into it, Smith could (he said so, at least) interpret these characters."[31]

Hadley's account suggests that Joseph Smith was calling the interpreters spectacles as early as 1829, just as he did in his 1832 history. Besides their superficial resemblance to eyeglasses, the interpreters could be considered spectacles by analogy, since they were used to "read the words" of "the book" as they were divinely given (2 Nephi 27:19–20).

Seer Stones as "Glasses"

In Joseph Knight's account quoted previously, he calls the interpreters "glasses" yet notes they were used, not by wearing them, but by placing them in a hat. In calling the interpreters *glasses*, he was not likely thinking of eyeglasses as Joseph Smith had been, since eyeglasses were usually called "spectacles," not glasses. *Glass* was a colloquial term for a seer stone. Knight had previously referred to one of Joseph Smith's seer stones as "his glass."[32] Ezra Booth called Joseph Smith's brown seer stone a "dark glass."[33] A neighbor had a seer stone Lucy Mack Smith called "a green glass."[34] Peter Bauder, a minister who interviewed Joseph Smith at the Whitmer home in 1830, referred to the interpreters as "a glass."[35] Isaac Hale, Joseph Smith's father-in-law, reported that Joseph Smith referred to his use of seer stones to search for buried items as "glass-looking."[36] Accordingly, the two seer stones comprising the interpreters, whether clear or not, would be two "glasses."

In Joseph Smith's day, *glass* was also a common term for a telescope, spy-glass, or other instrument used for viewing distant objects, and it may have been by analogy to such instruments that seer stones were called glasses.[37] According to Lucy Mack Smith's history, Joseph Smith had a reputation for using his seer stone to "discern things that could not be seen by the natural eye."[38] Joseph Knight quotes Joseph Smith as saying, after using the interpreters, "I can see any thing they are Marvelus."

Joseph Smith: "Two Stones in Silver Bows"

While Joseph Smith referred to the interpreters functionally as "spectacles" in his 1832 history, he gave a purely physical description in the Manuscript History of the Church. The portion of this history describing the interpreters was first published in *Times and Seasons* in April 1842:

> Also that there were two stones in silver bows, and these stones fastened to a breastplate constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim.[39]

Here the interpreters are simply "two stones in silver bows." An article published by Joseph Smith as "Church History" in *Times and Seasons* in March 1842 includes greater detail:

> With the records was found a curious instrument which the ancients called "Urim and Thummim," which consisted of two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow fastened to a breastplate.[40]

Here the two stones are "transparent" and "set in the rim of a bow." Although Joseph Smith may have written parts of "Church History" himself or more likely dictated them to one of his scribes, some of the text was borrowed from at least one other source. The section of the article that includes the description of the interpreters was taken with some modification from an earlier publication by Orson Pratt, *A[n] Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions, and of the Late Discovery of Ancient American Records.* Pratt's description of the interpreters reads as follows:

> With the records was found "a curious instrument, called by the ancients the Urim and Thummim, which consisted of two transparent stones, clear as crystal, set in the two rims of a bow …"[41]

In using Pratt's description of the interpreter stones, Joseph Smith (or his scribe) made one substantial change: the phrase, "clear as crystal," was excised. The specific rejection of this phrase by Joseph Smith or his scribe suggests that whatever the "transparent stones" looked like, they were not, exactly, "clear as crystal."

Seer Stones as "Transparent"

If "transparent" in Joseph Smith's description of the stones did not mean clear, what did it mean? There are two possibilities.

"Transparent" may have meant merely translucent (semi-transparent). The word was sometimes used this way in Joseph Smith's day. For example, British diplomat James Morier published a book in 1818 in which he mentioned hot springs in Persia that produced "that beautiful *transparent* stone, commonly called Tabriz marble."[42] Tabriz marble is a somewhat translucent, often banded travertine used as a decorative stone

in Persian palaces, tombs, and baths. The interpreter stones, described by Harris as "white, like polished marble, with a few gray streaks," may have been similar in appearance to Tabriz marble. They may have also been similar in their color and optical qualities to Joseph Smith's own white seer stone. Richard Robinson, who was shown the white seer stone in 1900 by President Lorenzo Snow, described it as "the shape of an egg though not quite so large, of a gray cast something like granite but with white stripes running around it. It was *transparent* but with no holes."[43] Had Robinson or Morier seen the marble-like interpreter stones described by Martin Harris, they might have called them "transparent" as well. At least one early source unambiguously describes the interpreter stones as translucent. An 1830 article in the *Auburn Free Press* states that Joseph Smith translated by "looking through two semi-transparent stones."[44]

Stones that are *semi*-transparent, by definition cannot be looked through in the usual sense. The seemingly self-contradictory statement in the *Auburn Free Press* article suggests a second possible meaning of "transparent" in Joseph Smith's account. According to an 1851 history of the Palmyra area of New York, Martin Harris told Palmyra residents that the interpreter "stones or glass … were opaque to all but the Prophet."[45] Other seer stones were likewise said to be transparent only for some individuals. William Stafford, who lived near the Smiths in Manchester, had, according to his son, a "stone which *some* thought they could *look through*."[46] A notice in the December 1, 1842 issue of *Times and Seasons* warned of false revelations from a boy (James Brewster) who claimed to have "the gift of seeing and looking through or into a stone."[47] The "gift of seeing" is the gift Brigham Young, David Whitmer, and Orson Pratt all attributed to Joseph Smith in his use of seer stones. It is the gift of a seer, the gift of looking seemingly "through or into a stone" to see visions.[48] While this ability was expressed in Joseph Smith's gift of visions by which he experienced many divine communications, it must also have been expressed in his prior use of seer stones, which his father-in-law referred to as the occupation of "seeing."[49]

Whether a seer stone was transparent in this sense depended not only on who was using it but also on how it was used. An article published in a Palmyra newspaper in 1825 described a stone used for treasure hunting "which *becomes* transparent *when placed in a hat and the light excluded* by the face of him who looks into it."[50] After describing the interpreter stones as having the appearance of white marble, Martin Harris said that he dared not "look *into* them *by placing them in the hat*,"

as though placing the stones in a hat would have made them clear. In the same account, he also described Joseph Smith's own seer stone as transparent while in use: "*In* this stone he could see many things to my certain knowledge."[51]

Whether a stone is transparent to physical light becomes irrelevant once it is placed in a hat and "the light excluded." The stone disappears in the darkness and anything that is seen must be seen, in David Whitmer's words, by the "spiritual light" of a vision.[52] According to a report of an interview by James H. Hart in 1884, Whitmer described the disappearing act of Joseph Smith's seer stone as it was replaced by a vision of sacred text:

> The way it was done was thus: Joseph would place the seer-stone in a deep hat, and placing his face close to it, would see, *not the stone,* but what appeared like an oblong piece of parchment, on which the hieroglyphics would appear, and also the translation in the English language ... When the seer-stone was not placed in a hat, no characters or writing could be seen *therein.*[53]

The English text of the Book of Mormon is described as appearing in the stone, not because the stone becomes a viewing device, but because the stone is no longer seen, being replaced by a visioned document. The stone thus seemingly becomes transparent to the seer.

Lucy Mack Smith: "Two Smooth Stones"

According to her written history, Lucy Mack Smith was permitted to examine the interpreters "with no covering but a silk handkerchief."[54] Through the cloth, she could have discerned shapes and textures but not much more. The most credible description of the interpreters attributed to her is found in the original, dictated (1844–1845) manuscript of her history, which says that the interpreters

> consisted of 2 smooth stones con[n]ected with each other in the same way that old fashioned spectacles are made.[55]

As expected, this statement describes the texture and shape of the instrument but says nothing of its color or of the clarity of the stones. Neither does it call the instrument spectacles but simply notes the similarity in construction. This statement is similar to Martin Harris's 1859 description of the interpreters, although less detailed.

Seer Stones as "Diamonds"

In a later (1845) manuscript of Lucy Mack Smith's history, "2 smooth stones" is replaced with "two smooth three-cornered diamonds set in glasses, and the glasses were set in silver bows."[56] A similar phrase, but with "glass" instead of "glasses," was also inserted in blue ink into the earlier, dictated manuscript of her history. By examining the interpreter stones through a cloth, Lucy could have only speculated that they were made of diamonds or glass. This description of the interpreters as "diamonds" is also unexpected since there is no hint that the interpreter stones were precious gems in Lucy's original manuscript, in the scriptural accounts (Mosiah 28:13, Ether 3:23–28), or in accounts attributed to Joseph Smith or the three witnesses. The idea that the stones were three-cornered in shape likewise lacks support from other accounts. Brigham Young believed the manuscripts of Lucy's history contained errors and requested that Church historian George A. Smith produce a corrected text for publication.[57] The description of the interpreters as three-cornered diamonds was apparently one of those errors. It was struck from the 1845 manuscript and omitted from the corrected history, which was published in book form in 1902.[58]

Martha Jane Coray and her husband Howard apparently composed the 1845 manuscript based on the original (dictated) manuscript as well as other notes and sources. The idea that the interpreters were three-cornered diamonds in glass(es) may have come from one of those other sources or from the Corays' own assumptions.[59] It is likely, however, that Lucy Mack Smith did at times refer to the interpreters as glasses and diamonds, not as descriptions of their appearance but rather as colloquial terms for seer stones. As mentioned above, she once referred to a neighbor's green seer stone as a glass. She is quoted as calling the interpreters "large bright diamonds set in a bow like a pair of spectacles" in an 1842 interview with Henry Caswall, and her husband apparently referred to the interpreters as diamond or diamonds in an 1830 interview with Fayette Lapham.[60] Both the Caswall and Lapham reports contain many inaccuracies, but the reference to diamond or diamonds in each does seem significant. *Diamond*, like *glass*, was a local term for a seer stone in the New York area, and Lucy and her husband may have both been using the term in that sense.[61] Because of these uncertainties, along with Lucy's limited contact with the interpreters and the lack of corroboration from other sources, the description of the interpreters as diamonds in Lucy's history is of little help in determining what the instrument looked like.

Descriptions Attributed to David Whitmer

David Whitmer left no firsthand description of the interpreters, although they are mentioned in reports of some of the many interviews he gave to newspaper correspondents and others. The accounts of these interviews are inconsistent in many details, probably due mostly to the interviewers' inability to accurately remember and convey what Whitmer had told them. On occasion, Whitmer issued corrections to statements he was purported to have made. Before the use of recording equipment became standard practice, interviewers had to reconstruct statements from hastily written notes, filling in gaps and smoothing over rough spots with their own words based on their sometimes-faulty memories of what was said and assumptions of what was meant. The chance for error was high, especially when interviews included such esoteric topics as seer stones. This tendency for error limits the utility of secondhand accounts for reconstructing historical facts.

Three accounts of interviews with Whitmer include detailed descriptions of the interpreters.

On August 16, 1878, the *Deseret Evening News* published portions of a letter from Wilhelm Poulson that related an interview he had with David Whitmer, including a conversation regarding the interpreters:

> I — Did Joseph use the Urim and Thummim when he translated
>
> He — The Urim and Thummim were two white stones, each of them cased in as spectacles are, in a kind of silver casing, but the bow between the stones was more heavy, and longer apart between the stones, than we usually find it in spectacles.[62]

In his letter, Poulson notes that the "conversation was mostly written down word for word half an hour after the interview with David Whitmer, Esq., who will recognize it as his words."[63] It is doubtful that Poulson could have accurately reproduced Whitmer's statements word for word after leaving the interview, and, in fact, Whitmer wrote a letter to a friend a few years later complaining that he was misquoted in Poulson's letter.[64] Despite the possible errors, Poulson's account of Whitmer's description of the interpreter stones — two white stones set in a long silver frame — accords well with Harris's detailed 1859 description. This suggests, at least, that Whitmer and Harris had similar visual recollections of the interpreters.

On June 5, 1881, the *Kansas City Journal* published a report of an interview conducted with David Whitmer a few days earlier. It includes

a description of the interpreters, presented as a quotation of Whitmer's words:

> He [Joseph Smith] had two small stones of a chocolate color, nearly egg shaped and perfectly smooth, but not transparent, called interpreters, which were given him with the plates.[65]

This statement appears to be an amalgamation of descriptions of the interpreters and Joseph Smith's brown seer stone. There were other errors in the report, and Whitmer soon wrote a letter of correction to the editor:

> I notice several errors in the interview had with me by one of your reporters as published in the DAILY JOURNAL of June 5th, '81, and wish to correct them.
>
> I am reported as saying that "the young men in the neighborhood saw the plates in the hill." The language used was, that "we saw the place (not the plates) in the hill from which the plates were taken, just as he described them to us before he obtained them." … I did not say that Smith used "two small stones" as stated nor did I call the stone "interpreters." I stated that "he used one stone (not two) and called it a sun [seers] stone." The "interpreters" were as I understood taken from Smith and were not used by him after losing the first 116 pages as stated. It is my understanding that the stone refer[r]ed to was furnished him when he commenced translating again after losing the 116 pages.
>
> My statement was and now is that in translating he put the stone in his hat and putting his face in his hat so as to exclude the light and that then the light and characters appeared in the hat together with the interpretation which he uttered and was written by the scribe and which was tested at the time as stated.[66]

Whitmer later complained to a friend:

> As to the interview published in the Kansas City Journal of June 5th 1881 there were So many Errors in it as published that I felt compelled to correct what I thought to be the most damaging Errors … and Even in publishing the Statement Correcting their former publication where I had written "Seers Stone" they made it read "Sun Stone."[67]

On July 16, 1844, the *St. Louis Republican* published a report of an interview with David Whitmer. The report represents Whitmer as describing the translation of the Book of Mormon as follows:

> In translating from the plates, Joseph Smith looked through the Urim and Thummim, consisting of two transparent pebbles set in the rim of a bow, fastened to a breastplate. He dictated by looking through them to his scribes.[68]

This description of the translation is uncharacteristic of David Whitmer, who, in the most credible statements attributed to him, spoke of Joseph Smith using a single seer stone and hat, not the interpreters.[69] The reporter may have augmented his recollection of Whitmer's words with other sources. In fact, this description of the interpreters appears to derive not from the interview with Whitmer but from Joseph Smith's 1842 article, "Church History," quoted previously. That article describes the interpreters as "two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow fastened to a breastplate." The only difference is that *stones* is replaced by *pebbles* in the 1844 report.

These are the most detailed descriptions of the interpreters attributed to David Whitmer. All have credibility problems, but the first is clearly the strongest and agrees well with Harris's detailed 1859 account.

Descriptions Attributed to Oliver Cowdery

There are no firsthand descriptions of the interpreters from Oliver Cowdery. The best we have are two reports from individuals who heard him describe the translation process.

Oliver Cowdery was interviewed by Josiah Jones in 1830. A summary of the interview was recorded in an 1831 letter. In the letter, Jones reports what he learned from Cowdery:

> He stated that Smith looked into or through the transparent stones to translate what was on the plates. I then asked him if he had ever looked through the stones to see what he could see in them; his reply was that he was not permitted to look into them. I asked him who debarred him from looking into them; he remained sometime in silence; then said that he had so much confidence in his friend Smith, who told him that he must not look into them, that he did not presume to do so lest he should tempt God and be struck dead.[70]

Jones is ambivalent as to whether the stones were looked "into" or "through," but either word works in describing how a seer sees visions

with a stone. Jones calls the stones "transparent." Oliver Cowdery, like Joseph Smith, may have used this term in describing the stones, or Jones's use of the term may reflect his assumption that stones that can be looked "into or through" must be clear. Ultimately, this account tells us little about the physical appearance of the interpreters.

In April of 1831, the *Evangelical Magazine and Gospel Advocate* published a letter by Abram Benton, dated March 1831. In the letter, Benton reports on testimony he heard in a July 1830 court hearing in which Oliver Cowdery and other acquaintances of Joseph Smith described how Joseph Smith used the interpreters as well as his own seer stone. Benton states:

> For several years preceding the appearance of his book, he was about the country in the character of a glass-looker: pretending, by means of a certain *stone, or glass*, which he put in a hat, to be able to discover lost goods, hidden treasures, mines of gold and silver, &c.

> ... During the trial it was shown that the Book of Mormon was brought to light by the same magic power by which he pretended to tell fortunes, discover hidden treasures, &c. Oliver Cowdery, one of the three witnesses to the book, testified under oath, that said Smith found with the plates, from which he translated his book, *two transparent stones, resembling glass*, set in silver bows. That by looking *through* these, he was able to read in English, the reformed Egyptian characters, which were engraved on the plates.[71]

Like Joseph Knight, Benton refers to Joseph Smith's own seer stone as a "glass." He refers to the interpreters as "two transparent stones, resembling glass." He does not say how they resembled glass. Was it in their smooth surfaces, as in Harris's "smooth, like polished marble," or in their clarity? Likewise, "transparent" could mean either clear or merely translucent, or its meaning may be metaphorical. In any case, Benton does not claim to be quoting Oliver Cowdery. This is Benton's summary, perhaps using his own words, of what he remembered and understood Cowdery to have meant. Benton's understanding that Joseph Smith used the stones by "looking through" them may have led him to assume the stones were clear, and that assumption may have in turn influenced the language he used in his summary. Alternatively, if Cowdery referred to the interpreters as "glasses" (as Joseph Knight did) or as "spectacles" (as Joseph Smith did), that may have elicited the same

hasty assumption. The assumption that stones looked into or through are clear would be a reasonable one in most cases but not when "the gift of seeing and looking through or into a stone" is the topic at hand. Looking "through" or "into" opaque stones to see visions is what seers like Joseph Smith did.[72] Due to its secondhand source and the ambiguity of the language, this account tells us little about the physical appearance of the interpreters.

Descriptions Attributed to William Smith

As Joseph Smith's younger brother, William Smith would likely have been privy to discussions about the interpreters and may have been permitted, like his mother, to examine them through a cloth.[73] In July 1890 or 1891, William was interviewed by J. W. Peterson and W. S. Pender. About thirty years later, in May 1921, Peterson recorded his recollection of how William had described the interpreters:

> Explaining the expression as to the stones in the Urim and Thummim being set in two rims of a bow he said: A silver bow ran over one stone, under the other, around over that one, and under the first in the shape of a horizontal figure 8 much like a pair of spectacles. That they were much too large for Joseph and he could only see through one at a time using sometimes one and sometimes the other.[74]

In a report of the same interview published three years later, Peterson provided a slightly different description:

> He said a double silver bow was twisted into the shape of the figure eight, and the two stones were placed literally between the two rims of a bow ... He also informed us that the instruments were too wide for his eyes, as also for Joseph's, and must have been used by much larger men.[75]

Any implication that Joseph Smith used the interpreters in translating by wearing them like spectacles, however awkwardly, is contradicted by William Smith's personally published account, quoted previously, in which he states that "the Urim and Thummim, (which he obtained with the plates) ... was placed in a hat to exclude the light" in order to translate.

Besides Martin Harris's 1859 description and the 1878 description attributed to David Whitmer, these are the only authoritative descriptions of the interpreters that provide any detail about the form of the metal frame that held the stones. We must use these descriptions

with caution, however. They are second- or thirdhand at best, and were recorded decades after the interview with William Smith, on which they were based. Even so, the descriptions of the interpreter stones in a metal frame are roughly consistent with those of Harris and Whitmer. The main difference is that the descriptions attributed to William Smith mention two lengths of wire extending between the stones, while Harris mentions a single "round bar." All these detailed descriptions refer to the interpreters simply as stones (not diamonds, glasses, or spectacles) and describe them as set too far apart to be worn like eyeglasses.

Conclusions

In the discussion above, I have reviewed all the historical accounts that contain detailed descriptions of the interpreters and are attributed to persons who may have seen or handled the instrument. None of the descriptions of the interpreters in these accounts can be taken at face value, except for Joseph Smith's description in the Manuscript History of the Church, Lucy Mack Smith's description in the original 1844–1845 dictated manuscript of her history, and Martin Harris's 1859 description. These three descriptions were dictated or reviewed by the respective witnesses and use relatively unambiguous language. Together, they describe two round, mostly white, perhaps translucent, smooth stones set in a long silver frame.[76] Although superficially resembling spectacles, the instrument would have been much too large to have been worn as such. Joseph Smith instead used the stones by placing them in a hat the same way he and others of his time used individual seer stones.

Harris's description of the stones as opaque suggests they functioned in the same way as other seer stones — not as optical instruments, but as objects for facilitating imaginative visions. The idea that the Book of Mormon and other revelations by "the Urim and Thummim" were received as visions is consistent not only with witness accounts but also with the way the Bible and Book of Mormon portray the revelation of new scripture to ancient seers such as Isaiah, Amos, Micah, Ezekiel, John, and Lehi.

Most other accounts describing the interpreters are secondhand at best, and many include terminology used differently in the past. When quoting such accounts, which may have been written from memory hours or even years after an interview, we cannot simply say "Lucy Mack Smith said …," or "According to David Whitmer …," or "Oliver Cowdery testified under oath that ..." To be used responsibly, each account must be evaluated for credibility, its possible meanings explored in light of the

culture and language of the time and place of its writing, and its claims tested against other sources.

Two descriptive phrases that have disproportionately influenced the popular perception of the interpreters — "three-cornered diamonds set in glass" and "clear as crystal"— are especially dubious. These descriptions have no apparent connection to any witness experience with the interpreters and were specifically rejected from histories prepared under the direction of Brigham Young and Joseph Smith, respectively.

The most credible description of the interpreters attributed to David Whitmer is similar to Martin Harris's 1859 description but less detailed. Both say the stones were white and set in a long silver frame. The two secondhand descriptions attributed to Oliver Cowdery, like Joseph Smith's 1842 description in "Church History," refer to the stones as transparent.

Descriptions of the interpreter stones as transparent make sense from the perspective of the early nineteenth century and Joseph Smith's local culture, where *transparent* could mean translucent, and even opaque seer stones became transparent to those who had the gift to "look into" them. Joseph Knight's description of the stones as glasses made sense within a cultural perspective in which a glass was an instrument used to see what was otherwise invisible, and even opaque seer stones were called glasses. Descriptions of the interpreters as diamonds were also acceptable within the cultural context in which they were written. In the world of a New York seer, a "diamond" was a seer stone, "glasses" were placed in hats to see visions, and what was "transparent" was not always clear. This was the world in which Joseph Smith developed his "gift of seeing," and he and others used the vocabulary of that world to describe the ancient seer stones that constituted the interpreters.

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Endnotes

1   For the interpreters as seer stones, see Mosiah 8:13; Mosiah 28:13, 16; and Richard E. Turley, Jr., Robin S. Jensen, and Mark Ashurst-McGee, "Joseph the Seer," Ensign (October 2015): 49–55. For the interpreters and Joseph Smith's individual seer stones as "the Urim and Thummim," see Stan Spencer, "Seers and Stones: The Translation of the Book of Mormon as Divine Visions of an Old-Time Seer," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 17 (2017):27–29.

2   For an overview of Joseph Smith's use of seer stones, including a photograph of the brown stone, see Turley, Jensen, and Ashurst-McGee, "Joseph the Seer," 49–55; also Michael Hubbard MacKay and Nicholas J. Frederick, *Joseph Smith's Seer Stones* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 2016). For descriptions and uses of Joseph Smith's seer stones and the interpreters, see Mark Ashurst-McGee, "Pathway to Prophethood: Joseph Smith Jr. as Rodsman, Village Seer, and Judeo-Christian Prophet" (master's thesis, Utah State University, 2000), 230–319. The brown seer stone measures 5.5 cm x 4 cm x 3.5 cm. "Note on Seer Stone Images," The Joseph Smith Papers, http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/site/note-on-seer-stone-images.

3   "Martin Harris Interview with Joel Tiffany, 1859," in *Early Mormon Documents*, ed. Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996), 2:305.

4   "Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845," The Joseph Smith Papers, 107, http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1845/114.

5   "Appendix: Orson Pratt, A[n] Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions, 1840," 13, The Joseph Smith Papers; http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/appendix-orson-pratt-an-interesting-account-of-several-remarkable-visions-1840/13.

6   References for these points will be provided with the discussions of the respective accounts below.

7   In contrast, the sixteen small stones placed in the eight Jaredite barges are described in relative detail as "small stones; and they were white and clear, even as transparent glass" (Ether 3:1).

8   Spencer, "Seers and Stones," 29–31.

9   "Martin Harris Interview with Joel Tiffany, 1859," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:305, emphasis added.

10 Spencer, "Seers and Stones," 32–43.

11 In about summer of 1832, Joseph Smith wrote in his personal history that "the Lord had prepared ~~spectticke~~ spectacles for to read the Book." "History, circa Summer 1832," 5, The Joseph Smith Papers, http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-summer-1832/5.

12 Joseph Smith, Times and Seasons 4 (15 May 1843):194.

13 The Lord's instructions to Oliver Cowdery in D&C 9:7–9 to "study it out in your mind" and "ask me if it be right" are sometimes interpreted as a description of the process by which Joseph Smith translated, which, if true, would imply that he did more than read a visioned text. The context of these verses suggests an alternative interpretation — that these instructions refer to the expediency of Oliver Cowdery's desire to translate rather than to his translating technique, and were provided to teach him how to obtain the faith he would need to overcome his fear so he could translate by seer stone. Stan Spencer, "The Faith to See: Burning in the Bosom and Translating the Book of Mormon in Doctrine and Covenants 9," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 18 (2016):219–32.

14 "'Church History,' 1 March 1842," 707, The Joseph Smith Papers, http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/church-history-1-march-1842/2. Joseph Smith may have found his words in Omni 1:20. For Joseph Smith's other accounts, see 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 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 121–29. Oliver Cowdery's description of the translation process is equally spare and vague. For an interpretation of his sole firsthand account describing the translation process, see Spencer, "Seers and Stones," 34.

15 David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ: By a Witness to the Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon* (Richmond, MO: by the author, 1887), 12, 37, emphasis added.

16 The most straightforward reading of 2 Nephi 27:19–20 suggests that it is not the words written on the plates that Joseph Smith

would read. According to this passage, after "the book and the words thereof" had already been delivered to Joseph Smith (v. 19), the Lord would tell him that he would read words yet to be given (v. 20). However, there is an alternative way of interpreting this passage that does not require that there be two sets of words. If "give unto thee" in this passage is taken to mean "grant unto thee [to read]," it is then the granting of the authorization or power (not another set of words) that God would provide. For this meaning of give in reference to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, see Mormon 8:15.

17 "David Whitmer to Kansas City Journal 13 June 1881," in *Early Mormon Documents*, ed. Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2003), 5:81–82.

18 "William Smith, On Mormonism, 1883," in *Early Mormon Documents*, ed. Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 1996), 1:497, emphasis added.

19 "Joseph Knight, Sr., Reminiscence, Circa 1835–1847," in *Early Mormon Documents*, ed. Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 4:15, 17–18, emphasis added.

20 For Whitmer's 1881 letter, see "David Whitmer to Kansas City Journal 13 June 1881," 81–82. For his 1879 account, see John L. Traughber Jr., "Testimony of David Whitmer," *Saints' Herald* 26 (November 15, 1879), 341.

21 In his 1859 account, Martin Harris notes Joseph Smith's ability to see visions by looking "in" his seer stone as well as the interpreters. "Martin Harris Interview with Joel Tiffany, 1859," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:302, 309. Also note the phrase, "look in them" in Mosiah 8:13. In the darkness of Joseph Smith's hat, a stone may not have been visible at all. As he gazed in the direction of the stone(s) and saw a vision of words on parchment, he may have thought of it as appearing in or through the stone(s).

22 Imaginative in this sense does not mean imaginary. It simply means that a vision is perceived through the brain's imaginative faculty, or the mind's eye, as one perceives a dream or other vivid mental image, rather than through the physical senses. L. Roure, "Visions and Apparitions," in *Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), 15:477. An object (such as a piece of parchment) appearing out of nowhere would seem

to indicate an imaginative vision, unless one surmises that an actual piece of parchment materialized in Joseph Smith's hat. In our technological world, we might alternatively suppose that the seer stone physically projected an image of a parchment into Joseph Smith's eyes. Although such a miraculous transformation of stone to projector may be plausible, it is not required to explain the witness accounts. Also, none of those who watched Joseph Smith translate reported seeing any light escape from Joseph Smith's hat, and the light in Whitmer's account is described as "spiritual," not physical.

23 The standard books at the time of Lehi and Ezekiel (who also read from a book in vision) were rolls of papyrus or leather. By the time John envisioned a "little book," writing on sheets of parchment was becoming more common. Jack Finegan, *Encountering New Testament Manuscripts: A Working Introduction to Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1974), 19–29.

24 This is not to say that all or even most visions purportedly seen by those who used seer stones were spiritual, divine, or representative of reality. Images seen in the mind's eye (see note 22) can have different origins, even while being mediated and experienced in a similar way through the brain's imaginative faculty. Visions without revelatory content would have been nothing more than imagination or visual hallucinations, while those with revelatory content were not necessarily divine. See Spencer, "Seers and Stones," 55–59; Brant Gardner, *The Gift and Power: Translating the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford, 2011), 261–74. The established Christianity of Joseph Smith's day could not teach him how to see divine visions — it rejected their very occurrence in the modern age. But the art of "seeing" was still alive in folk religion, and Joseph's use of seer stones to facilitate visions reflects that source of training. For the traditional use of seer stones, see "Seer Stone," The Joseph Smith Papers, http://www.josephsmithpapers. org/topic/seer-stone; Spencer, "Seers and Stones," 54–56, 96n152. For Joseph Smith's use of the interpreters and other seer stones for seeing visions, see Michael Hubbard MacKay and Gerrit Dirkmaat, *From Darkness Unto Light: Joseph Smith's Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 2015), 69, 76n44, 77n45, 77n48; Spencer, "Seers and Stones," 52–54. Seers in many cultures throughout history have looked into objects or surfaces to attain a visionary state, including,

perhaps, ancient Israel's high priest with the Urim and Thummim (see note 26). For an exploration of how seer stones and hats may have functioned in facilitating imaginative visions, see Spencer, "Seers and Stones," 68–72.

25 The idea that God provided Joseph Smith with a vision of the English translation does not imply that God was the translator, nor does it imply that the translation was perfect; God could have shown Joseph a translation produced by someone else, whether immortal or mortal. Accounts of two of Joseph Smith's other translation projects have him being shown, in vision, parchment or papyrus documents presumably written by mortals (see Spencer, "Seers and Stones," 44–45, regarding the parchment of John and a visioned papyrus of the Book of Abraham).

26 Abraham used the Urim and Thummim to see a great vision (Abraham 3:1–11). He not only saw stars and spirits but also heard God speak to him by the Urim and Thummim, which experience he described as talking with the Lord "face to face, as one man talketh with another." Old Testament passages involving the Urim and Thummim are consistent with its usage as a visionary instrument. Spencer, "Seers and Stones," 59–64; also Ashurst-McGee, "Pathway to Prophethood," 56–58.

27 Martin Harris granted an interview to Joel Tiffany, editor of the spiritualist periodical, *Tiffany's Monthly*, in 1859. "Martin Harris Interview with Joel Tiffany, 1859," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:305.

28 Tiffany's report of the interview begins by noting efforts to assure that Martin Harris's statements were accurately recorded: "The following narration we took down from the lips of Martin Harris, and read the same to him after it was written, that we might be certain of giving his statement to the world." "Martin Harris Interview with Joel Tiffany, 1859," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:302. In other words, Harris, according to Tiffany, dictated and then personally verified and approved the account.

29 White Alabaster, photograph, 512x522 pixels, The Compleat Sculptor, https://shop.sculpt.com/mother-nature-2-7-8d-x-3-1-2h-white-alabaster-cyli.html. Used with permission.

30 Edward Stevenson to the editor, November 30, 1881, *Deseret Evening News*, 13 December 1881, 4.

31 "Palmyra Freeman, circa August 1829," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:221.

32 "Joseph Knight, Sr., Reminiscence, Circa 1835–1847," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:13.

33 "Ezra Booth Accounts, 1831," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 5:309.

34 "Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845," The Joseph Smith Papers, 3, bk. 6, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1844-1845/71.

35 "Joseph Smith Interview with Peter Bauder, October 1830," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:17.

36 "Isaac Hale Statement, 1834," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:285.

37 *Webster's Dictionary 1828* – Online Edition, s.v. "glass," definition 8, accessed July 21, 2019, http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/glass. Also Francis Lieber, ed., *Encyclopaedia Americana: A Popular Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature, History, Politics and Biography, Brought Down to the Present Time; Including a Copious Collection of Original Articles in American Biography; on the Basis of the Seventh Edition of the German Conversations-Lexicon* (Philadelphia: Carey and Lea, 1831), 5:511.

38 "Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845," The Joseph Smith Papers, 95, http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1845/102.

39 "Times and Seasons 15 April 1842," 753, The Joseph Smith Papers, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/times-and-seasons-15-april-1842/3. For the manuscript, see "History, 1838–1856, volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834]," 5, The Joseph Smith Papers, http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/5. Although Joseph Smith may not have written or dictated this text, he personally reviewed and corrected the early portion of the manuscript, which includes it (see "Historical Introduction" to the manuscript).

40 "'Church History,' 1 March 1842," 707.

41 "Appendix: Orson Pratt, A[n] Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions, 1840," 13. The quotation marks within Orson Pratt's description indicate that he is, in turn, borrowing language from a theological summary written by his brother

Parley. See Parley P. Pratt, "Discovery of an Ancient Record in America," *Millennial Star 1* (June 1840): 30. Parley's description of the interpreters appears to have been taken from Mosiah 28:13, to which he added "transparent" and "clear as chrystal."

42　James Morier, *A Second Journey through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor, to Constantinople, Between the Years 1810 and 1816* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1818), 284, emphasis added.

43　Richard M. Robinson, "The History of a Nephite Coin" (unpublished manuscript, 30 December 1934), typescript, https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets?id=8b11984f-244a-4795-986e-fca0f5649e3b, emphasis added.

44　"The Book of Mormon," Auburn Free Press 7, no. 29 (8 December 1830):2, emphasis added.

45　O. Turner, *History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase, and Morris' Reserve: Embracing the Counties of Monroe, Ontario, Livingston, Yates, Steuben, Most of Wayne and Allegany, And Parts of Orleans, Genesee, and Wyoming. To Which Is Added, A Supplement or Extension of the Pioneer History of Monroe County* (Rochester, NY: William Alling, 1851), 215

46　"Kelley Notes, 6 March 1881," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:87, emphasis added.

47　*Times and Seasons 4* (1 December 1842):32, emphasis added.

48　Apostle Orson Pratt taught that "the Urim and Thummim is a stone or other substance sanctified and illuminated by the Spirit of the living God, and presented to those who are blessed with the gift of seeing." *Masterful Discourses and Writings of Orson Pratt*, ed. N. B. Lundwall (Salt Lake City: N. B. Lundwall, 1946), 552. In his Journal entry for May 6, 1849, Brigham Young recorded: "We spent the time in interesting conversation upon … the gift of seeing, and how Joseph obtained his first seer stone." Brigham Young, "May 6, 1849," in *Manuscript History of Brigham Young 1847–1850*, ed. William S. Harwell (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing, 1997), 200. In David Whitmer's statement quoted previously, he says that "God gave to Brother Joseph the gift to see … Oliver Cowdery had the same gift at one time." While president of the High Council in Zion, David Whitmer condemned false visions seen by members of the Hulet Branch of the Church in Ohio, saying

that their "gift of seeing" was of the devil. "History, 1838–1856, volume A–1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834]," 530, The Joseph Smith Papers, http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/536. The gift of visions is not one of the spiritual gifts mentioned by Paul (1 Corinthians 12), but it is mentioned in the seventh Article of Faith. Noah Webster's 1828 dictionary defines seer as "1. One who sees; as a seer of visions." *Webster's Dictionary 1828* – Online Edition, s.v. "seer," http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/seer. The December 26, 1860 *Deseret News* reported that President Brigham Young had preached "that the gift of seeing was a natural gift, that there are thousands in the world who are natural born Seers, but … the Lord selected Joseph Smith to be his vicegerent and mouthpiece upon the earth in this dispensation." "Tabernacle," *Deseret News*, 26 Dec. 1860.

49   For the gift of visions, see previous note. Isaac Hale stated in an affidavit in 1834: "I first became acquainted with JOSEPH SMITH, Jr. in November, 1825. He was at that time in the employ of a set of men who were called 'money diggers;' and his occupation was that of seeing, or pretending to see by means of a stone placed in his hat, and his hat closed over his face. In this way he pretended to discover minerals and hidden treasure." "Isaac Hale Statement, 1834," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:284–87.

50   "Wonderfull Discovery," *Wayne Sentinel*, 27 December 1825, quoted in Ashurst-McGee, "Pathway to Prophethood," 171, emphasis added.

51   "Martin Harris Interview with Joel Tiffany, 1859," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:302, 305, emphasis added.

52   See Whitmer's 1887 account quoted previously. A fictional story written (though not published) in Joseph Smith's time tells of a pretended seer who had "a stone which he pronounced transparent — tho' it was not transparent to common eyes. — Thro' this he could view things … & discover hidden treasures, secluded from the eyes of other mortals." Solomon Spaulding, The "Manuscript Found": Manuscript Story (Salt Lake City: *Deseret News*, 1886), 74–75. In pronouncing the opaque stone "transparent," the pretended seer must have been speaking, not of its appearance, but of the traditional understanding that seer stones were looked "through or into" to see visions.

53 "David Whitmer Interview with James H. Hart, 21 August 1883 &
10 March 1884," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 5:104–5, emphasis
added.

54 "Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845," The Joseph Smith Papers,
7–8, bk. 5, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/
lucy-mack-smith-history-1844-1845/61. One report, by Henry
Caswall, includes a claim that she saw the interpreters. "Lucy Smith
Interview, 1842," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:221. This was
not a formal interview in which Caswall could have easily taken
careful notes, and he may have incorrectly remembered some
details. In fact, this short account also includes other incredible
and unsubstantiated claims — that Lucy saw the gold plates, that
the breastplate was made of pure gold, that the number of believers
in the Book of Mormon had reached 100,000 by 1842, and that the
plates were found in a cave and were bound by a single ring at the
corner. His report tends toward embellishment and exaggeration.
See Craig Foster, "Henry Caswell: Anti-Mormon Extraordinaire,"
BYU Studies 35, no. 4 (1995–96):150–52. Lucy never otherwise
claimed to have seen the plates or the interpreters uncovered.

55 "Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845," The Joseph Smith Papers,
7–8, bk. 5. This is the original wording in the earliest (1844–1845
"rough draft") manuscript of her history. Later, "stones" was
crossed out with blue ink and replaced with "3 cornered diamonds
set in glass and the glass was set in silver bows," along with a note
indicating that she examined the instrument "with no covering
but a silk handkerchief."

56 "Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845," The Joseph Smith Papers, 107.
For edits in the dictated manuscript, see the preceding note.

57 See the "Historical Introduction" in "Lucy Mack Smith, History,
1845," The Joseph Smith Papers, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/
paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1845/7#historical-intro.

58 *History of the Prophet Joseph by His Mother Lucy Smith as Revised
by George A. Smith and Elias Smith* (Salt Lake City: Improvement
Era, 1902).

59 See the "Historical Introduction" in "Lucy Mack Smith, History,
1845," The Joseph Smith Papers, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/
paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1845/7#historical-intro.

60 For Caswall's interview, see Lucy Smith Interview, 1842," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:221. For Lapham's interview, see "Joseph Smith, Sr., Interview with Fayette Lapham, 1830," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:462. For a sample of inaccuracies in the Caswall report, see note 54. Also see note 61 regarding Lapham's account.

61 For examples of the use of "glass" and "glass-looking" in reference to seer stones, see statements by Ezra Booth, Isaac Hale, and Joseph Knight herein. For seer stones as "diamonds," see "Gold Digging in Brighton! The Spiritual Humbug on a Grand Scale — A Thousand Dollar Swindle," *The Rochester Daily Times*, 28 May 1851; and George H. Harris, "Myths of Ononda," (unpublished manuscript, H. Michael Marquardt papers, ca. 1887). Ashurst-McGee disputes the idea that diamond was a folk term for a seer stone that could be applied to a stone of any type, citing Lapham's recollection of Joseph Smith Senior's descriptions of the interpreters ("a pair of spectacles … the eyes not of glass, but of diamond") as contradicting that idea, if accurate. Ashurst-McGee, "Pathway to Prophethood," 197–98, 305, 305n496. He is correct in saying that Lapham's statement contradicts the idea that Smith was using the word diamond in reference to seer stones, since both diamond and glass in Lapham's recollection refer to materials, not objects. The accuracy of Lapham's recollection of Smith's words, however, is far from certain. First reported forty years after his interview with Smith, Lapham's account contains many inaccuracies. His wording is certainly a paraphrase, not a quotation, and may reflect his own misinterpretation of Smith's colloquial use of diamond. Lapham's recollection that the interpreters had lenses "not of glass, but of diamond" could have easily resulted from his misinterpretation of a statement by Smith that the interpreters had lenses "of diamonds" (meaning seer stones).

62 "David Whitmer Interview with P. Wilhelm Poulson, Circa April 1878," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 5:40.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid., 5:36.

65 "David Whitmer Interview with Kansas City Journal, 1 June 1881," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 5:76.

66   "David Whitmer to Kansas City Journal 13 June 1881," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 5:81–82.

67   "David Whitmer Interview with Kansas City Journal, 1 June 1881," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 5:72.

68   "David Whitmer Interview with St. Louis Republican, July 1884," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 5:131.

69   For the three most authoritative accounts from David Whitmer, see Spencer, "Seers and Stones," 32–33, 38–40. For other accounts attributed to David Whitmer, see Welch, "The Miraculous Translation of the Book of Mormon," 145–58. The account listed by Welch that makes most mention of the interpreters appeared in the Chicago Tribune in 1885. Whitmer's son insisted that his father was not a source for this account as alleged and that it was inaccurate, but that his father was tired of always contradicting such reports and so let it pass. "David Whitmer Interview with Nathan Tanner, Jr., 13 May 1886," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 5:166.

70   "Oliver Cowdery Interview with Josiah Jones," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:415.

71   "Abram W. Benton Reminiscence, March 1831," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:95, 97, emphasis added.

72   This does not mean that all or even most of the visions purportedly seen by these individuals were divine or representative of reality. The fact that buried money seen with stones was rarely unearthed suggests some degree of mere imagination or deception in the purported visions. For more on this topic, see Spencer, "Seers and Stones," 55–56.

73   Nearly 100 years after the event would have taken place, a report of an interview with William Smith was published in which it is claimed that "William informed us that he had, himself, by Joseph's direction, put the Urim and Thummim before his eyes, but could see nothing, as he did not have the gift of a Seer." J. W. Peterson, "The Urim and Thummim," *The Rod of Iron 1*, no. 3 (February 1924):7. This report is hardly convincing given its extremely late date and lack of corroboration from other accounts, including William Smith's own 1883 account quoted previously. Also, it is unlikely that William Smith would have been permitted to see the interpreters since Joseph Smith had been commanded to show

them to no one except a few special witnesses (per Joseph Knight's account, quoted previously; see also Mosiah 8:13). It is possible that Peterson, who did not publish this report until decades after the interview was conducted, remembered William Smith's words incorrectly. Smith may have said something more like, "Even had I, by Joseph's direction, put the Urim and Thummim before my eyes, I could have seen nothing, as I did not have the gift of a Seer." Peterson, at the end of his report, admits he is working from memory rather than notes taken at the time of the interview. As readily available reproductions of this report are incomplete and tend to have errors, I provide the full report here:

> On the fourth of July, about 1891, in company with Elder W. S. Pender, I first met Elder William B. Smith, brother of Joseph Smith, the Martyr. He was then in his eightieth year. We remained with him at his home in Osterdock, Iowa, for several days, and our conversation often turned upon the early scenes with which he and his father's family were connected during the rise of the church. Among other things we inquired minutely about the [begin p. 7] Urim and Thummim and the breastplate. We asked him what was meant by the expression, "two rims of a bow," which held the former. He said a double silver bow was twisted into the shape of the figure eight, and the two stones were placed literally between the two rims of a bow. At one end was attached a rod which was connected with the outer edge of the right shoulder of the breast-plate. By pressing the head a little forward, the rod held the Urim and Thummim before the eyes much like a pair of spectacles. A pocket was prepared in the breastplate on the left side, immediately over the heart. When not in use the Urim and Thummim was placed in this pocket, the rod being of just the right length to allow it to be so deposited. This instrument could, however, be detached from the breastplate and his brother said Joseph often wore it detached when away from home, but always used it in connection with the breastplate when receiving official communications, and usually so when translating, as it permitted him to have both hands free to hold the plates.

In answer to our question, William informed us that he had, himself, by Joseph's direction, put the Urim and Thummim before his eyes, but could see nothing, as he did not have the gift of a Seer. He also informed us that the instruments were too wide for his eyes, as also for Joseph's, and must have been used by much larger men. The instrument caused a strain on Joseph's eyes, and he sometimes resorted to the plan of covering his eyes with a hat to exclude the light in part. William Smith imparted to us much information regarding other things, but this is about all I remember with regard to the Urim and Thummim. — J. W. Peterson.

74 "William Smith Interview with J. W. Peterson and W. S. Pender, 1890," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:508.

75 Peterson, "The Urim and Thummim," 7. See note 73 for the full article and concerns about its credibility.

76 After reviewing these and other descriptions of the interpreters, Ashurst-McGee comes to a different conclusion. He suggests that the descriptions of the stones as clear or diamond-like and descriptions of the stones as opaque may not be contradictory, but rather complementary, with the former perhaps referring to "clear diamonds" and the latter to "circular lenses of cloudy white crystal" or glass in which the clear, three-cornered diamonds were encased. Ashurst-McGee, "Pathway to Prophethood," 305–8, 310, 318. This explanation is worth considering, since it brings together the most detailed descriptions of the interpreters. But it prompts the questions of why Harris, in his careful and detailed description of the instrument, would have left out any mention of the diamonds or the nested construction of the lenses, and why two descriptions that are central to this explanation — the description of the interpreters as "three-cornered diamonds set in glass(es)" and "clear as crystal," if accurate, would be specifically rejected by Brigham Young and Joseph Smith (or those editing under their direction), respectively. In their book on the translation and publication of the Book of Mormon, MacKay and Dirkmaat reconcile the various descriptions of the interpreter stones in another way. While they accept that the term diamonds was used to identify the stones as seer stones, they suggest that Pratt called them "crystals" to "express the value of the stones and to set them apart from others," and they suggest that the stones

were described as clear or transparent, not because they were transparent in the usual sense, but rather "possibly in the same way that an unpolished diamond or crystal was translucent." They conclude that the interpreters were thick, "cloudy crystalline stones" that were convex on both sides and "shaped in a way that might magnify if they were transparent." MacKay and Dirkmaat, *From Darkness Unto Light*, 62–63.

Never Static, Never Simple: One Woman's Conversations Within the Marginalia of *If Truth Were a Child*

Amanda Colleen Brown

Review of George B. *Handley, If Truth Were A Child: Essays*, (Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2019), 253 pp. $19.99 (paperback).

Abstract: *George B. Handley challenges his readers to reevaluate conventional definitions of truth and the approaches they employ to define their own truths. He argues that the individual quest for truth should include as many available resources as possible, whether those resources are secular or religious. His framework of intellectual and religious experience allows him to discuss truth in the context of literary theory and of the events that shaped his own faith. My review focuses on four themes: balancing experience and learning, balancing the individual and the community, balancing answers and faith, and balancing individual readings of holy texts. Ultimately, Handley's discussion of those themes gives readers the tools to navigate the current public discourse more effectively, empowering them to look beyond their own perspectives to discover the good in everyone and find balance in their lives.*

When I approach a *Living Faith* volume,[1] I expect to have a conversation with the author, to meet his views with my own. When writing a review, I want to answer his personal thoughts with my own. While this creates a less formal review, I think it speaks more to the heart of a series dedicated to living faith.

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1. *Living Faith* is the name of a series of books published by Maxwell Institute, announced in January 2014. Handley's volume is the latest in this series.

While reading this book, one word kept appearing in my margins on almost every page: לְאזן, translated "to balance."[2] I first came across the word in a Modern Hebrew lecture but learned about its larger etymology in an Akkadian seminar later in the term. The word for *intelligent* or *wise* in Akkadian is <u>uznu</u>, which is also the word for *ear*,[3] signifying the ancient belief that the ears balanced the head just as wisdom balances one's actions. This image appropriately describes how I came to Handley's material. I am a Latter-day Saint, a scholar, a Millennial, a dancer, and approximately 1,002 other things. My life and the things I identify with are a continuous balancing act. I am not unique in this; in fact, the universality of balancing the parts that make up the whole is foundational to the book. In discussing Handley's work, I have chosen to focus on four main themes in which the individual is expected to balance in various capacities. While something of the individual essay structure is lost in this, I believe the book should be taken as a whole.

Throughout this volume, when Handley refers to truth, he is either referring to knowledge and information gleaned from study or to "religion's revealed truths" (xiii). He argues for the enlargement of both, either through more study or revelation and experience. He broadly characterizes truth not as a "fact or a thing" but as "experiences and relationships that teach us love." He explains that "Truth is no trophy in our glass case or award framed on our wall. Its value isn't in possessing it … truth's value is manifest by the love we muster to build relationships in its pursuit" (83). From this perspective, truth is less about obtaining information and understanding or choosing a side of the polemics that endlessly confront us and more about how individuals act on what they believe.

The value of viewing truth through this perspective is best explained by the author's editorialization on the judgment of Solomon (1 Kings 3:16–28). Two prostitutes come before Solomon asking for a ruling regarding their dispute. They live together with their babies, but one of the babies dies in the night. Both mothers claim the living baby is her own. Solomon shockingly rules that the baby be cut in half, ensuring that both mothers have a share of the living baby, while simultaneously ensuring both lose their babies. The false mother rejoices over this ruling, preferring the true mother have nothing instead of having something she cannot. The real

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2. Shmuel Bolozky, *501 Hebrew verbs: fully conjugated in all the tenses in a new easy-to-learn format alphabetically arranged by root* (Barron's Educational Series, 1996), 7-8.

3. Martha T. Roth, et al., *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2010), 20:362.

mother is desperate that her child live, even if it is not with her, so the child can be a whole human with potential to grow into an adult. She would not have him forever crystalized in one stage. Solomon recognizes the true mother from this response, and the baby is given to her.

After recounting this story, Handley asks, "with how much more care and humility would we speak and act if the truth were not the result of some game of words or a battle of wills, but a flesh-and-bone living child, a living soul?" (105). What if we treated truth as a living entity capable of transforming from toddler to mature adult? Asking readers to reform their conceptualization of truth from the facts they first learned into an entity that should undergo constant transformation offers a process by which truth is enlarged to match experience. This creates a space in which personal bias and agenda are continuously under scrutiny and therefore unable to mask as truth. Viewing truth as a child — ever-changing, yet still unconditionally cared for — allows readers to open themselves to a transformative process rather than a static event that ends in a premature death.

Balancing Experience and Learning

Handley indicates his thesis in the following language:

> I believe that the humanities are not just an adornment but are essential to our spiritual lives, and by that I also mean that intellectual and spiritual growth need to occur in at least some relation to one another. However, neither religion nor the humanities can have the greatest impact and best influence in our lives without three crucial ingredients: criticism, compassion, and charity. These things often work together but sometimes get separated, and when they do, the quality of our intellectual and spiritual lives suffers. (36)

Throughout his book, Handley openly discusses the experiences in his life that have promoted faith while simultaneously citing authors he academically values. This method produces essays both deeply personal and grounded in academic discourse. The first two chapters explore his approach to Christianity and specifically the Latter-day Saint faith and his reasons for attributing value to them in his personal life. As a religious Millennial, I greatly identified with his exploration into the merits of religious tenets.

Explaining his reasoning for adhering to his Latter-day Saint faith, Handley states, "I didn't choose the religion for cultural or political

reasons … I didn't choose it because Latter-day Saints are my tribe or because my identity is that of a Latter-day Saint. I chose it because I believe it" (xiii). By framing the motivation behind his faith, he creates a framework from the outset where the reader can expect him to allude to the experiences that shaped his faith in one sentence and discuss literary theory in the next.

Personally, I found this mix of experience and training not only refreshing but healthy. In categorizing our learning as either spiritual or academic and therefore compartmentalizing the two as inherently separate, we run the risk of allowing one to outpace the other. In creating a space where experience grows from intellectual accomplishment, and intellectual accomplishment grows from lived experiences, the individual opens up to a holistic learning process in which faith and secular pursuits constantly create and reform beliefs.

Balancing the Individual and the Community

Handley's discussion on the individual's role within a global community throughout the book begins by posing questions every faithful person must ask: "How can I espouse beliefs that are universal while still remaining tolerant, patient, and appreciative of the truths espoused by others? How can I espouse beliefs and testify of their veracity while also acknowledging that the truth of God is always greater than our understanding of him?" (29). These are questions that sink to the heart of the matter of truth because they acknowledge that belief in universal ideas must interact with the broader community. As such, the believer must carefully consider his or her faith's espoused truths, seeking to better understand them within the context of the diversity of human history.

Handley opens this discussion with an outline of what Christianity means to him as a believer and builds upon his reasoning for espousing its revealed truths throughout his essays. He states that belief in Christ should not be characterized as intolerance or fanaticism but as a moral obligation in every relationship. He puts it this way: "I believe I am morally obligated to try to heal, to bring joy, and to do good. This is what amounts to bringing others to Christ, to whatever extent they are willing or interested" (24). This approach is appealing because it creates a common ground for every interaction. Instead of a conversation centered on specific ideologies, the focus shifts to allowing others to accept the amount of truth they are prepared for in order to share one's faith. This can manifest through acts of service, a powerful testimony, or a friendly conversation between neighbors. Of course, dedication to the set of beliefs one espouses plays

an integral part in adhering to said beliefs, but when being right becomes more important than loving, serving and striving to heal, and bringing joy to others, one must refocus motives toward Christ.

Handley also explains why he adheres to the Latter-day Saint faith, citing the unique perspectives on personal revelation, missionary work, and temple work as particularly important to him. Of the first he states, "From personal experience, I have learned that the Lord grants me higher understanding to the degree I am willing to improve my life and rethink my assumptions. Revelation, in other words, is never independent of my willingness to change" (11). He then explains that for him, personal revelation invites change and checks his convictions to make sure they are "as close to God's truths as they can be" (18). Personal revelation is then a way of drawing closer to truth in the very fact that it may make the individual question his or her previous outlook on the topic/circumstance to which it pertains, precisely because God's thoughts are not the thoughts of humans (see Isaiah 55:8, 9).

Handley's reflections on missionary and temple work also resonated with me. As a student of the humanities, I am wary of practices that have the appearance of colonialism. Do we rely too heavily on our own "ethnic stor[ies]" (21) to elevate our beliefs above our faith? In his discussion on missionary work, Handley wrote of his own experience with this question, concluding:

> I wish people today could appreciate what it means for young people to walk in the streets among all kinds of people, to eat and talk and live as they do in humility and simplicity and to learn life on their terms, to speak to them in their homes, and to work to earn their trust not because the missionaries have something to gain from them but because they only hope for the people's deeper happiness. (26)

By framing the desire to share the beliefs one holds sacred on the terms of the other person, Handley presents a path by which feelings of superiority are cowed by experience and love. Temple work only adds to this. As a religion, we are not satisfied in only asking those around us if what we believe to be true can add to what they already believe. No, we ask it of our dead as well. In this, "the zeal of a missionary is balanced by the patience of a temple worker" (30). Our beliefs do not have to be accepted at the edge of the sword, as it were. We believe in giving people time to search out truth for themselves, so much so that the time for seeking truth extends beyond the grave.

Dovetailing this discussion, Handley reminds us that "Although your stories are different from mine, yours are just as idiosyncratic" (35). He advocates charity for each other while each of us comes to truth under our own specific circumstances and in our own times. He also urges the use of as many resources in our search for truth as we have at our disposal, be they academic, cultural, artistic, or religious. He says, "When the faithful disciple engages deeply … and emerges with a changed, reoriented, and enlarged vision of human experience, the humanities prove integral to the ongoing restoration of all things … consecrated learning becomes a poetics of the Restoration" (62). Pursuing the line of inquiry the humanities have established is essential to the gospel because it is what provides the stimulus for personal revelation.

Balancing Community and Leadership

The emphasis on growing truth as a community naturally leads to a discussion regarding the institution and the concept of institutional perfection. Handley argues for a balance of responsibility between the institution and those who interact with it. He says:

> There are certainly examples in church history of when church leaders have been wrong about one issue or another. If I were to see them as the spiritual equivalent of superheroes who have categorically superior character, superior intelligence, and superior and unassailable wisdom on all topics, then this stance would imply that the blessings and opportunities of discipleship are intended for only an elect few, which would diminish my belief in my own chances for improvement and growth. If I believe I see their weaknesses, my responsibility is to do what I can to keep working where I have the most direct influence to make the church as effective as it can be for others. This is for me more important than my judgement of the leaders or my efforts to identify discrepancies between gospel ideals and institutional culture or practice." (151)

He later notes that while it is easy to blame the institution, the complexity of human beings and individual reactions to it require more introspection than simply laying the blame at the feet of leaders. We are all responsible for pain and must become better, patiently waiting on the development of the revelation we have. The institution is not perfect, which would be problematic if we were loyal to the institution. Instead the institution is merely the structure that unites our loyalties. We are all

equal in the ability to receive individual revelation and are all, therefore, complicit in fostering and carrying out the community structure we hope to be part of.

Balancing Answers and Faith

In approaching truth and knowledge, Handley asks: What is knowledge worth to us? What do we wager? How far are we willing to pursue truth to find meaning in it? These questions reminded me of the sentiment expressed in the September 2017 article "How a free canvas tote became a bigger status symbol than a $10,000 Hermès bag." The author suggested that a *New Yorker* tote bag, free with a subscription, telegraphed to the subscriber's community that she appreciates cultural literacy and is willing to pay a premium for knowledge.[4] While the search for truth extends beyond a free tote, using it as a status symbol physically indicates the wearer's search for truth as an aesthetic element and aptly illustrates truth as a form of currency. More fundamentally, is truth worth skimming Wikipedia articles as consumers, or is it worth our time, patience, research, and attention?

The balance we are discussing here is so difficult because finding immediate answers to our questions and believing there's enough of an answer to give the process time are different methods often conflated into one. How comfortable are we in *not* understanding the whole of something all at once but then easily grasping an answer to the next question? Yet Handley argues that having patience and trust in coming to a full understanding of truth is imperative. He says, "I am wary of easy or superficially logical explanations that try to make facile sense of things that do not deserve superficiality but instead require time and patience and faithful waiting" (163). Finally, the most uncomfortable balance of all may be between having answers and having none at all. Balancing these aspects of devotion and doubt are essential to all people who seek faith.

Balancing Reading Holy Texts

Handley's writing revolves around the premise that obtaining a meaningful understanding of truth is not a trivial matter. Applying this to scriptural literacy, he advocates a reimagining of truth found in "likening" the scriptures and a renewed commitment to the pursuit of

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4. Leslie Albrecht, "How a free canvas tote became a bigger status symbol than a $10,000 Hermès bag," MarketWatch, September 9, 2017, https://www.marketwatch.com/story/how-a-free-canvas-tote-became-a-bigger-status-symbol-than-a-10000-hermes-bag-2017-09-01.

truth. Arguing for an approach of duality, where the reader perpetually glances back, balancing history lost with revealed present truth, he encourages literary discernment in sacred reading.

Drawing heavily from Jacobs and Ricoeur, Handley also reimagines the process of reading scripture and the risks inherent to it. Instead of relying on the too-often oppositional reader response and historical critical methods, he advocates a reading in which participants imagine themselves into the text, and he provides examples of what such readings can accomplish throughout the book, connecting them to our own interpretative history.

Most notably, this method is outlined in Handley's reading of 2 Nephi 27 and its "narrativized metaphor" (203) of Isaiah 29's reference to a sealed book. In this passage, Nephi takes a text he feels a connection with and reads himself and his people into it, expanding it to fit his prophetic vision and experience. Just as Nephi saw both the original meaning and an expanded meaning in his editorialization, he thinks that we, too, are supposed to see the sealed book as a prophecy about Martin Harris's failed meeting with Charles Anthon *and* as an allegory about the pitfalls one experiences after he or she has rejected revelation (203–205). Expanded readings like these are why the Holy Ghost is a necessary tool for reading scripture in that he provides discernment.

While I agreed with Handley's ultimate conclusions, his process exhibited my primary disagreement with the book. Having previously argued that Nephi's reinterpretation is intrinsically connected to the original meaning of Isaiah 29, I feel Handley missed much of how Nephi read himself into the quoted text by forgoing an analysis that accounted for the original context of the Isaiah passage, which he skipped over entirely.[5] Unlike Isaiah's voices crying from the dust, who have no medium to communicate beyond the grave, Nephi's voices are encapsulated in a book then given life through the efforts of a medium translator. Reading context into passages allows the reader to fully appreciate the extent to which the new metaphor encapsulates the original meaning.

I value Handley's proposed system because it provides a reading framework for those who are intimidated by the black hole that is historical critical theory. I love accounts of the wrestle one has with the narrative and how it can connect the individual to the divine. However, I worry that without a very basic framework of historical and cultural

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5. Amanda Colleen Brown, "Out of the Dust: An Examination of Necromancy as a Literary Construct in the Book of Mormon," *Studia Antiqua* 14, no. 2 (January 2016), 27-37, https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1237&context=studiaantiqua.

knowledge, the reader will not reach "the moment of transfer from the seemingly ahistorical space of a sacred meaning into our own history" (200), simply because he or she lacks the foundation to go from one point to the next. I agree there is a time and place for an almost mystic reading of oneself into the text and have personally greatly benefitted from it. Such readings are what draw me into holy texts, making them my own, making them Divine. Such readings do not inform my understanding of what the text says in and of itself. My academic training does that. For me, it's a balance.

Conclusion

The author ends the book on a larger note, discarding the narrative of self-made blessings for a system in which grace is life itself. He says, "Appreciation of life's glory comes at a cost: one must forsake a will to control and the expectation of a desired outcome" (240). By broadening the definition of grace, life's meaning becomes less centered on a path paved with blessings received from commandments kept aright and more about the substance of a life lived as "a plotless poem" (241). Releasing ourselves from the narrative that commandments lived entitle us to grace frees us to more fully explore grace as something ineffable, something that cannot be wielded as a weapon to control our individual destinies.

As a final personal reflection, a quote that often has sprung to mind when I contemplate truth is, "there is no right or wrong, but thinking makes it so."[6] While this line is deeply ironic, coming from a prince whose entire character motivation revolves around his conviction that he sees his father's ghost, I find it an apt characterization of the perils and pitfalls one faces when undertaking a serious quest for truth. Handley's reminder that thinking is far less important than doing good and acting upon grace counteracts the idea that truth can be decided in a split-second decision set against conflicting data points. I wish to live in a world where building community through common ground is not just lauded as an ideal but is a reality. Reflecting upon ways in which we all can look beyond our own perspectives and find the good in everyone, Handley has outlined a path through the current public discourse. Treating truth as an entity in a constant state of development, Handley asks us to build upon what we believe together, to create common ground.

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6. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, act 2, scene 2.

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Gentiles in the Book of Mormon

**John Hilton III, Ryan Sharp,
Brad Wilcox, and Jaron Hansen**

Abstract: *The word* Gentiles *appears 141 times in the Book of Mormon (the singular* Gentile *appears only five times.) It appears more frequently than key words such as* baptize, resurrection, Zion, *and truth. The word* Gentiles *does not appear with equal frequency throughout the Book of Mormon; in fact, it appears in only five of its fifteen books: 1 Nephi, 2 Nephi, 3 Nephi, Mormon, and Ether. Additionally, Book of Mormon speakers did not say* Gentiles *evenly. Some speakers said the word much less often than we might expect while others used it much more. Nephi$_1$ used* Gentiles *the most (43 times), and Christ Himself used it 38 times. In addition to analyzing which speakers used the word, this study shows distinctive ways in which Book of Mormon speakers used this word.*

Students of the Book of Mormon can look at the text differently as they understand the context, purpose, and word choice of individual speakers. Stylometry is analysis of various literary styles that combines literary theory with statistics to understand the structure of a text. One application of stylometry which has received attention in Book of Mormon scholarship is often referred to as "wordprints." These studies attempt to show that just as everyone has a distinct fingerprint, each author tends to have a distinct voice and style. Contrasted with a subjective recognition that various authors have a similar theme or tone in their writing, stylometry uses quantifiable metrics and statistical techniques to inform the analysis.[1]

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1. Wayne A. Larsen, Alvin C. Rencher, and Tim Layton, "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon? An Analysis of Wordprints," *BYU Studies* 20, no. 3 (1980): 225-51; John L. Hilton, "On Verifying Wordprint Studies: Book of Mormon Authorship," in *BYU Studies* 30, no. 3 (Summer 1990), 89-108.

The initial studies on wordprints in the Book of Mormon looked at samples of 1,000 to 5,000 words and examined "the use of the small, function words, i.e., *the, and, but, of,* etc" in an effort to "recognize that different authors did indeed write the various strands within the Book of Mormon."[2] Additional studies used a statistical methodology called "nearest shrunken centroid" classification to conclude that "the Book of Mormon displays multiple writing styles throughout the text consistent with the book's claim of multiple authors and that the evidence does not show the writing styles of alleged nineteenth-century authors to be similar to those in the Book of Mormon."[3] A study by Roger Keller took this work in a different direction by analyzing words which were more theologically, culturally, or historically significant (such as *laws, commandments, church, Israel,* etc).[4] Keller attempted to determine if there were differences in how these words were being used by different speakers in the text.

Building on the work of these scholars, recent studies have continued to examine patterns of speech used by various speakers in the Book of Mormon. These studies have analyzed how a particular word was understood and used in context, how that understanding compared with other authors in the Book of Mormon, and what can be learned when a speaker's use of a word in the Book of Mormon is juxtaposed with its use in the Bible. For example, an analysis of the use of the word *baptize* in the Book of Mormon showed that it appeared differently in each book, and within the Book of Mormon, speakers did not evenly say *baptize* ; rather, different individuals focused on different aspects of the word.[5] Significantly, this same study showed that Christ Himself focused on baptism more than any other individual and that he did so in a way that encouraged a personal relationship with Him. A similar study focused on the word *resurrection* and showed that later Book of Mormon prophets were aware of how earlier prophets used the term. This finding challenges the idea that the Book of Mormon is the product of Joseph Smith or a derivative of the Bible by demonstrating that

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2. Roger R. Keller, *Book of Mormon Authors: Their Words and Messages* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1996), xii.

3. Matthew Roper, Paul J. Fields, and G. Bruce Schaalje, "Stylometric Analyses of the Book of Mormon: A Short History," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 21, no. 1 (2012): 43.

4. Keller, *Book of Mormon Authors: Their Words and Messages,* xi–xiii.

5. John Hilton III and Jana Johnson. "The Word *Baptize* in the Book of Mormon," *Interpreter* 29 (2018), 65-80.

the individuals in the Book of Mormon had different ways of discussing resurrection.[6] The Book of Mormon's use of the word *Gentiles* similarly shows evidence of multiple authors.

The plural word *Gentiles* appears 141 times in the Book of Mormon (the singular *Gentile* appears only five times.)[7] It appears more frequently than key words such as *baptize, resurrection, Zion,* and *truth.* This suggests that Book of Mormon authors considered discussions concerning Gentiles to be worth precious space in their records. Yet, some modern-day readers might pass over the word *Gentiles* in the Book of Mormon without deeply considering why Book of Mormon speakers discussed Gentiles or how various speakers discussed them differently.

Sidney Sperry wrote, "The Latter-day Saints who bring forth the Book of Mormon, thus assisting the Lord to do his marvelous work 'among the Gentiles,' are 'Gentiles' in the political sense. … So Moroni, the Savior, and some other writers speak of us as 'Gentiles' in the political sense, and this fact must be kept in mind by readers of the Nephite record. (See, e.g., 1 Nephi 13:39; 15:13; Mormon 5:15; 3 Nephi 16:4, 6; 21:5)."[8]

The term *Gentile* can be confusing. Two biblical scholars illuminated this confusion when they wrote, "the term 'Gentiles' is a Jewish (and, from the first century CE, also a Christian) term applied collectively to all non-Jews (and, by Christians, to non-Christian non-Jews), and Gentiles themselves applied other divisions … based on class (free man vs. slaves and rulers vs. subjects), gender (males and females) or ethnicity (Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Persians, Jews, and so on)."[9] Because of the various nuances described, it can be difficult to find an exact, uniform definition for the word *Gentiles.*

Paul Y. Hoskisson provided some clarity when he explained, "The word *Gentile* has several meanings that can be traced back etymologically to one original concept, the idea of a people or tribe. The English word *Gentile* comes from a Latin word that means 'tribe, clan, family, people, etc.'" This means that *Gentiles*, in general terms, simply

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6. John Hilton III and Jana Johnson, "Who Uses the Word Resurrection in the Book of Mormon and How Is It Used?" *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 21, no. 2 (2012), 30-39.

7. Three times in the title page, and in 2 Nephi 10:16, and 2 Nephi 26:33. These usages are excluded from this discussion, which only focuses on the plural *Gentiles.*

8. Sidney Sperry, *Answers to Book of Mormon Questions* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967), 24.

9. John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow, *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Erndmans, 2010), 668.

implies a segregation between various people; it gives the idea of *them* and *us.* He continued: "In this sense *Gentile* is a good translation of the Hebrew word goy/goyim in the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek word *ethnos/ethne* in the Greek New Testament, both of which also mean 'people.'" [10] Thus, when the term *Gentiles* is used in a biblical context, it most often refers to non-Jewish nations.

Monte S. Nyman described how the Book of Mormon uses similar language when he wrote, "The Gentiles, as the term is used in the Book of Mormon, are all those who are not Jews, including those who may be of the blood of Israel but have lost their identity and been assimilated into non-Jewish nations."[11] Specifically, the authors in the Book of Mormon tended to employ *Gentiles* when referring to anyone who is not from their tribe, or anyone who is not a Jew.

Occurrences of *Gentiles* in the Book of Mormon

The word *Gentiles* does not appear with equal frequency throughout the Book of Mormon; in fact, *Gentiles* appears in only five of its fifteen books: 1 Nephi, 2 Nephi, 3 Nephi, Mormon, and Ether (Chart 1).[12] The word does not appear at all in the middle sections of the book.

Occurrences of *Gentiles* may be related to Heather Hardy's observation that there is inconsistency throughout the Book of Mormon regarding personal salvation and salvation history. Early Nephite prophets, including Nephi$_1$, Jacob, and Isaiah, whom Nephi$_1$ and Jacob frequently quoted, focused on the salvation of groups of people, including both the house of Israel and the Gentiles. On the

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10.   *Doctrine and Covenants Reference Companion,* ed. Dennis L. Largey (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2012), s.v. "Gentile(s);" In this paper when we examined the word *Gentiles* in connection with the Bible, we also looked at the English words *heathen* and *nation.* In the KJV New Testament, *ethnos* is translated as Gentiles (93), nation (64), heathen (5), and people (2). *Goy(im)* is found over 550 times in the KJV Old Testament and in only 30 of these instances (about 5% of the time) was it translated as Gentiles. Instead it was translated as nation (374), heathen (143), and people (11).

11.   *Book of Mormon Reference Companion,* ed. Dennis L. Largey (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), s.v. "Gentiles, Book of Mormon message concerning."

12.   The Book of Mormon translation may not have proceeded in the same order that the Book of Mormon is found today. Some propose that translation with Oliver Cowdery as scribe may have begun in Mosiah 1 and proceeded to Moroni and then through 1 Nephi up to Words of Mormon. See John W. Welch, "How Long Did it Take to Translate the Book of Mormon?" *Ensign* (January 1988): 46-47. The lack of any reference to Gentiles in a great portion of the Book of Mormon remains significant.

other hand, many later prophets such as King Benjamin, Alma$_2$, and Nephi$_2$ focused much more on personal salvation.

Chart 1. Occurrences of *Gentiles* throughout the Book of Mormon.
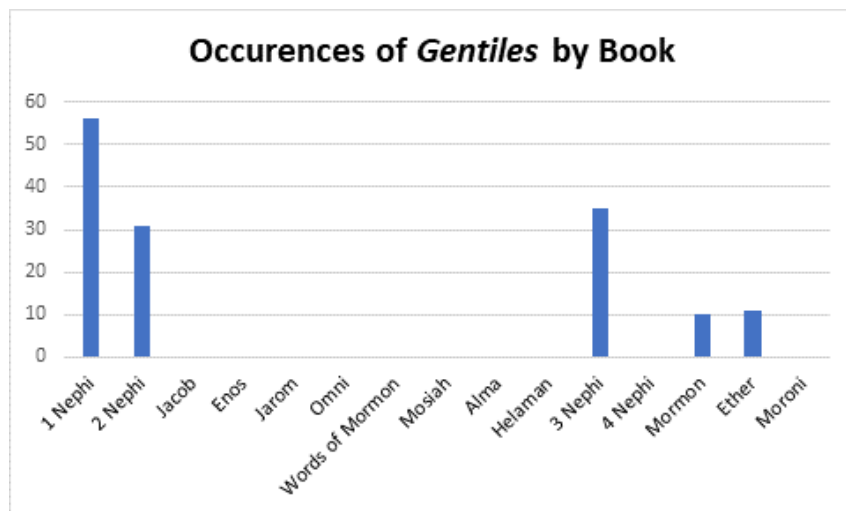
Hardy wrote, "Although a serious concern with the corporate salvation of the house of Israel [and the Gentiles] is lost from the bulk of the Nephite record after the demise of the first generation that migrated from Jerusalem, it is restored to prominence in the prophecies of the resurrected Jesus as recorded in 3 Nephi 16:4–20 and 20:10–26:5. Salvation history is never thereafter far from the Nephite record keepers' minds as they recognize (and direct) their own writings as a vehicle of both salvation and judgment to the Jews, Gentiles, and Lehites of latter days."[13]

Hardy's statement suggests that early writers in the Book of Mormon were highly focused on the salvation of groups, including the Gentiles, but this focus was lost over time. Perhaps as Nephite civilization became more distanced from its roots in Jerusalem, the minds of the people and prophets also became more distant from some of the concerns of their ancestors, including the salvation of the Gentiles. These later prophets tended to focus on individual duty and individual standing with deity

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13. Heather Hardy, "The Double Nature of God's Saving Work: The Plan of Salvation and Salvation History," in *The Things Which My Father Saw: Approaches to Lehi's Dream and Nephi's Vision* (2011 Sperry Symposium), eds. Daniel L. Belnap, Gaye Strathearn, and Stanley A. Johnson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2011), 21.

until Christ's visitation, at which point Christ reminded the people of their heritage and spoke frequently of the Jews and Gentiles.

Similarly, Joseph Spencer has pointed out that phrases relating to the gathering and scattering of Israel (which often occur in conjunction with *Gentiles*) are focal points for Nephi$_1$ and Jacob, but these ideas are not developed again until Christ's visit to the Lehites. The patterns in how the word *Gentiles* is utilized could bolster his thesis that Christ's words to the Lehites were intended (at least in part) to shift the understanding and focus of scripture back to that which had been originally taught by Nephi.[14]

These statements from previous research suggest that there may be interesting patterns to be found concerning the usage of *Gentiles* in the Book of Mormon. The general patterns of how *Gentiles* appears in the Book of Mormon depict a dynamic culture in which ideas were lost, changed, and rekindled. We can see that the foci of Nephite prophesying is not static but changing.

Who Uses the Word *Gentiles* in the Book of Mormon?

Not only is the word *Gentiles* unevenly distributed throughout the books of the Book of Mormon, the various speakers in the text also use it unevenly. These individual patterns support the claim that the Book of Mormon was written by many different ancient prophets with unique styles of speech. In addition, they may help the reader to better comprehend the principles taught concerning the Gentiles in the Book of Mormon.

In order to determine which speakers used the word *Gentiles,* we used "The Voices of the Book of Mormon" database. This database parses the text of the Book of Mormon by the person to whom the text is attributed.[15] Table 1 shows the frequency in which speakers in the Book of Mormon employed this word.

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14. This is not to say that a personal approach to the scriptures was or is not important but rather that Nephi's focus was that ancient covenants made to Israel needed (then and now) more emphasis.

15. In order to identify correctly who is speaking in any given passage, John Hilton III, Shon Hopkin, Jennifer Platt Wright, and Jana Johnson each independently analyzed the Book of Mormon to identify the different speakers. They then reviewed their individual findings and examined passages in which they disagreed on who was speaking. After creating an integrated version of the Book of Mormon parsed out by the person speaking, they compared their work to those of other scholars who had made similar efforts, and in some cases made adjustments to their original speaker designations (See Rencher's speaker divisions, which were the basis of Wayne A. Larsen, Alvin C. Rencher, and Tim Layton, "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon? An Analysis of Wordprints," *BYU Studies* 20,

Table 1. The speakers who say *Gentiles* and their frequency of use.[16]
This information is displayed visually in Chart 2.

Individual	Times used per 1,000 words	Times used	Percentage of total uses of *Gentiles*	Percentage of total words
Angel in Nephi$_1$'s Vision (1 Nephi 11-14)	9.12	18	12.8%	0.7%
The Father	4.66	7	5.0%	0.6%
Jesus Christ	2.61	37	26.2%	5.3%
Nephi$_1$	1.49	42	29.8%	10.5%
The Lord	0.76	9	6.4%	4.4%
Moroni$_2$	0.41	8	5.7%	7.3%
Jacob	0.24	2	1.4%	3.2%
Isaiah	0.12	1	0.7%	3.1%
Mormon	0.16	16	11.3%	36.4%

From Table 1 and Chart 2 (next page), we can see that Book of Mormon speakers did not say *Gentiles* evenly. Some speakers said the word much less often than others. The angel that taught Nephi$_1$ in 1 Nephi 11-14 used *Gentiles* much more frequently than we would expect given the relatively few words he spoke; moreover, his use of *Gentiles* was not evenly

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no. 3 [1980]: 225-51; see also placement of quotation marks in Grant Hardy, *The Book of Mormon: A Reader's Edition* [Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003]; For Isaiah passages we consulted John D. W. Watts, *Word Biblical Commentary 24: Isaiah 1-33* [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985] and *Word Biblical Commentary 25: Isaiah 34-66* [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987].) The resulting text was incorporated into WordCruncher. The database is available to researchers via http://wordcruncher. byu.edu. This database is admittedly limited in that it assumes that editors such as Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni accurately recounted the words spoken by specific individuals (rather than paraphrasing), and it assumes a literal translation of the Book of Mormon. This database was also used in John Hilton III and Jana Johnson, "Who Uses the Word Resurrection in the Book of Mormon and How Is It Used?" *The Journal of Book of Mormon and Restoration Scriptures,* 21, no. 2 (2012): 30-39 and Shon Hopkins and John Hilton III, "Samuel's Reliance on Biblical Language," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 23, no. 1 (2015): 31-52.

16. In addition to those in Table 1, Nephi1's brethren used the word once (1 Nephi 15:7).

distributed. He did not use the word at all in 1 Nephi 11-12 (the first half of his discussion with Nephi₁), and he used it only four times in chapter 14. His heavy use of *Gentiles* can be seen as he prophesied in 1 Nephi 13 about latter-day events on the American continent. Nephi₁, a major author, also said Gentiles more than we might expect. He frequently used *Gentiles* in his interchange with the angel; nearly one-fourth of all occurrences of *Gentiles* in the Book of Mormon appear in 1 Nephi 13.

Chart 2. Individuals' use of *Gentiles* in the Book of Mormon.
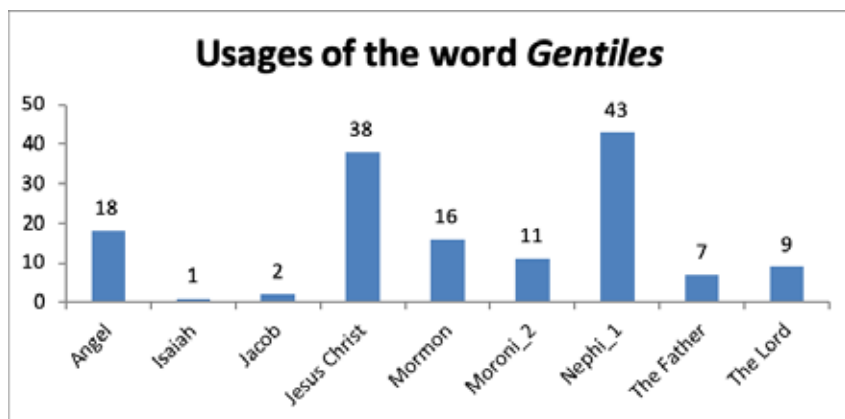
Also, as discussed above, between 2 Nephi and 3 Nephi, *Gentiles* does not appear. That means major speakers, including Lehi₁, King Benjamin, Abinadi, Alma₂, Amulek, Helaman₁, and Samuel the Lamanite, never said *Gentiles*. These individuals all addressed people living in their time and were likely less concerned about modern-day interactions between Gentiles and the house of Israel. They were more concerned with individual relationships with deity and less concerned with salvation history, and they may have been less connected with their Jewish heritage.

Another aspect of Book of Mormon speakers' use of *Gentiles* is whether they said the word *Gentiles* in directly speaking to them or whether they simply talked about them. Nephi₁, who used *Gentiles* more frequently than any other speaker, never directly addressed the Gentiles.[17] Rather than talking *to* them, he talked *about* them, as demonstrated in this passage:

17. Nephi1 quoted the Lord directly addressing the Gentiles, although he himself never did so (see 2 Nephi 29:5).

And now behold, my *beloved brethren,* I would speak unto you; for I, Nephi, would not suffer that ye should suppose that ye are more righteous than the *Gentiles* shall be. For behold, except ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall all likewise perish; and because of the words which have been spoken ye need not suppose that the *Gentiles* are utterly destroyed.

For behold, I say unto you that as many of the *Gentiles* as will repent are the covenant people of the Lord…And now, I would prophesy somewhat more concerning the Jews and the *Gentiles.* For after the book of which I have spoken shall come forth, and be written unto the *Gentiles,* and sealed up again unto the Lord, there shall be many which shall believe the words which are written; and they shall carry them forth unto the remnant of our seed. (2 Nephi 30:1–3; emphasis added)

Thus, Nephi₁'s audience was his "beloved brethren," not the Gentiles, and his focus on the Gentiles was largely tied to their role in interacting with his posterity in the latter days.[18]

In contrast, Mormon and Moroni spoke directly to the Gentiles themselves. They are the only Book of Mormon prophets who directly addressed their audience with the term *Gentiles.* Mormon said, "Hearken, O ye Gentiles" (3 Nephi 30:1), "Therefore I write unto you, Gentiles" (Mormon 3:17), and "O ye Gentiles" (Mormon 5:22). Moroni₂ stated, "And this cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles" (Ether 2:11) and "Wherefore, O ye Gentiles" (Ether 8:23). These consistent, direct references may indicate that Mormon and Moroni were aware their record would reach the Gentiles in the latter days, and they desired to convey messages directly to their future Gentile readers. This suggests a different understanding of the ultimate destiny of the record they were making as compared to the understanding Nephi and other prophets had. Mormon and Moroni had the benefit of hindsight to be able to understand the promises of the Lord and have a better idea of those whom their record would reach.

Jesus Christ also addressed the Gentiles directly. He made statements such as, "Turn all ye Gentiles" (3 Nephi 30:2) and "Come unto me, O ye Gentiles" (Ether 4:13).[19] Christ also frequently quoted his Father, and their intertwining voices spoke similarly about the Gentiles. Both

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18. Some of this use appears to be based on his conversation with the angel in 1 Nephi 13.

19. The Lord also explicitly addressed the Gentiles stating "O ye Gentiles," in 2 Nephi 29:5.

specifically directly addressed the house of Israel, but while doing so focused on the Gentiles. For example, we read, "because of their belief in me, saith the Father, and because of the unbelief of you, *O house of Israel,* in the latter day shall the truth come unto the *Gentiles,* that the fulness of these things shall be made known unto them" (3 Nephi 16:7), and "it is wisdom in the Father that they should be established in this land, and be set up as a free people by the power of the Father, that these things might come forth from them unto a remnant of your seed, that the covenant of the Father may be fulfilled which he hath covenanted with his people, O house of Israel" (3 Nephi 21:4).[20]

Jesus Christ and his Father are the only speakers in the Book of Mormon who spoke of the Gentiles in connection with the phrase *O house of Israel.* As Spencer suggested, it seems Christ was bringing back to Lehite remembrance the important relationship between the house of Israel and the Gentiles. Perhaps the phrase *O house of Israel* was meant to show the Lehites that prophecies concerning the Gentiles are interwoven with the promises to the house of Israel. It may also be that the phrase *O house of Israel* showed the affection the Father and Christ feel toward these individuals. In the following sections we will further discuss how Christ prophesied extensively concerning the role of the Gentiles in the latter-day restoration of the gospel and the physical and spiritual gathering of the house of Israel.

There are eighteen total references to the "power" or "Spirit" of God[21] being given to, or affecting the Gentiles in the Book of Mormon. Table 2 illustrates *how* these terms were used and *who* utilized them.

Table 2. The Power and Spirit of God and the Gentiles.

Individual	Development of Promised Land	Restoration	In Warning
Jesus Christ	1	4	0
Nephi	6	2	1
Angel	2	0	0
Mormon	0	0	1
Moroni	0	1	0

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20. See also 3 Nephi 16:11-15, 3 Nephi 20:20-21, 3 Nephi 20:27.
21. Or the Lamb, the Father or the Holy Ghost.

Nephi$_1$ and Christ tended to use these terms differently. Nephi predominantly spoke of how the Spirit and power of God would come upon the Gentiles to bring them to the Promised Land. In contrast, Christ primarily spoke of how the Lord would show forth his power to the Gentiles by bringing forth the fullness of the gospel, including the Book of Mormon, through them.[22] This difference may indicate the varying levels of understanding these two speakers had in regards to the Gentiles and their future in the gospel. Nephi understood the significance of the Promised Land, but Jesus Christ focused more on the importance of the fullness of the gospel, indicating greater priorities and understanding.

Most of Nephi's references to the power and spirit of God came from his vision in 1 Nephi 13-15, in which he saw the power and Spirit of God come upon the latter-day Gentiles. Nephi$_1$, in three consecutive verses, spoke of the "Spirit of God" or "the Lamb" in conjunction with the Gentiles, indicating that their coming unto the Promised Land was guided by God's hand. In the following verses, Nephi stated that he "beheld that *the power of God* was with them [the Gentiles], and also that the wrath of God was upon all those that were gathered together against them to battle. And I, Nephi, beheld that *the Gentiles* that had gone out of captivity *were delivered by the power of God* out of the hands of all other nations" (1 Nephi 13:18–19; emphasis added).[23]

Christ's use focused on the latter-day restoration of the gospel through the Gentiles.[24] This is consistent with both when Christ was quoted as speaking in 1 Nephi 13 as well as when he personally visited the Lehites in 3 Nephi 21. For example, Christ was quoted as saying he "will be merciful unto the Gentiles in that day, insomuch that I will bring forth unto them, in *mine own power,* much of my gospel, which shall be plain and precious" (1 Nephi 13:34; emphasis added). Similarly, in 3 Nephi 21:6 he stated, "it behooveth the Father that it [the Book of Mormon] should come forth from the Gentiles, that he may *show forth his power* unto the Gentiles" (3 Nephi 21:6; emphasis added). This consistency implies that the restoration of the gospel through the Gentiles was an important principle that Christ intended the Nephites

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22. Three other speakers, Mormon, Moroni, and the Angel who spoke to Nephi contributed to these themes as well.

23. See also 1 Nephi 13:12, 15, 16, 30 (the angel spoke to Nephi); 3 Nephi 21:4. Christ restated this prophecy that the Gentiles would be set up by the "power of the Father" in 3 Nephi 21:4.

24. 1 Nephi 13:34, 35, 39; 15:17; 3 Nephi 21:2, 6.

to understand, especially considering the effect of this restoration upon the latter-day remnant of that people.

References to the Gentiles as recipients of God's power do not occur elsewhere in scripture. This may be because the prophesied coming forth of the Book of Mormon would be through the latter-day Gentiles. Perhaps because the Gentiles would be instrumental in bringing forth the Book of Mormon, the Book of Mormon more clearly teaches how God would guide and empower them. Thus both the Nephites and Gentiles would understand the Lord's plan for the restoration of the teachings of the Book of Mormon.

In addition to references to the power and spirit of God coming upon the Gentiles, the Lord regularly discussed his direct interaction and influence on the Gentiles throughout the Book of Mormon.[25] References to the Gentiles as recipients of God's personal influence or interaction have a clearer focus in the Book of Mormon than in the Bible, with the exception of Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 49:22 which is quoted three times in the Book of Mormon.[26] For example, Ezekiel focused on how the Lord would show the "heathen" that he is God,[27] while Micah and Haggai prophesied their destruction.[28] However, although the majority of biblical references carry this same tone, Isaiah described how Israel would be a "light to the Gentiles"[29] and likewise envisioned a time when the Gentiles would hear the gospel and "join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord."[30] The Book of Mormon takes this seemingly obscure idea from Isaiah and magnifies it.

A key Book of Mormon emphasis is the Lord's mercy toward the Gentiles and his interaction with them as an instrument in his hands. For example, he said, "Wo be unto the Gentiles, saith the Lord God of Hosts! For notwithstanding I shall lengthen out mine arm unto them from day to day, they will deny me; nevertheless, I will be merciful unto them, saith the Lord God, if they will repent and come unto me" (2 Nephi 28:32) and "I will afflict thy seed by the hand of the Gentiles;

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25.   1 Nephi 21:22, 22:6; 2 Nephi 6:6, 10:18, 28:32, 29:5; 3 Nephi 21:14; Ether 4:13, 12:28 are the clearest examples of this.

26.   In addition, there are references to the Lord's power working with individual Gentiles or nations (e.g. Isaiah 45:1).

27.   Ezekiel 36:23, 36; 38:16; 39:7, 21.

28.   Micah 5:15; Haggai 2:22.

29.   Isaiah 49:6; 42:6.

30.   Isaiah 56:6-7; 66:23.

nevertheless, I will soften the hearts of the Gentiles, that they shall be like unto a father to them" (2 Nephi 10:18).

Conditional Phrases Concerning Gentiles

Gentiles also appears in the Book of Mormon in connection with conditional phrases such as "if … then" For example, the Lord said, "nevertheless, I will be merciful unto **them** [the Gentiles], saith the Lord God, **if** they will repent and come unto me" (2 Nephi 28:32; emphasis added). Such phrases involving the Gentiles appear twenty times in the standard works; eighteen of these references are in the Book of Mormon.[31] Only four individuals (Christ, the Father, Mormon and Moroni), used a conditional phrase (blessing or warning) specifically in reference to the Gentiles.[32]

A general pattern of divine beings giving Gentiles conditional blessing appears throughout the Book of Mormon.[33] In contrast there is only one occasion in which a mortal offers a conditional promise to the Gentiles.[34] Within the words of divine beings as they speak of the Gentiles, there is a common theme discussed. The Angel who speaks to Nephi, the Father, and Jesus Christ all stated that if the Gentiles repented they would be numbered among the house of Israel. Note the parallels in these three passages:

- "[I]f the Gentiles shall hearken … [a]nd harden not their hearts against the Lamb of God … they shall be numbered among the house of Israel" (1 Nephi 14:1-2).
- "If the Gentiles will repent and return unto me, saith the Father, behold they shall be numbered among my people, O house of Israel" (3 Nephi 16:13).
- "[F]or this cause that the Gentiles, if they will not harden their hearts, that they may repent and come unto me … that they may be numbered among my people, O house of Israel" (3 Nephi 21:6).[35]

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31. The closest Biblical references are found in Jeremiah 18:8 in which the Lord stated that He would not let his wrath fall upon a nation which should repent of their evil and in Jeremiah 12:16-17 in which we read the nations can learn to believe in the Lord and swear after His name and become part of the House of Israel.

32. Although Nephi used a conditional phrase with Gentiles, in it he grouped the Gentiles together with others, the Jews and his people, to say they all have no hope except through repentance (2 Nephi 33:9).

33. 3 Nephi 16:4, 10, 13; 20:15, 20; 21:6, 14.

34. 2 Nephi 6:12.

35. 2 Nephi 10:18 and 3 Nephi 30:2 include similar phrases (spoken by God/Christ) but do not include a conditional promise, and Ether 13:10 utilizes

Although no mortal ever spoke of the Gentiles becoming *numbered* among the house of Israel, it is a significant point of common emphasis for some of the heavenly beings who spoke in the Book of Mormon. We cannot determine with certainty why this is the case, but there are a number of possibilities. Perhaps God and Christ have a more comprehensive vision of the Gentiles and wish to bring them into the select group of the house of Israel, whereas mortals are less likely to consider the importance of the Gentiles. On the other hand, mortals such as Nephi and Jacob may have felt it was only the prerogative of deity to determine who could be included in the house of Israel. In any event, it seems that heavenly beings have a unique vision of the destiny of the Gentiles and have care and concern for their welfare.

There is also a consistent pattern of conditional warnings unto the Gentiles from Jesus Christ, the Father, and Mormon. Each warned that if the Gentiles remain in wickedness after the blessings they have received, they would be trodden down by the remnant of Israel; no other speakers provided this warning.[36] This pattern of conditional warnings began with the voice of the Father, who warned, " *if they* [the Gentiles] *will not turn unto me,* and hearken unto my voice, I will suffer them, yea, I will suffer my people, *O house of Israel,* that they shall *go through among them,* and shall *tread them down* " (3 Nephi 16:15; emphasis added).

Christ expanded on this teaching stating, " *if the Gentiles do not repent after the blessing which they shall receive,* after they have scattered my people — Then shall ye, who are *a remnant of the house of Jacob, go forth among them;* … as a lion among the beasts of the forest … who, if he goeth through both *treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.* … And it shall come to pass, saith the Father, that the sword of my justice shall hang over them at that day; and *except they repent it shall fall upon them,* saith the Father, yea, even upon all the nations of the Gentiles" (3 Nephi 20:15-16, 20; emphasis added).

Both these passages (along with the similar later warnings in 3 Nephi 21:12, 14 and Mormon 5:22-24), resemble Micah 5:8. Interestingly, the three speakers whose words connect to Micah's all emphasized the conditional nature of the warning much more than Micah himself. Moreover, the manner in which the Father and Christ's

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similar phrases, but not to talk about the Gentiles.

36. 1 Nephi 14:6 also contains a warning to the Gentiles against hardening their hearts against the gospel but does not include a reference to the house of Israel going forth among them and tearing them.

warnings intertwine is striking. Likewise, Mormon's mimicking of their phraseology is not surprising, and it creates a more coherent narrative.

Moroni gave two conditional warnings, but they were different in nature and focus from those provided by the Father, Christ, or Mormon. He warned the Gentiles against upholding secret combinations in the last day that shall lead to their destruction (see Ether 8:23). He also warned (almost in passing) that if the Gentiles fail to have charity, God would take away that which they had received (see Ether 12:35).

The Fullness of the Gospel and the Gentiles

Throughout the Book of Mormon references to Gentiles, there is a common theme of the gospel going from the Gentiles to the house of Israel, specifically to the remnant of Lehi's descendants. The restoration of the gospel to the Lehite remnant seems to be especially important to those who referred to the Gentiles, though they each approached it differently. Nephi saw in vision the destruction of his people and the apostate remnant of his father's seed in the latter days and focused on how the Gentiles would help to graft this remnant back into the house of Israel. Christ commanded that his teachings be written to the Gentiles and prophesied concerning when they would go forth. Mormon and Moroni both frequently referenced the commandment and prophecy given by Christ and wrote accordingly.

2 Nephi

Nephi was the first to refer to the Gentiles in the Book of Mormon. Immediately he noted his father's prophecy that the Gentiles would receive the fullness of the gospel and that this would bring about the "grafting in" of the house of Israel back to the knowledge of their Redeemer.[37] As recorded in 1 Nephi 13, he witnessed the reception of the latter-day Bible, or the book which proceeded forth out of the mouth of the Jew, as shown by the angel and confirmed by the voice of Christ.[38] The Bible would play an important role along with the words of the Nephites in bringing to pass this "grafting" through the Gentiles.

Nephi's brethren did not understand the teachings of Lehi to which Nephi referred. Nephi explained to them that through the Gentiles the remnant of their seed and the lost Jews would again be "grafted" back into

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37. 1 Nephi 10:11-14.
38. 1 Nephi 13:23, 25, 26, 29, 34, 35, 38, 39, 40.

the natural tree.[39] This process would be through the fullness of the gospel which would come forth from the Gentiles unto the remnant of the Lehites.

Finally, Nephi explained the Lord's teachings that the Gentiles would bring the children of the house of Israel forth in their arms. Nephi taught that this process would be both temporal and spiritual in nature in that the Gentile nation would physically aid their seed, but they would also make known the covenants of the Father.[40] Twice this prophecy is quoted, once by Nephi and once by Jacob,[41] which are the only times the voice of Lord was heard prophesying the restoration, temporal or spiritual, of the Jews through the Gentiles. Thus, Nephi emphasized how the Gentiles would use the gospel to help gather the remnant of the House of Israel.

Christ

On two occasions, Christ commanded that his words be written in order to go forth to the Gentiles.[42] These commandments act as bookends around his teachings and prophecies concerning the restoration of the gospel through the Gentiles and their interaction with the house of Israel. In 3 Nephi 16:4 Christ said: "And I command you that ye shall write these sayings after I am gone… that these sayings which ye shall write shall be kept and shall be manifested unto the Gentiles, that through the fulness of the Gentiles, the remnant of their seed [the Lamanites], who shall be scattered forth upon the face of the earth because of their unbelief, may be brought in, or may be brought to a knowledge of me, their Redeemer." After his teachings he reiterated this commandment and prophecy in 3 Nephi 23:4: "Therefore give heed to my words; write the things which I have told you; and according to the time and the will of the Father they shall go forth unto the Gentiles."

Christ immediately began teaching with the words of the Father, explaining that the gospel would go forth to the Gentiles because of Israel's unbelief. He also said it would go forth again to the House of Israel after the Gentile's rejection of His words.[43] Christ explained that the reception of the gospel by the Gentiles would be a sign of the beginning of the gathering of Israel, and thereafter the restored covenants of the

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39. 1 Nephi 15:13, 17.
40. 1 Nephi 22:6-9.
41. 1 Nephi 21:22 (Nephi), 2 Nephi 6:6 (Jacob). There is one other time in 2 Nephi 10:18 in which the lord referred to how the Gentiles will be as a father to the Lehite descendants, but this is more temporal in nature.
42. 3 Nephi 16:4, 3 Nephi 23:4.
43. 3 Nephi 7-12.

Father would go forth again to the remnant of the House of Israel.[44] In this way he explained that it would be a sign of the times and a sign to Israel. In this brief sermon to the people at Bountiful, Christ clarified the timing and purpose of the gospel going forth to the Gentiles and expressly commanded that those words be written to go forth to them.

Mormon and Moroni

Mormon, aware his record would come to the Gentiles, explained that he wrote his words "to the intent that they may be brought again unto this people, from the Gentiles, according to the words which Jesus hath spoken" (3 Nephi 26:8). After stating this purpose he returned to it repeatedly.[45] His words reflected his understanding that his work would reach the Gentiles, and through them, his people in the latter days would also receive the record. Mormon explained that this promise was according to the words of Christ. Moroni also referenced this promise, saying it was obtained by many Nephite prophets through faith.[46] Moroni included this promise in the title page of the Book of Mormon, stating that the record was written unto the remnant of the Lamanites and also the Jew and Gentile but intended to "come forth in due time by way of the Gentile," that all "may know the covenants of the Lord."

Understanding how these speakers prophesied of the restoration of the gospel to the remnant of the house of Israel through the Gentiles helps readers of the Book of Mormon to better comprehend the intent of the words therein. Furthermore, it helps to emphasize the importance of the going forth of the Book of Mormon to the scattered remnants of the house of Israel.

Intertextuality and the Gentiles

There are a few examples of intertextuality between some of the speakers who used *Gentiles. Intertextuality* is an author's drawing on the words of a previous author. Both Christ and Nephi stated that after Lehi's seed dwindled in unbelief, a record of their ancestors would come forth to the Lehites through the Gentiles (see Table 3, next page).

Nephi described the role of the Gentiles in the gathering of Israel saying that "the thing which our father meaneth concerning the grafting in of the natural branches *through the fulness of the Gentiles,* is, that *in the latter days,* when our seed shall have dwindled in unbelief … then

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44. 3 Nephi 21:2 followed by more clarification of purpose in 3 Nephi 21:5,6,11.
45. Mormon 3:17-20, 5:9-15, 7:8-9.
46. Compare 3 Nephi 26:8 and Ether 12:22.

shall the *fulness of the gospel* of the Messiah come unto the Gentiles, and from the Gentiles unto *the remnant of our seed* " (1 Nephi 15:13, emphasis added). Christ used similar language to describe the latter-day spreading of the gospel. He stated, "through the *fulness of the Gentiles, the remnant of their seed,* who shall be scattered forth upon the face of the earth because of their unbelief, may be brought in, or may be brought to a knowledge of me, their Redeemer … in the latter day" (3 Nephi 16:4, 7, emphasis added). In connection with this teaching, Christ discussed what would happen if the Gentiles reject the " *fulness of [his] gospel* " (3 Nephi 16:10, 12, emphasis added).

Table 3. Intertextuality between Christ and Nephi (emphasis added).

1 Nephi 15:13, 17	3 Nephi 21:5-6
"[I]n the latter days, *when our seed shall have dwindled in unbelief,* yea, for the space of many years, and many generations after the Messiah shall be manifested in body unto the children of men, then shall the fulness of the gospel of the Messiah come unto the Gentiles, and *from the Gentiles unto the remnant of our seed … it [the fulness of the gospel] shall come by way of the Gentiles, that the Lord may show his power unto the Gentiles …*"	"[W]hen these works and the works which shall be wrought among you hereafter shall come forth *from the Gentiles, unto your seed which shall dwindle in unbelief* because of iniquity; For thus it behooveth the Father that *it [the Book of Mormon] should come forth from the Gentiles, that he may show forth his power unto the Gentiles …*"

Another example of intertextuality is seen within the words of Jesus Christ (speaking through the angel who spoke to Nephi) and Moroni, writing on the title page. Christ said, "I will manifest myself unto thy seed, that they shall write many things which I shall minister unto them, which shall be plain and precious; and after thy seed shall be destroyed, and dwindle in unbelief, and also the seed of thy brethren, behold, *these things shall be hid up, to come forth unto the Gentiles, by the gift and power of the Lamb* " (1 Nephi 13:35; emphasis added). Similarly, speaking of the same record approximately 1,000 years later, Moroni wrote that it was " *hid up unto the Lord … To come forth by the gift and power of God*" (Title Page of the Book of Mormon; emphasis added).

Conclusion

The word *Gentiles* appears throughout the Book of Mormon; however, it is distributed unevenly, and some individuals employed this word much more frequently than others. Not only do specific individuals utilize *Gentiles* much more frequently than others, different individuals were prone to speak about the Gentiles in unique ways. Nephi and Christ were the two main speakers who discussed God's power moving upon the Gentiles, a phenomenon unique to the Book of Mormon. Also, Christ and Nephi consistently talked about the power of God being upon the Gentiles in their own distinct ways.

Sometimes we look at the Book of Mormon as a completely cohesive text in which all the various speakers stand in agreement about every issue. We might see the general messages as being equally conveyed by each prophet, rather than each individual focusing on different topics. Reviewing the use of *Gentiles* throughout the Book of Mormon paints a different picture. Some speakers addressed the Gentiles directly, but others did not mention Gentiles at all. This variance in speaking patterns regarding the Gentiles seems evidence of various voices over a period of hundreds of years creating what we now have as the Book of Mormon. Each had concerns unique to the times in which he lived, yet Mormon was able to draw out spiritual themes from all the individual writings.

Although many speakers, including Nephi, never spoke directly to the Gentiles, other speakers did. Speakers like Mormon and Moroni seem to have understood that the Gentiles would receive their words, and they made an effort to address them specifically. Similarly, God and Jesus Christ spoke directly to the Gentiles because of their divine knowledge that the record would go to the Gentiles in the latter days. However, other speakers were more immediately concerned with the people and problems of their day, and they may not have even understood that the Gentiles would ever receive their words.

These variations support the claim that the Book of Mormon is a collection of the words of various individuals throughout Nephite history. Such patterns are not the texture of fiction and provide greater evidence of the divinity of the Book of Mormon and support its claim to authorship by generations of prophet-historians.

Students of the Book of Mormon can look at the text differently by understanding where individual speakers are coming from when they teach. Modern-day readers can also consider their own roles in the salvation of the house of Israel as a whole. They can consider how in every place and time, the gospel may be taught in such a way as to

best fit the needs of those present, yet regardless of the time or location, Jesus Christ and the Father are aware of the bigger picture, and they are focused on the benefit all people can gain by having and living the gospel. Although individual teachings and interests may vary throughout the Book of Mormon, the Father and Jesus Christ's remain constant.

We hope the patterns of the usage of *Gentiles* discussed herein will help the reader to have a greater understanding of Gentiles in the Book of Mormon, the related doctrines, and the individual styles of its usage by the various speakers. We also hope this work will inspire further study of Gentiles in the Book of Mormon, since it can have great personal meaning in the times in which we live.

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Lehi, Joseph, and the Kingdom of Israel

Richley Crapo

Abstract: I present evidence of two priesthoods in the Jewish Bible: an Aaronite priesthood, held by Aaron and passed down through his descendants; and a higher Mushite priesthood, held not only by Moses and his descendants but also by other worthy individuals, such as Joshua, an Ephraimite. The Mushite priests were centered in Shiloh, where Joshua settled the Ark of the Covenant, while the Aaronites became dominant in the Jerusalem temple. Like Joshua, the prophet Lehi, a descendant of the northern tribe of Manasseh, held the higher priesthood. His ministry, as recounted in the Book of Mormon, demonstrates four characteristics that show a clear connection to his ancestors' origins in the northern Kingdom of Israel: (1) revelation through prophetic dreams, (2) the ministry of angels, (3) imagery of the Tree of Life, and (4) a positive attitude toward the Nehushtan tradition. These traits are precisely those which scholarship, based on the Documentary Hypothesis, attributes to texts in the Hebrew Bible that originated in the northern Kingdom of Israel rather than in Judah.

There is a cultural continuity between Joseph, the son of Jacob, and his descendants down through Lehi that I wish to highlight. Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, became the two largest tribes that settled in the southern part of what later became the Kingdom of Israel when the monarchy established by King David seceded from the northern tribes. Lehi discovered that he was a descendant of Joseph's son Manasseh when he read this in the brass plates that contained his genealogy (1 Nephi 5:16). His heritage stretched back to Joseph in Egypt, although he apparently had not known this before that time. I propose to throw some light on Lehi's northern heritage and trace how it shows up in his own ministry, as reported in the Book of Mormon. I also explain how Lehi's ancestors had come to live in Jerusalem and why Lehi may have lost track of his own genealogy.

To recount this history, I first discuss some of the evidence of a higher priesthood that is typically not found in the writing of non-Latter-day Saint interpreters in other Christian denominations, who typically recognize only the existence of the Aaronic priesthood, to which Moses appointed his brother Aaron to care for the Ark of the Covenant. This distinction between two orders of the priesthood is essential to a Latter-day Saint understanding of the story of Lehi.

The Two Orders of the Priesthood

Consider what it meant in Hebrew when Exodus refers to Moses as a *prophet*. Unlike the English word *prophet*, the Hebrew *navi* merely means "spokesperson." Moses was indeed a spokesperson for God, but other humans could have spokespersons too, as exemplified in Exodus 7:1, which refers to Aaron as a spokesperson (*navi*) for Moses. So the Hebrew word itself does not have an inherently religious meaning and does not necessarily imply an office within a priesthood. However, Moses did not simply declare that his older brother Aaron and Aaron's sons were priests; rather he appointed and ordained them to those positions. That he did so at least raises the question of whether Moses's authority to declare God's will entailed a priesthood office — one with authority to ordain another — as well as a special relationship with God. Yet Christian exegetes have not addressed this distinction.

A near-exception among sectarian interpreters, George W. Coats, a former professor at McMurry College and at Lexington Theological Seminary, sees Joshua, the successor to Moses, not as a secular authority but as a "cultic" figure who exercised authority over the Levites who took care of the Ark. Recognizing that Joshua's authority was superior to that of the Levite, Coats acknowledges that "it is interesting to note that in this pericope [in which Joshua built an altar on Mount Ebal] movement of the ark by the hands of the Levites comes from the command of Joshua."[1] However, although he refers to Joshua as a *cultic figure*, a term that implies some sort of religious authority, Coats does not raise the question whether his "cultic" commission represented a priesthood order rather than a unique personal authority conferred upon him by Moses. Nor does he examine the similar issues regarding the nature of the authority held earlier by Moses.

In contrast with a number of non-Latter-day Saint sectarian exegetes, several scholars have recognized the existence of a priesthood held

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1. George W. Coats, "The Ark of the Covenant in Joshua: A Probe into the History of a Tradition," *Hebrew Annual Review* 9 (1985): 151.

by Moses and his descendants, a priesthood that differed from that of Aaron's descendants. The existence of *Mushite* priests was first suggested by Julius Wellhausen[2] and later reinforced by Frank Moore Cross.[3] More recently, Richard Friedman[4] has also argued that there were Mushite priests who were descendants of Moses in addition to those priests who were descendants of Aaron. He bases this on both biblical texts and Jewish traditions.

Socially, the roles of both the Aaronites and the Mushites changed over time. Before the establishment of the First Temple in Jerusalem, the priestly offices were disbursed throughout all the tribal territories, and sacrificial rites were conducted locally at "high places": "Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days" (1 Kings 3:2). Even after Solomon built the First Temple, worship continued through the reign of Jehoshaphat at the high places throughout the two post-Solomonic kingdoms (1 Kings 22:43) and was not fully stopped in Judea until Josiah had the shrines and high places eliminated (2 Kings 23:19–20). Furthermore, instances of non-Aaronites offering sacrifice can be found during the period of Judges and the Monarchy. Examples include the son of the Ephraimite Micah (Judges 17), Jonathan, a descendant of Moses (Judges18); and Samuel, who was an Ephraimite (1 Samuel 1:1).

A Latter-day Saint Viewpoint

Typically, Jewish scholars have not viewed these two priesthoods as ranked but have interpreted them as different, sometimes competing clans that asserted their right to serve as priests. An alternative viewpoint is a ranked relationship between the Mushites and Aaronites. According to Joseph Smith, "All the prophets had the Melchizedek Priesthood."[5] This would include Moses and offers the possibility that the Mushite priesthood represented the line of those who held the Melchizedek authority, which oversaw the work of the Aaronites.

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2. Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena Zur Geschichte Israels* (Berlin, DE: G. Reimer, 1886), 141-43.

3. Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 195-215.

4. Richard Eliot Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1973) 22–23, 136.

5. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 181.

Unlike the priesthood of Aaron, which was passed down strictly by descent, the Melchizedek Priesthood held by Moses was passed down to someone chosen by God, from any tribe of Israel, to govern that priesthood. Numbers 27:18-19, 21-23 recounts the passing of authority to Joshua (an Ephraimite):

> And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. … Moses did as the Lord commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.

The Hebrew word, here translated as "gave him a charge," is *tsâvâh* (צָוָה), which means "give charge over, appoint, ordain."[6]

This commission included authority to direct the lower priesthood of Aaron and his descendants. Thus it was Joshua, not the Levites, who consistently decided when and where those guardians of the Ark would transport it from one place to another. Joshua ultimately had the Ark taken to the territory of Ephraim, his own tribe, and it came to be housed at Shiloh, under the care of the Mushite priest Eli, who was also a descendant of Moses.

Lehi and the Kingdom of Israel

Although Lehi lived at Jerusalem, he consistently refers to himself as belonging to the House of Israel. Even though he resided in Jerusalem, he never referred to himself as a Judean (Jew). Rather, he speaks of "the Jews" (i.e., those who governed the Kingdom of Judah) in the third person, making it clear he was not writing of his own tribal or political heritage. This contrast between the two kingdoms is an important one, and knowing more about the northern kingdom in which Lehi's identity was rooted will help us appreciate the Book of Mormon and our Latter-day Saint understanding of the Bible as well. Lehi's ancestral connection to the Kingdom of Israel is important because the culture of the northern tribes was significantly different from that of the southern kingdom, and the difference is clear in the Book of Mormon.

When Joshua, himself an Ephraimite, led the twelve tribes into the Promised Land, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh settled in the lands

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6. In some translations of this text, the chosen word is *commissioned*.

north of Jerusalem. It was here that Joshua placed the holy Tabernacle of God and the Ark of the Covenant that was housed in the town of Shiloh in the lands of Ephraim among the northern tribes (Joshua 18:1). The sons of Eli served as the priests of this first sanctuary. Thus, while kingship was held by Judah and exercised in the city of Jerusalem, the sacred sanctuary of God was kept by Ephraim in Shiloh under the authority of those priests who held the higher priesthood of God.[7]

At this time, a shrine was also erected at the northern town of Dan, where the priest was Jonathan. Judges 18:30 says Jonathan was the son of Gershom and that Gershom was the son of Manasseh. However, according to the Talmud,[8] the Jewish codification of the oral traditions, Jonathan was actually the son of Moses's son Gershom, but because of Jonathan's great wickedness, the name of the wicked king Manasseh was substituted for Moses's name. This shrine in Dan was subordinate to the shrine in Shiloh, where the higher priesthood held by Moses was held by Eli.

However, like Jonathan, the sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were unrighteous, and God allowed the Ark to be captured by the Philistines. After it was recovered, the Ark was not returned to Shiloh but was carried by King David to Jerusalem. King David installed two Mushite high priests to take charge of the Ark in Jerusalem: Zadok, Eli's grandnephew, who was a priest from Jerusalem, and Abiathar, the great-great-grandson of Eli (Abiathar, the son of Ahimelek, the son of Ahitub, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli), whose priestly line claimed descent from Moses and therefore authority based on the higher priesthood. This state of affairs lasted only until Solomon replaced his father David as king and exiled Abiathar from his position as high priest of the Tabernacle because Abiathar had supported Solomon's brother Adonijah as the successor to David. Thus the control of the temple under Solomon fell to the Aaronic priests of Jerusalem, and the exile of the Melchizedek high priest set the stage for the later secession of the northern tribes from the monarchy after Solomon's death.

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7.   While non-Latter-day Saint sectarian exegetic commentaries typically assume that Eli was a descendant of Aaron, the Book of Joshua, which lists all the cities associated with Aaron, makes no mention of Shiloh, and Sam 2:27 strongly suggests that Moses, to whom God appeared in Egypt, was the ancestor of Eli. For an excellent discussion of Moses's family, including Eli, see Flavio Barbiero, "The Great Ancestor of Eli High Priest of Siloh," Alien Eyes (website), accessed September 2, 2019, http://www.altriocchi.com/H_ENG/pen5/moses_family/ancestor_eli.html.

8.   *Bava Basra* 109b. While the part of the Talmud containing *Bava Basra* was compiled at the beginning of the third century, the same information is found in the second-century *Seder Olam*.

The Northern Tribes and Their Religious Texts

The modern Hebrew Bible was compiled in Jerusalem, the capital of the Davidic monarchy and of the later Kingdom of Judah after the division of the monarchy. This is why Jerusalem is the preeminent city in biblical stories and why the Kingdom of Israel and its capital are viewed as if from afar. Yet the northern Kingdom of Israel was far wealthier and more influential than the Kingdom of Judah until the fall of Israel to the Assyrians in 721 BC. During this era, the southern kingdom was actually something of a backwater. For instance, the southern capital of Jerusalem remained a rather small town with a population scholars estimate to vary from as low as 2,000 to no more than about 5,000 at the fall of Israel.[9]

The fall of the Kingdom of Israel caused Jerusalem to achieve the status of a real city. When the Assyrians conquered the Kingdom of Israel in 721 BC, the elites of that kingdom — including the aristocrats and priests — were taken into captivity; but as is common in times of conquest, many of the people of the northern kingdom fled to safety among their southern cousins in Judea. This influx of northern refugees (and likely some refugees from western Judea) caused the city of Jerusalem to swell to about 25,000. These refugees and their descendants made up more than 80 percent of the total population of the walled city,[10] although the Jerusalem Jewish establishment maintained political control over their kingdom. Having lost their tribal roots in their homeland, it was easy for the northern refugees to assimilate into the culture of Judea over more than a century; it is unsurprising that at least some lost track of their original tribal identities. Such was the case with Lehi and his family, who learned they descended from Joseph's son Manasseh only after Nephi obtained the plates of Laban for his father (Alma 10:3).

Since the northern refugees were a numerical majority, their very numbers were a potential threat to the domination of the Judean elites. As one way to integrate the many northerners into Judean society, the Jewish leaders added many of the northern stories and traditions into their own scriptures by editing them into the existing southern corpus. Biblical scholars refer to these northern texts as the *E (or Elohist) texts* because they refer to God by variations of the name El, Eloah, or Elohim rather than by the southern name, which in English we know as Jehovah.

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9. Hershel Shanks, "Ancient Jerusalem: The Village, the Town, the City," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 42, no. 3 (May/June, 2016): 51-53.

10. Magen Broshi, "Estimating the Population of Ancient Jerusalem" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 4, no, 2 (June 1978): 10-15.

The Jerusalem priesthood did the best they could to knit the two peoples into their common Hebrew heritage. First and foremost, they placed the northern creation story by Elohim at the head of their new, integrated version of the text of Genesis. This was no great concession, since that is the version that speaks of God in the more courtly and urbane language of the northern kingdom and stresses his omnipotence. Today, teasing apart the Hebrew Bible to identify those texts that were original to the northern and southern traditions is carried out by scholars who follow what they call *historical criticism*.

Historical Criticism and the Hebrew Bible

Contemporary historical criticism of the Jewish scriptures has its roots in the "Documentary Hypothesis" of Julius Wellhausen. Scholars who follow this approach find reason to believe that the biblical text was the product of an editorial process in which later writers brought texts of diverse origins together into a finished product. For instance, the first two chapters of Genesis both tell the story of God's creation of the world, but from two very different viewpoints that refer to the Creator by two quite different names. Genesis 1 was brought to Jerusalem by refugees from the Kingdom of Israel when it fell to the Assyrians in 721 BC. In this northern text, God is referred to as *Elohim*, while in chapter two the Creator's name is *Yahweh* (who is better known to English speakers as *Jehovah*). Elohim was the common designation for God among the northern tribes, which eventually claimed their independence as the Kingdom of Israel after they rebelled from the rule of Solomon's son Rehoboam. This name for *God* is a plural form, derived from the shorter name of the Semitic deity El, who was universally seen as the Father of the lesser Semitic gods of the Babylonians and Assyrians in the East as well as the Canaanites, neighbors to the northern tribes. In the Genesis 1 account, *Elohim* takes a singular verb as he "creates" (Hebrew *bara*, (בָּרָא) "to shape, fashion, or form by cutting") the heavens and the earth, the day and the night, and the plants and animals by "speaking" them into existence. He is a God of authority whose word is law.

God's creation account in Genesis 1 differs markedly from its portrayal by the priests of Judah in the south, where the story is found in Genesis 2. Beginning in verse 4, God is referred to by the Hebrew name *Yahweh*, which is said to have been revealed to Moses (Genesis 6:3). In Genesis 2, Jehovah never "creates." Instead, he is a hands-on creator who "forms" (Hebrew *yatzah*) man out of the dust of the earth, who "sends"

(Hebrew *matar*) rain, who "plants" (Hebrew *nata*') a garden, and who "makes" (Hebrew *tzamach*) the plants of the garden.

The Major Differences between the Northern and Southern Texts

Book of Mormon authors often follow the Elohist style of writing, which is in the tradition of Lehi's fathers. John L. Sorenson, while pointing out a number of these from the Book of Mormon, argues that there is "good evidence that the Book of Mormon contains elements which are congruent with what scholars of the Old Testament distinguish as the E or Elohistic source."[11]

I cite just one such example here: even centuries after Lehi's departure, the Book of Mormon perpetuated the characteristic Elohist phrase "the man, Moses" (Hebrew *ha-ish Mosheh*; for example, in Exodus 11:3, Exodus 32:1, and Numbers 12:3) in Helaman 8:13. However, instead of exploring many simple examples like this one, I wish to focus on four *general* characteristics that distinguish the northern Elohist texts that came from the Kingdom of Israel. These four Elohist characteristics strongly contrast with the so-called J texts written by the southern authors.

The Ministry of Angels

In the Elohist texts, prophets interact with angels. For instance, at Beth-el, Jacob saw angels ascending and descending between earth and Elohim in heaven, while in the Jahwist version of the same story, he simply witnesses God above the earth without mention of angels. The Elohist text also contains the story of Jacob wrestling with an angel. Angels also play a prominent role for Lehi and his family. Angels are first referred to in 1 Nephi 1:7–8, in which Lehi cast himself upon his bed, was overcome by the Spirit, and experienced a vision of "God sitting on his throne, surrounded by numberless concourses of angels, in the attitude of singing and praising their God." In 1 Nephi 11, an angel appears to Nephi and speaks to him about the meaning of Nephi's vision. Later, an angel even appears to Nephi's brothers.

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11. John L. Sorenson, "The 'Brass Plates' and Biblical Scholarship," *Dialogue* 10, no. 4 (1977): 37, https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V10N04_33.pdf.

Interpreters of Prophetic Dreams

According to Gnuse,[12] revelations through dreams were particularly characteristic of the Elohist text, where they are typically introduced in a formulaic way (*ba-ḥ alomi wehinneh* — "In my dream, behold!"[13] as in Genesis 40:9, 16; 41:17, 22). Like his ancestor Joseph, Lehi was a visionary, and he drew upon the symbolism of the Kingdom of Israel where the descendants of Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, settled. Lehi, whose ancestry was of northern origins, was spoken to in a dream (1 Nephi 2:1–2; 3:2, where Lehi's son Nephi uses this kind of introduction). In fact, Lehi treats dreams and visions as synonymous when he writes, "Behold, I have dreamed a dream; or, in other words, I have seen a vision" (1 Nephi 8:2).

The later southern editor Ezra, writing in the latter half of the fourth century BC, commented on the role of prophetic dreams: "Hear now my words, If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak to him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him I will speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches. God is able to give understanding to people concerning these dreams" (Numbers 12:6). The Bible says that the meaning of prophetic dreams belongs to God (Genesis 40:8, an Elohist text). Although inspiration through dreams can also be found in some Jahwist texts, they seem more characteristic of practices among the northern tribes, where they follow a developed formula.

The Imagery of the Tree of Life (Hebrew *etz ḥayim*)

Prophets in the Kingdom of Israel not only emphasized Elohim when speaking of God, they also maintained a "Mother in Heaven" tradition.[14] Elohim's consort was known to them as *Asherah*, her primary symbol being the Tree of Life. Both Asherah and her tree were eventually rejected by the compilers of the Hebrew Bible in Jerusalem, where veneration of her tree came to be viewed as an idolatrous practice. However, in Lehi's vision of the tree of life, Lehi draws heavily on this theme, present in the Kingdom of Israel from which his ancestors came:

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12. Robert Karl Gnuse, *The Elohist: A Seventh-Century Theological Tradition* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), 65–66.

13. "Bible Encyclopedias: The 1901 Jewish Encyclopedia," StudyLight.org, accessed September 2, 2019, https://www.studylight.org/encyclopedias/tje/e/elohist.html.

14. Daniel C. Peterson, "Nephi and his Asherah," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 9, no. 2 (2000), https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1253&context=jbms.

> And it came to pass that while my father tarried in the wilderness he spake unto us, saying: Behold, I have dreamed a dream; or, in other words, I have seen a vision. … And it came to pass that I beheld a tree, whose fruit was desirable to make one happy. And it came to pass that I did go forth and partake of the fruit thereof; and I beheld that it 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. And as I partook of the fruit thereof it filled my soul with exceedingly great joy. (1 Nephi 8:2, 10‑12)

Later, Lehi's son Nephi experienced the same vision:

> And it came to pass that the Spirit said unto me: Look! And I looked and beheld a tree; and it was like unto the tree which my father had seen; and the beauty thereof was far beyond, yea, exceeding of all beauty; and the whiteness thereof did exceed the whiteness of the driven snow. And it came to pass after I had seen the tree, I said unto the Spirit: I behold thou hast shown unto me the tree which is precious above all. And he said unto me: What desirest thou? And I said unto him: To know the interpretation thereof. (1 Nephi 11:8‑11)

The Bronze Serpent Raised on a Staff Tradition

The story of Moses's raising a bronze serpent on a staff to heal those who would look upon it in faith (Numbers 21:8‑9) is also attributed by scholars to an Elohist story preserved in the Jewish scriptures. Just as the compilers of the Hebrew Bible at Jerusalem came to see the northern Asherah traditions as unacceptable, so too they eventually rejected the bronze serpent as an idolatrous object. King Hezekiah "removed the high places [where Asherah's trees were venerated], and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan"[15] (2 Kings 18:4). In contrast, the people of the Book of Mormon did not view the Nehushtan as an object of veneration in its own right but perpetuated the Elohist symbolism of the Nehushtan as a symbol of repentance and faith (see also John 3:14, which

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15. While the text in Numbers concerning Moses raising the bronze serpent is an Elohist text, "Nehushtan" (נחשתן) 2 Kings 18:4 is a later, non-Elohist derogatory term meaning "a brazen thing, a mere piece of brass," which expresss the disdain in which the bronze image was held by the later southern editors.

— in the context of a discussion of belief/faith in Christ and saving the believer from perishing — identifies the "serpent" that Moses raised up as a symbol of Christ's crucifixion). Unlike the Jews who rejected Lehi's teachings, Lehi's descendants explicitly recognize the serpent raised on a staff as a symbol of the Messiah who would be raised up on the cross to atone for the sins of mankind (2 Nephi 25:20; Helaman 8:14-15).

The Continuity from Joseph of Egypt through Lehi and the Book of Mormon Prophets

Let us go back before the time of the monarchy to the era of Moses and the Exodus of all the tribes from Egypt.

Joseph's story begins in Genesis 37, where he is introduced as the beloved son of his father Jacob: "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours" (Genesis 37:3). Joseph's older brothers respond with jealousy. Isolated by his brethren's animosity, Joseph becomes a visionary, an interpreter of dreams who prophesies his own ascendancy over his older brothers:

> And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. 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 yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed [Hebrew *shamar*, "give heed to"] the saying. (Genesis 37:5-11)

That their father believed what Joseph's brothers more likely saw as the boasting of a prideful dreamer surely aggravated their dislike of Joseph. Eventually, they conspired against him and sold him to passing merchants, who eventually sold him in Egypt as a slave, where he again

demonstrated his inspired understanding of dreams by interpreting the dreams of a butler, a baker, and of Pharaoh himself (Genesis 39: 19–41).

Joseph eventually married an Egyptian woman, Asenath, who bore him two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. It is noteworthy that Ephraim and Manasseh grew up speaking Egyptian as their mother tongue, a fact that echoes down to the time of their descendant Lehi, who taught his son to record the "knowledge of the Jews" in "the language of the Egyptians." Ephraim and Manasseh also received the birthright blessing that had gone to Joseph instead of his eldest brother Reuben, as Joseph's dream of many years before had prophesied (1 Chronicles 5:1): "For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's" (1 Chronicles 5:2). This birthright blessing was not that of rulership, for the line of kingship was given to Judah. What then was the "birthright" blessing? Simply this: It was through Joseph's two offspring born in Egypt that the right to the Melchizedek Priesthood passed down. This is confirmed in two ways. The first, known to Latter-day Saints, is that the prophet Lehi, who was a descendant of Manasseh, held the Melchizedek Priesthood. The second, known to secular scholars, I will discuss shortly.

As a prophet of God, Joseph held the Melchizedek priesthood. He also prepared a record of his own experiences, a record that has not yet been made available, but which was in the hands of Joseph Smith, along with the Book of Abraham:

> The public mind has been excited of late, by reports which have been circulated concerning certain Egyptian mummies and ancient records, which were purchased by certain gentlemen of Kirtland, last July. … The record of Abraham and Joseph, found with the mummies, is beautifully written on papyrus, with black, and a small part red, ink or paint, in perfect preservation. The characters are such as you find upon the coffins of mummies — hieroglyphics, etc., with many characters of letters like the present (though probably not quite so square) form of the Hebrew without points.[16]

Although he did not translate and publish the Book of Joseph, Joseph Smith's linking of the father of Ephraim and Manasseh to an Egyptian text has intriguing implications for Latter-day Saints. I explore some of these here.

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16. Joseph Smith, Jr., "History of Joseph Smith," in *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*, vol. 15 (Liverpool, UK: Samuel W. Richards, 1853), 549-50.

Those Who Held the Melchizedek Priesthood

While the lesser or Aaronic Priesthood passed down by lineage, the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood operated differently. As the governing priesthood, it passed on to someone worthy of holding the keys of priesthood governance. For instance, Abraham obtained the right to the Melchizedek Priesthood even though his father had not held it. Abraham received this right from Melchizedek, the King of Salem (Abraham 1:2–5). Similarly, Moses received the Melchizedek Priesthood from his father-in-law Jethro, not from his own father (D&C 84:6).

We know the Melchizedek Priesthood was also held by the Nephites (Alma 13:10), having been held by father Lehi.

The Jewish apocryphal book of Jubilees and the Assumption of Moses, as well as Josephus (Ant. 16. 6. 2), identify the non-Zadokite priesthood of the Maccabees as belonging to the "priesthood of Melchizedek." R. H. Charles states that the Maccabean high-priests co-opted the title "Priest of the Most High God" in imitation of Melchizedek:

> Now the Maccabean high-priests were the first Jewish priests to assume the title "priests of the Most High God" — the title anciently borne by Melchizedek, and applied to the Maccabean high-priests in Jubilees, the Assumption of Moses, Josephus, and the Talmud. A kindred title of the same significance is applied according to a growing body of expositors to Simon the Maccabee in Psalms 110. In due accord with these facts our text (*T. Lev.* 8:14) declares that a new name should mark the new priesthood.[17]

Joshua Mathews makes this point even more strongly: "There is a textually recognizable and demonstrably distinct priestly succession — an order of Melchizedek — intended in the composition of the Pentateuch and continuing throughout the OT canon (Tanak)."[18] Further, "The first matter to consider is the portrayal of Aaron in the Pentateuch. I am suggesting that Melchizedek initiates a priestly succession, or order, meant to be seen as an alternative priesthood to that

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17. R. H. Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English : with introductions and critical and explanatory notes to the several books*, vol. 2 (Oxford, UK: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1913), 289.

18. Joshua G. Mathews, *Melchizedek's Alternative Priestly Order: A Compositional Analysis of Genesis 14:18–20 and Its Echoes Throughout the Tanak* (Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement 8; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 2-3.

of Aaron and his successors."[19] Although Matthews here describes the priesthood of Melchizedek simply as an "alternative" to that of Aaron, he emphasizes that Exodus 18 contrasts Aaron and Moses's non-Jewish father-in-law Jethro as a priest (Hebrew, *kohen*) who is superior to Aaron in his declaration of Yahweh's role in rescuing Moses's people from Egypt. Mathews also cites Carpenter[20] in support of Jethro's priestly role, as when Jethro fulfilled Yahweh's message to Pharaoh to permit Moses's people to go into the wilderness to offer sacrifice to Yahweh (Exodus 5:3), and when he made a burnt offering and the promised sacrifices to Yahweh in behalf of the Israelites.

Joseph and Lehi as Elohist Prophets

Lehi learned of his roots in the northern kingdom when he obtained from Laban the genealogy of his ancestors. That his ancestors had arrived at Jerusalem as fleeing refugees from the north about 130 years earlier explains his apparent lack of knowledge of his own ancestral roots. Yet Lehi had clearly been socialized in the imagery of the northern kingdom. His knowledge included teachings of such northern prophets as Zenos, Zenock, and Esias (Helaman 8:20; 3 Nephi 10:16), whose teachings were not included in the Jewish scriptures compiled in Jerusalem. (In Helaman, the northern prophets' names are notably listed first, followed by those of the southern prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah.) Lehi's northern heritage is especially evident in the ministry of angels, the role of visionary dreams, the imagery in these dream visions of the Tree of Life in his and his son Nephi's lives, and the tradition of Nehushtan, the bronze serpent Moses raised on a staff and was remembered for centuries by the descendants of Lehi.

Conclusion

The Book of Mormon has a strong connection with the Elohist traditions of the Kingdom of Israel (as argued by John Sorenson), traditions largely lost in the Hebrew Bible as it was produced in Jerusalem. It clearly bears the imprint of the culture of the northern tribes in the prophetic traditions that Lehi followed.

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19. Ibid., 80.

20. Eugene E. Carpenter, "Exodus 18: Its Structure, Style, Motifs and Functions in the Book of Exodus," in *A Biblical Itinerary: In Search of Method, Form, and Content – Essays in Honor of George W. Coats*, ed. Eugene E. Carpenter (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 103.

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Could Joseph Smith Have Drawn on Ancient Manuscripts When He Translated the Story of Enoch?: Recent Updates on a Persistent Question

Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and Ryan Dahle

Abstract: *In this article, we offer a general critique of scholarship that has argued for Joseph Smith's reliance on* 1 Enoch *or other ancient pseudepigrapha for the Enoch chapters in the Book of Moses. Our findings highlight the continued difficulties of scholars to sustain such arguments credibly. Following this general critique, we describe the current state of research relating to what Salvatore Cirillo took to be the strongest similarity between Joseph Smith's chapters on Enoch and the Qumran* Book of Giants — *namely the resemblance between the name Mahawai in the* Book of Giants *and Mahujah/Mahijah in Joseph Smith's Enoch account. We conclude this section with summaries of conversations of Gordon C. Thomasson and Hugh Nibley with* Book of Giants *scholar Matthew Black about these names. Next, we explain why even late and seemingly derivative sources may provide valuable new evidence for the antiquity of Moses 6–7 or may corroborate details from previously known Enoch sources. By way of example, we summarize preliminary research that compares passages in Moses 6–7 to newly available ancient Enoch texts from lesser known sources. We conclude with a discussion of the significance of findings that situate Joseph Smith's Enoch account in an ancient milieu. Additional work is underway to provide a systematic and detailed analysis of ancient literary affinities in Moses 6–7, including an effort sponsored by Book of Mormon Central in collaboration with The Interpreter Foundation.*

Figure 1. *George Campfield, fl. 1861: Enoch, Creation Window, All Saints Church, Selsley, England, 1861.[1] This stained glass window, commissioned from the company of craftsmen headed by William Morris, shows Enoch standing in heaven following his final ascension.*

Both in the expansive nature of its content and the eloquence of its expression, Terryl and Fiona Givens consider the account of Enoch in chapters 6 and 7 of the Book of Moses as perhaps the "most remarkable religious document published in the nineteenth century."[2] It was produced early in Joseph Smith's ministry — in fact in the same year as the publication of the Book of Mormon — as part of a divine commission to "retranslate" the Bible.[3] Writing the account of Enoch appears to have occupied a few days of the Prophet's attention sometime between 30 November and 31 December 1830.

According to Elder Neal A. Maxwell, Joseph Smith's "Book of Enoch" provides "eighteen times as many column inches about Enoch … than we have in the few verses on him in the Bible. Those scriptures not only contain greater quantity [than the Bible] but also … contain … [abundant] new material about Enoch on which the Bible is silent."[4] Current scholarship casts doubt on the assertion that this new material was derived from deep study of the scriptures[5] or absorbed in significant measure from Masonic or hermetical influences.[6] Hence, the most common naturalistic explanation for the account is that Joseph Smith drew the major themes in the Latter-day Saint stories of Enoch from exposure to ancient Enoch manuscripts from outside the Bible.[7]

Of these Enoch manuscripts, the best-known is *1 Enoch*, a Jewish compilation of five originally separate books thought to have been written between about 200 BCE and 100 CE. *1 Enoch* is one of the most important Jewish works of pseudepigrapha, highly valued in the early Christian community and explicitly[8] (and implicitly[9]) cited in New Testament epistles. However, apart from the shared prominence of selected themes in its *Book of Parables* (in particular a "Son of Man" motif), there are relatively few specific and unique resemblances to Moses 6–7, especially considering the great length of *1 Enoch*. Commonalities of equal or perhaps greater interest are also to be found in *2 Enoch* and *3 Enoch* (e.g., detailed descriptions of Enoch's heavenly ascent and its characterization of the prophet as a "lad") as well as the Aramaic *Book of Giants* (particularly the stories of Enoch's preaching mission and his battles with formidable adversaries). In addition, scattered passages in late Jewish and Islamic documents provide unique correspondences and sometimes corroborate earlier Enoch sources. Yet none of these sources, except Richard Laurence's 1821 English translation of *1 Enoch*, were published in English prior to Joseph Smith's translation of the Book of Moses.

Pioneering insights on the relationship between ancient Enoch writings and the Book of Moses can be found in the writings of Hugh W. Nibley, who wrote a series of articles on the subject for the *Ensign* magazine in 1975–1977. Unfortunately, Nibley received one of the most important manuscripts relevant to his study — Józef Milik and Matthew Black's 1976 publication of the first English translation of the *Book of Giants* — only days before the publication deadline for the last article in the series.[10] As a result, of the more than 300 pages Nibley devoted to Enoch in the volume that gathered his writings on the subject, only a relative handful were dedicated to these significant Aramaic "Enoch" fragments.[11] Regrettably, after Nibley completed his initial research for the *Ensign* articles, he turned his attention to other subjects and never again took up a sustained study of the relationships between Moses 6–7 and ancient writings on Enoch.

In collaboration with David J. Larsen, Bradshaw published a verse-by-verse commentary on Moses 6–7 that includes extensive discussion of related themes in Enoch pseudepigrapha, including the *Book of Giants*. In the present article, we do not attempt to duplicate what has already been written on this subject.[12] Rather, our intent is to summarize and update selected findings from the previous study.

Figure 2. Book of Enoch P, Chester Beatty XII, leaf 3 (Verso), 4th century.[13] The leaf shown includes the portions of 1 Enoch *cited in Jude 1:14–15.*

Could Joseph Smith Have Borrowed from *1 Enoch*?

As a starting point for the answer to this question, we observe that since Joseph Smith was well aware that the biblical book of Jude explicitly quotes *1 Enoch*,[14] the most obvious thing he could have done to bolster his case for the authenticity of the Book of Moses (if he were a conscious deceiver) would have been to include the relevant verses from Jude somewhere within *his* revelations on Enoch. But this the Prophet did not do.

As a second anchor point, the question also requires that we assess the likelihood that Joseph Smith knew about the 1821 publication of Laurence's translation of *1 Enoch*. In his 2010 master's thesis from Durham University, Salvatore Cirillo[15] cites and amplifies the arguments of Michael Quinn,[16] arguing that the available evidence that the Prophet had access to this translation of *1 Enoch* has moved "beyond probability — to fact." He sees no other explanation for the substantial similarities that he finds between the Book of Moses and the pseudepigraphal Enoch literature.[17] However, Cirillo's confidence is at odds with the views of other scholars who have addressed this issue.

For example, as a result of his study of the potential availability to the Prophet of the 1821 printing of *1 Enoch*, renowned Latter-day Saint historian Richard L. Bushman concluded:[18] "It is scarcely conceivable that Joseph Smith knew of Laurence's Enoch translation."[19]

Because Joseph Smith's access to the 1821 printing is unlikely, some scholars have argued that he may have seen a purported 1828 American edition of the work. However, Yakov Ben Tov (online pseudonym) has shown that the arguments of Michael Quinn and Salvatore Cirillo concerning this 1828 American printing are flawed in at least two major respects:[20]

- "Cirillo badly misquotes Quinn as stating that the supposed 1828 printing happened in America. Not only does Quinn not say that, the *National Union Catalog* says explicitly that it was Oxford."

- "It is unlikely that there was an 1828 publication of Laurence's translation of the Book of Enoch at all." "An editor must have mistakenly read 1838 as 1828 when the entries were made for publication."

Moreover, even if *1 Enoch* had been available to the Prophet, a study by Latter-day Saint historian Jed Woodworth concludes that the principal themes of "Laurence's 105 translated chapters do not resemble Joseph Smith's Enoch in any obvious way."[21]

An exception to this rule is *1 Enoch's Book of Parables*, which holds special interest for students of the Book of Moses.[22] Notably, both books describe heavenly ascents of Enoch that include visions with a central figure and a common set of titles. For instance, the title "Son of Man," which is a notable feature of the *Book of Parables*,[23] appears in marked density throughout Enoch's grand vision in the Book of Moses.[24] Remarkably, the titles "Chosen One,"[25] "Anointed One,"[26] and "Righteous One"[27] also appear prominently in both texts.

Figure 3. Gustav Kaupert, 1819–1897: Jesus Christ, 1880. Located in the Protestant Church of the Redeemer, formerly the Roman Palace Basilica of Constantine (Aula Palatina), Trier, Germany.[28]

Consistent with the conclusions of Enoch scholars George W. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam about the use of these multiple titles in the *Book of Parables*,[29] the Book of Moses applies them all to a single individual.[30] Moreover, Moses 6:57 gives a single, specific description of the role of the Son of Man as a "righteous judge."[31] According to Nickelsburg and VanderKam,[32] this conception is highly characteristic of the *Book of Parables*, where the primary role of the Son of Man is also that of a judge. Chapters 70–71 close the *Book of Parables* by describing Enoch being hidden from those on earth, ascending to heaven, acquiring all of the knowledge of the secrets of heaven, and experiencing a vision of the angels and others dwelling with God. In somewhat of a surprise ending, Enoch is declared to be the Son of Man — or perhaps, more descriptively and in line with modern scripture, *a* Son of Man.[33]

Aside from the shared prominence of the "Son of Man" and related motifs in the *Book of Parables* (a section of *1 Enoch*) and the Book of Moses, only a few significant and unique parallels have been identified between the two Enoch chapters of the Book of Moses and the sizable text of *1 Enoch*.[34] Besides the contrast in emphasis in the two books, there is a significant difference in tone. After careful comparison of *1 Enoch* and Moses 6–7, Woodworth succinctly states: "Same name, different voice."[35] Similarly, in Ben Tov's review of the evidence, he concludes: "the literary connections between Moses 6–8 and *1 Enoch* are in my opinion very loose, and more time and attention should be placed elsewhere."[36]

In summary, ongoing research has shown that it is not only improbable but also off the mark to conclude that *1 Enoch* served as the primary inspiration for Joseph Smith's writings about Enoch. In spite of all the spilled ink spent on *1 Enoch*, more striking affinities are found in other pseudepigrapha, such as *2 Enoch, 3 Enoch,* and the Qumran *Book of Giants.*

Could Joseph Smith Have Borrowed from Other Enoch Pseudepigrapha?

Reflecting the trend of some scholars to look beyond *1 Enoch* for potential sources of Joseph Smith's Enoch accounts, Latter-day Saint scholar Cheryl L. Bruno, in a 2014 article in the *Journal of Religion and Society*,[37] attempts to make the case that Jewish Enoch traditions, mediated by Masonic accounts that Joseph Smith presumably encountered, significantly influenced Moses 6–7. In support of her claims, she points out that in addition to *1 Enoch* and other Jewish sources, there are similarities in *2 Enoch* and the Book of Moses Enoch in "Enoch's call to preach"[38] and his divine transfiguration.[39] She also cites *3 Enoch* in relation to Enoch's enthronement.[40] Surprisingly (and disappointingly), apart from making brief reference to Enoch as a scribe for divine tablets,[41] she does not mention the prominent and unique resemblances between Moses 6–7 and the Aramaic *Book of Giants.*

The fragmentary *Book of Giants* has proven to be of tremendous importance to Enoch scholarship, in part because it is arguably the oldest extant Enoch manuscript.[42] Although fragments of the *Book of Giants* had been found previously in the writings of Mani, its discovery at Qumran as part of the "Dead Sea Scrolls" showed that its composition "is at least five hundred years [earlier] than previously thought."[43] Thus it helps us "to reconstruct the literary shape of the early stages of the Enochic tradition."[44]

Note that the term "giants" in the title *Book of Giants* is misleading.[45] Actually, the book describes two different groups of individuals, referred to in Hebrew as the *gibborim* and the *nephilim*. In discussing Enoch's mission among the *gibborim*, it is probably more appropriate to read the term with its customary biblical connotation of mighty hero or warrior rather than as "giant."[46] Later, the terms *gibborim* and *nephilim* (the latter term originally used to refer to what seems to have been a remnant of a race of "giants") seem to have been erroneously equated in some contexts.[47] Consistent with this distinction between these two groups of people, Joseph Smith, in his Enoch account, specifically differentiated "giants" (*nephilim*?) from Enoch's primary adversaries (*gibborim*?).[48]

Although the combined fragments of the *Book of Giants* scarcely fill three pages in the English translation of Martinez,[49] we find in it the most concentrated and extensive series of parallels between a single ancient text and Joseph Smith's account of Enoch's teaching mission and subsequent battles with the *gibborim*. These resemblances range from general themes in the story line (secret works, murders, visions, earthly and heavenly books of remembrance that evoke fear and trembling, moral corruption, hope held out for repentance, and the eventual defeat of Enoch's adversaries in battle — ending with their utter destruction and imprisonment) to specific occurrences of rare expressions in corresponding contexts (the reference to a "wild man," the name and parallel role of Mahijah/Mahujah, and the "roar of the wild beasts").

With respect to resemblances between the Aramaic *Book of Giants* fragments and the Manichaean *Book of Giants* materials, Loren T. Stuckenbruck observes: "Given the very different geographical, socio-religious, and ideological context" it is "all the more remarkable that there can be any overlap in content at all."[50] This observation applies even more convincingly when comparisons are made between the Aramaic *Book of Giants* and the account of Enoch in the Book of Moses.

With respect to two of the entries in Figure 4, we note recent research on the description of a war scene in the *Book of Giants* that includes references to a "wild man" and "the roar of wild beasts." These two terms resonate with the people's (sarcastic) description of Enoch in the Book of Moses as a "wild man" (Moses 6:38) and a puzzling phrase that appears later in the account, "the roar of the lions" (Moses 7:13). While earlier *Book of Giants* translations sometimes contained only one or the other of the two terms of significance, there is increasing consensus

that both terms are present in the original manuscript.[51] As a plausible explanation for why the terms "wild man" and "wild beast/lion" should appear in close proximity within the *Book of Giants*, Brian R. Doak's sociolinguistic analysis, made independently of the new advances in translation, deliberately conflates the "potentially distinct categories of the 'elite adversary' and the 'elite animal' in order to highlight the correspondence between elite military victory against a prestige animal (lion) and the defeat of an Egyptian giant in 1 Chronicles 11:22–23."[52]

Event	Book of Moses	Book of Giants
Secret works and murders	6:15	1Q23, 6+14+15:2–4
A "wild man"	6:38	4Q530, 22:8
Mahijah/Mahawai questions Enoch	6:40	4Q530, 2:20–23
Enoch reads record of deeds	6:46–47	4Q203, 8:1–11
Trembling/weeping after Enoch reads	6:47	4Q203, 4:6
Call to repentance	6:52	4Q203, 8:14–15
Conceived in sin	6:55	4Q203, 8:6–9
Enoch defeats *gibborim*	7:13	4Q531, 22:3–7
The "roar of wild beasts"	7:13	4Q531,22:8
Imprisonment of *gibborim*	7:38	4Q203, 7B 1:5[53]

Figure 4. *Examples of parallel themes and expressions in the* Book of Giants *and Moses 6–7 accounts of Enoch's teaching mission and battles.*[54]

While Bruno omitted discussion of important parallels with the Aramaic Enoch in her discussion, Cirillo did not let the significant resemblances between *Book of Giants* and Moses 6–7 go unnoticed. Indeed, he argued in strong terms in his master's thesis that Joseph Smith must have known about this ancient Enoch text. Cirillo writes:[55]

> Nibley's own point that Mahujah and Mahijah from the [Book of Moses] share their name with Mahawai in the [*Book of Giants*] is further evidence that influence [from pseudepigraphal books of Enoch] occurred [in Joseph Smith's Enoch writings]. And additional proof of Smith's knowledge of the [*Book of Giants*] is evidenced by his use of the codename Baurak Ale.

What goes conspicuously unmentioned in Cirillo's arguments for the influence of Enoch pseudepigrapha on Moses 6–7 is that, apart from *1 Enoch*, none of the significant Jewish Enoch manuscripts were available in an English translation during Joseph Smith's lifetime. It is baffling that Cirillo's strongest arguments for the Prophet's having been influenced by these ancient works comes from the Qumran *Book of Giants* — a work that was not discovered until 1948! Cirillo never attempts to explain how a manuscript that was unknown until the mid-twentieth century could have influenced the account of Enoch in the Book of Moses, written in 1830.

Bruno takes a different route than Cirillo, arguing that resemblances to ancient Jewish pseudepigrapha in Joseph Smith's Enoch writings were mediated to an important degree by (as it is argued) the Prophet's early exposure to the traditions of Freemasonry. However, it should be remembered that, as Bruno's own article demonstrates, the most numerous, significant, and specific echoes of antiquity in the Book of Moses are not found in the secondary Masonic literature she cites but rather in the primary Jewish traditions themselves.

This is not to say that the rituals, ideas, and ideals of Freemasonry were not important to Joseph Smith, particularly after he became institutionally involved during the Nauvoo period from 1839 onward.[56] What is important is that one must not overstate resemblances with Freemasonry while understating more relevant and specific affinities to ancient traditions *not* present in Freemasonry — thus making proverbial molehills into mountains while reducing mountains to molehills.

In summary, it would have been virtually impossible for Joseph Smith in 1830 to have been aware of the most important resemblances to ancient literature in his Enoch revelations. Other than the limited and typically loose parallels found in *1 Enoch* (which, as discussed previously, was unlikely to have been available to Joseph Smith), the texts that would have been required for a modern author to derive significant parts of Moses 6–7 had neither been discovered by Western scholars nor translated into English. Even if relevant Masonic traditions had been available to Joseph Smith by 1830, they would not have provided the Prophet with the suite of specific and sometimes peculiar details that are shared by Moses 6–7 and pseudepigrapha like *2 Enoch*, *3 Enoch*, and the *Book of Giants*.

Figure 5. *Fragment of the Qumran* Book of Giants *(4Q203) containing the first part of the personal name MḤWY (outlined in red).[57] In modern translations, the name is usually transliterated as "Mahawai." Hugh Nibley was the first to suggest a correspondence between this* Book of Giants *character and the names Mahijah/ Mahujah in the Book of Moses.[58] Unlike many of the other poorly preserved Aramaic fragments of the* Book of Giants*, the translation of this one is straightforward: "(5) […] to you, Mah[awai …] (6) the two tablets […] (7) and the second has not been read up till now."[59]*

Could Joseph Smith Have Borrowed "Mahijah/Mahujah" from the *Book of Giants?*

In this section, we summarize recent updates to research concerning the name "Mahawai," considered by Cirillo to be the strongest similarity between Joseph Smith's chapters on Enoch and the Qumran *Book of Giants*. Although the discussion summarized below has not substantively changed from what Bradshaw has already argued elsewhere, new contributions in the endnotes from David Calabro and Matthew L. Bowen shed further light on details of these similarities.

The Name and Role of Mahawai in the Book of Giants

Cirillo, drawing upon the similar conclusions of Stuckenbruck,[60] considers the names of the *gibborim*, notably including Mahawai, as "the most conspicuously independent content" in the *Book of Giants*, being "unparalleled in other Jewish literature." Moreover, according to Cirillo, "the name Mahawai in the [*Book of Giants*] and the names Mahujah

and Mahijah in the [Book of Moses] represent the strongest similarity between the [LDS revelations on Enoch] and the [pseudepigraphal books of Enoch] (specifically the [*Book of Giants*]).” Remember that this argument comes from a scholar arguing *against* the authenticity of Joseph Smith’s revelations by claiming that the (earlier) Book of Moses Enoch account was influenced by the (later) Aramaic *Book of Giants*.

In Joseph Smith’s story of Enoch, Mahijah appears out of nowhere, as the only named character in the account besides Enoch himself:

> And there came a man unto him, whose name was Mahijah, and said unto him: Tell us plainly who thou art, and from whence thou comest? (Moses 6:40)

In the Book of Moses, the name “Mahijah” appears a second time in a different form, namely “Mahujah.”[61] Also, in the Masoretic Hebrew text of the Bible, the variants MḤYY [= Mahija-] and MḤWY [= Mahuja-] both appear in a single verse (with the suffix “-el”) as references to the same person, namely “Mehuja-el.”[62] Because the King James translation renders both variants of the Hebrew name identically in English, Joseph Smith would have had to access and interpret the Hebrew text to see that there were two versions of the name. But there is no evidence that he or anyone else associated with the translation of Moses 6–7 knew how to read Hebrew at that time or, for that matter, even had access to a Hebrew Bible.

Even if someone were to claim that Joseph Smith became aware of these two variants by examining the Hebrew text, it would still be difficult to explain why, assuming that he did indeed possess this information, the Prophet would have chosen not to normalize the two variant versions of the name into a single version in the Book of Moses, as is almost always done in translations of Genesis 4:18. Instead, each of the attested variants of the name is included in the Book of Moses in appropriate contexts, preserving both ancient traditions. Moreover, Joseph Smith’s versions of the name omit the suffix “-el,”[63] thus differing from the Hebrew text of the Bible and instead according appropriately with its Dead Sea Scrolls[64] equivalent in the *Book of Giants*.

Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that there are intriguing similarities between Mahijah in Joseph Smith’s Book of Moses and

Mahawai in the *Book of Giants*, not only in their names but also in their respective roles. Hugh Nibley observes:[65]

> The only thing the Mahijah in the Book of Moses is remarkable for is his putting of bold direct questions to Enoch. … And this is exactly the role, and the only role, that the Aramaic Mahujah plays in the story.

In the *Book of Giants*, we read the report of a series of dreams that troubled the *gibborim*. The dreams "may symbolize the destruction of all but Noah and his sons by the Flood."[66] In an impressive correspondence to the questioning of Enoch by Mahijah in the Book of Moses, the *gibborim* send Mahawai to "consult Enoch in order to receive an authoritative interpretation of the visions."[67] In the *Book of Giants*, we read:[68]

> [Then] all the [*gibborim*] [and the *nephilim*] … called to Mahawai and he came to them. They implored him and sent him to Enoch [the celebrated scribe],[69] and they said to him: "Go … and tell him to [explain] and interpret the dream."

Cirillo comments: "The emphasis that [Joseph] Smith places on Mahijah's travel to Enoch is eerily similar to the account of Mahawai to Enoch in the [*Book of Giants*]."[70]

In conclusion, it is remarkable that both the similar name and role of Mahawai/Mahijah are preserved in both the *Book of Giants* and the Book of Moses. Going further, Stuckenbruck observes the same pattern of preservation in Chinese Manichaean fragments of the *Book of Giants*, which include several other names that are, for one reason or another, significantly altered. Especially given the potential for "instances in which onomastic changes (e.g., characters' names) may have been due to the change of the language media," he is impressed with the "straightforward correspondence between the name(s) Mahawai in the Manichaean texts and Mahaway in the Aramaic [*Book of Giants*], in which the character, acting in a mediary role, encounters Enoch 'the scribe.'"[71] This confluence of resemblances in both name and role witnesses the importance of this character across three versions of the text, separated by vast distances in time, culture, and geography.

Figure 6. Walter Bird (1903–1969): Photographic portrait of Matthew Black (1908–1994), 1965.[72]

Matthew Black's Explanation for "Mahujah" in the Book of Moses

The only attempt of which we are aware to explain how a manuscript discovered in 1948 could have influenced a work of scripture translated in 1830 comes from remembrances by two individuals about the well-known Aramaic scholar Matthew Black, who collaborated with Józef Milik in the first translation of the fragments of the *Book of Giants* into English in 1976. Black was approached by doctoral candidate Gordon C. Thomasson after a guest lecture at Cornell University, during a year that Black spent at the Institute of Advanced Studies at Princeton (1977–1978).[73] According to Thomasson's account:[74]

> I asked Professor Black if he was familiar with Joseph Smith's Enoch text. He said he was not but was interested. He first asked if it was identical or similar to *1 Enoch*. I told him it was not and then proceeded to recite some of the correlations Dr. Nibley had shown with Milik and Black's own and others' Qumran and Ethiopic Enoch materials. He became quiet. When I got to

Mahujah (Moses 7:2), he raised his hand in a "please pause" gesture and was silent.

Finally, he acknowledged that the place-name Mahujah could not have come from *1 Enoch*. He then formulated an hypothesis, consistent with his lecture, that a member of one of the esoteric groups he had described previously [i.e., clandestine groups who had maintained, sub rosa, a religious tradition based in the writings of Enoch that pre-dated Genesis] must have survived into the 19th century, and hearing of Joseph Smith, must have brought the group's Enoch texts to New York from Italy for the prophet to translate and publish.

At the end of our conversation he expressed an interest in seeing more of Hugh's work. I proposed that Black should meet with Hugh, gave him the contact info, and he contacted Hugh the same day, as Hugh later confirmed to me, and soon made a previously unplanned trip to Provo, where he met with Hugh for some time, and also gave a public guest lecture but, as I was told, in that public forum would not entertain questions on Moses.

Hugh Nibley also recorded an account of his interactions with Matthew Black during the latter's 1977 visit to BYU. The account included a conversation with Black that apparently occurred near the end of the visit. Nibley asked Black if he had an explanation for the appearance of the name Mahujah in the Book of Moses, and reported his answer as follows: "Well, someday we will find out the source that Joseph Smith used."[75]

Newly Available Enoch Sources

In 2018, John C. Reeves and Annette Yoshiko Reed published the first volume of their book series entitled *Enoch from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*.[76] This volume makes available in English many little-known texts about Enoch from Jewish, Christian, and Islamic sources. The following section summarizes preliminary research comparing passages in Moses 6–7 to newly available sources in the volume by Reeves and Reed, including the notable mention of a character that seems to corroborate the prominent role of Mahawai in the Aramaic *Book of Giants* and of Mahujah/Mahijah in Moses 6–7. Like the ancient Enoch sources we have discussed earlier, none of these newly available sources would have been accessible when Joseph Smith translated the Book of Moses.

Most of the Enoch manuscripts we highlight below are relatively late and in some instances may have been preserved largely through oral rather than written traditions. That being the case, one might legitimately question whether such texts could preserve early Enoch traditions with any degree of accuracy. Therefore, before discussing these new findings, we summarize the reasons why Enoch sources of relatively late provenance might still contain unique information that stretches back deeper into antiquity.

Do Late, Secondary Sources Ever Preserve Ancient Traditions?

Recent scholarship has increasingly recognized the importance of the role of oral transmission in the preservation of religious traditions later normalized by scribes — both with respect to the Bible[77] and, perhaps, to the Book of Mormon.[78] It should also be noted that vestiges of otherwise lost oral traditions[79] are frequently included in extracanonical sources.[80] Significantly, these latter writings rarely if ever constitute de novo accounts. Rather, they tend to incorporate diverse traditions of varying value and antiquity in ways that make it difficult to tease out the contribution each makes to the whole.[81] As a result, even relatively late documents rife with midrashic speculations unattested elsewhere,[82] unique Islamic assertions,[83] or seemingly fantastic Christian interpolations[84] may sometimes preserve fragments of authentically inspired principles, history, or doctrine, or may otherwise bear witness of legitimate exegetically derived[85] or ritually transmitted[86] realities.

Arguing specifically for the possibility that Jewish scholars in the Middle Ages might have "back borrowed" previously neglected early Enoch texts, Annie Yoshiko Reed explains:[87]

> This renewed interest in Enoch and his books [in medieval Judaism] forms part of a broader pattern within Jewish literature, whereby Second Temple texts and traditions rejected or otherwise not attested in the Rabbinic literature of Late Antiquity reemerge anew in post-Talmudic sources. This phenomenon remains much noted but still understudied. Nevertheless, it certainly undermines the common scholarly narrative, popularized in part by Charles and other early scholars of *1 Enoch*, whereby the apocalyptic and related creativity of Second Temple Judaism is purported to have been totally abandoned in post-70 Judaism and bears fruit only within Christianity. In some cases, what we see in these medieval Jewish materials may be Second Temple traditions that developed in the interim outside of Rabbinic circles

and/or within the Jewish magical tradition. Other cases may reflect instances of "back-borrowing" whereby learned Jews in the Middle Ages reencountered pre-Christian Jewish texts and traditions that had been transmitted by Christians or others (e.g., as most famously with Josephus and the medieval Hebrew *Yosippon*). It is certainly intriguing that the same sources in which other evidence of such "back-borrowing" clusters, such as the *Chronicle of Yerahmeel* (which knew *Yosippon* and perhaps Pseudo-Philo *LAB*) and the writings of R. Moshe ha-Darshan (which include intriguing parallels with *Jubilees* and other "pseudepigrapha"), traditions about Enoch are prominent as well. It is in this Hebrew *Chronicle* and in R. Moshe ha-Darshan's *Bereshit Rabbati* (11th c.), for instance, that we find not just motifs that echo earlier Enochic texts and traditions but also extensive material paralleling the Enochic *Book of the Giants* (ca. 2nd c. bce) now known in Aramaic from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Before giving brief summaries of new findings from the Reeves and Reed volume, we discuss two examples of unique and corroborating resemblances from late texts in more detail.

Example of a unique resemblance. Sometimes a given resemblance to the Book of Moses Enoch account may be unique in the extant Enoch literature. Joseph Smith's Enoch is promised that he will manifest God's power in his words and actions. Specifically, he is told that "the mountains shall flee before you, and the rivers shall turn from their course" (Moses 6:34).

Later in the Book of Moses we read the fulfillment of this promise: "So great was the faith of Enoch that … the rivers of water were turned out of their course" (Moses 7:13). Enoch's experience in the Book of Moses can be profitably compared to this Enoch account from the Mandaean *Ginza*:[88]

> The [Supreme] Life replied, Arise, take thy way to the source of the waters, turn it from its course. … At this command Tauriel indeed turned the sweet water from its course.

We find no account of a river's course turned by anyone in the Bible. However, such a story appears in this pseudepigraphal account and in its counterpart in modern scripture — in both instances within a story of Enoch.

Example of a corroboration of previously known resemblances. In other cases, late texts may corroborate or provide additional details about Enoch traditions in more ancient accounts. We find such examples

in the Reeves and Reed publication of extracts from Pseudo-Mas'ūdī's *Akhbār al-zamān wa-min abādat al-hidthān, wa-'ajā'ib al-buldān, wa'l-ghāmir bi-al-mā' wa'l-'imrān,*[89] where a variant of Mahawai/Mahujah/Mahijah appears as the name of a king — namely, Yamaḥuel — who commanded that Enoch be put to death.[90]

Reeves and Reed take Yamaḥuel to be an intended reference to the biblical Mehujael,[91] a name whose relationship to Mahawai in the Aramaic *Book of Giants* and of Mahujah/Mahijah in Moses 6–7 we have discussed previously. Significantly, Yamaḥuel's primary role in the Islamic text is to ask questions,[92] just as it is in the Book of Moses and the *Book of Giants*.

Figure 7. William Blake (1757–1827): Sketch for "War Unchained by an Angel — Fire, Pestilence, and Famine Following," ca. 1780–1784.[93]

Pseudo-Mas'ūdī's account is set "at the time when Idris [Enoch] … was born," and idol worship was prevalent among "the descendants of Cain." In one version of the story, the devil told the king of the idolaters that a descendant of "Mahalalel" — doubtless a reference to Mahalaleel, the grandfather of Enoch mentioned in Genesis 5:13–17 — would "foment opposition to [idolatrous] divinity and to kingship." Satan tried to bring about Enoch's demise, but "God assigned for Idris [Enoch] angels to protect him." The account also states that "when Iblis [Satan]

and some of those who were with him from his forces came (to do Idris [Enoch] harm), they [i.e., the angels] kept them from harming him."

The mention of angelic protection in the Islamic account recalls God's promise of protection to Enoch when He said in Moses 6:32 that "no man shall pierce thee." These accounts also resonate with the following passage from the Mandaean Enoch account discussed above:[94]

> When I saw myself thus surrounded by enemies, I did flee. … And since that time, with my eyes fixed on the road, I looked to see … if the angel of Life would come to my aid. … Suddenly I saw the gates of heaven open.

Later in the same account, Enoch's enemies lament their inability to harm him and his companions. Then they complain that the eventual escape to heaven of Enoch and his companions has brought a final end to their attempts:[95]

> In vain have we attempted murder and fire against them; nothing has been able to overcome them. And now they are sheltered from our blows.

The phrase "And now they are sheltered from our blows" seems to refer to the ascent to heaven of Enoch and his fellows. The text immediately preceding this phrase reads, somewhat obscurely:[96]

> By fleeing and hiding these men from on high have gone up higher than us. We have never known them. However, now you see that they are covered with glory and splendors that appear to us in all the brightness of their triumph.

The probable meaning of this passage is revealed through a similar complaint and explanation of 'Ohya, a leader of the *gibborim* in the *Book of Giants*. He gives a description of his defeat in a great battle with Enoch and his people[97] and then says that his mortal opponents now "reside in the heavens and live with the holy ones."[98] This account can be compared with Moses 7:21, which states that Zion, the city of Enoch, "in process of time, was taken up into heaven." Similarly, Moses 7:69 avers, "And Enoch and all his people walked with God, and he dwelt in the midst of Zion; and it came to pass that Zion was not, for God received it up into his own bosom; and from thence went forth the saying, ZION IS FLED."[99]

Preliminary Findings within the New Sources

Below we summarize some other preliminary findings within the Reeves and Reed volume:

- "Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying: Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God" (Moses 5:10). In a Jewish text, Adam is similarly reported to have had such a vision in which God showed him "each generation and its scholars."[100] This passage is immediately followed by a description of how Enoch learned to see divine visions "in his normal (i.e., bodily) state." This description recalls Moses 6:36, where Enoch is reported to have "beheld … things which were not visible to the natural eye."

- "Satan *came among them*," i.e., the "sons" and "daughters" of Adam (Moses 5:13, emphasis added). The implication in scripture and Islamic Enoch sources is that the devil appeared to the people in the form of a man. Pseudo-Mas'ūdī's account says specifically that "Iblis [Satan] *came among them* in the form of an old man,"[101] and Pseudo-Asmain's version states that the Angel of Death "*came down* to him [Enoch] in a human form."[102]

- "I am also a son of God" (Moses 5:13). In al-Kisa'i's *Tales of the Prophets*, Satan makes a similar claim:[103] "I am a servant from the servants of God. I worship Him like you." However, in the *Interrogatio Joannis*, a Latin text, it is said that Satan presented himself as God and called for the worship of Enoch's sons:[104] "Know that I am God; there is no other god apart from me!"[105] This agrees with the description in Moses 6:49: "Satan hath come among the children of men, and tempteth them to worship him." It also recalls Satan's words to Moses in Moses 1:12: "Moses, son of man, worship me."

- "Jared taught Enoch in all the ways of God" (Moses 6:21). Similarly, Pseudo-Mas'ūdī's account reports that Jared[106] "taught [Enoch] the knowledge which he had received … and handed over to him the *Book of Secret(s).*"

- "All the people hate me; for I am slow of speech; wherefore am I thy servant?" (Moses 6:31). Wahb b. Munabbih reported that Enoch "was soft-spoken and gentle in his manner of speaking."[107] Other accounts portray Enoch as having been "deliberate in his speech" and "often silent."[108]

- "They taste the bitter, that they may know to prize the good" (Moses 6:55). Somewhat similarly, three Islamic accounts report Enoch's request to sample death ("taste death for a moment during the day"), explaining that if he could "experience the pain of death and its sorrow" he would "be more prepared" and "more attentive in [his] worship."[109]

- Enoch succeeded in making his people "of one heart and one mind" (Moses 7:18). A Jewish text similarly reports that Enoch "united the nations under the worship of God."[110]

- "Enoch … built a city that was called the City of Holiness, even Zion" (Moses 7:19). Several ancient texts celebrate Enoch as a builder of temples and cities.[111] Note, however, that there is frequent confusion on this matter, because Cain's son Enoch was also known for building a city (Genesis 4:17).

- "The residue of the people which were the sons of Adam … were a mixture of all the seed of Adam save it was the seed of Cain, for the seed of Cain were black,[112] *and had not place among them*" (Moses 7:22, emphasis added). A similar stigma is reported in Islamic Enoch texts such as this one: "Enoch sent for his people and warned them, and commanded them to obey God, may He be praised and glorified, and to resist Satan, and *not to associate with the descendants of Qabil [Cain]*."[113]

- "Satan … had a great chain … and he looked up and laughed," and Enoch "had bitterness of soul … and refuse[d] to be comforted" (Moses 7:26, 44). In al-Kisa'i's *Tales of the Prophets*,[114] we are told that Enoch was given a tour of hell by the Angel of Death, who placed Enoch by the path of Mālik, the Keeper of the Fire. When Mālik (a Satan figure) saw Enoch, it is reported that his face "broke into a grin."[115] Moreover, "chains" were among the "horrors" of hell that

Enoch witnessed, and "had God Most High not fortified him, he would have lost his mind. … [H]e could not sleep or enjoy the taste of food out of the fear of the punishment of God Most High which his own eyes had witnessed."[116] As Joseph Smith's Enoch "refused to be comforted," so Rabbi Joshua ben Levi (who shares archetypal affinities with Enoch) refuses to come out of Paradise[117] until, as in the Book of Moses (Moses 7:60), he is persuaded by the Lord's oath to him.

- "Whoso … climbeth up by me shall never fall" (Moses 7:53). In al-Kisa'i's *Tales of the Prophets*, we read that Ridwa, the gatekeeper of Paradise, told Enoch that a branch of the Tuba Tree would "hang down toward him" and that "he should cling to it, and it will bring him into Paradise."[118] Some of the imagery in this story (particularly of the need to climb up a branch to enter into Paradise) can be meaningfully compared to the Narrative of Zosimus and to Lehi's dream of the Tree of Life.[119]

Conclusions

Continued study of the Book of Moses is important. The renowned sociologist of religion Rodney Stark has concluded that, on its own, "the Book of Mormon … may not have added enough doctrinal novelty to the Christian tradition to have made [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints] more than a Protestant sect."[120] On the other hand, Terryl Givens has rightly argued that in actuality it was the lesser-known Pearl of Great Price that provided the "essential foundations of a radically new religious tradition."[121] One important element of this argument is the fact that the Book of Moses "largely informs and guides [Latter-day Saint] temple theology."[122]

Paradoxically, however, Harold Bloom laments that the Book of Moses and the Book of Abraham are conspicuous not only because they are two of the "more surprising" works of Latter-day Saint scripture, but also, regrettably, because they are also the most "neglected."[123] With the great spate of publications over the decades since fragments of Egyptian papyri were rediscovered in the Metropolitan Museum of Art,[124] we have begun to see a remedy for the previous neglect of the Book of Abraham.[125] Now, gratefully, because of wider availability of the original manuscripts and new detailed studies of their contents, the Book of Moses is also beginning to receive its due.[126]

Figure 8. *Enoch Window at Canterbury Cathedral, ca. 1178–1180.*[127] *Enoch is shown here with upraised hands in the traditional attitude of prayer. The right hand of God emerges from the cloud to grasp the wrist of Enoch and lift him to heaven.*

Why Comparative Studies Matter to Latter-day Saints

Whether we are talking about primary works, such as the *Book of Giants* or, for example, obscure, secondary Islamic sources from the ninth century, the possibility that traditions of deep antiquity are contained within pseudepigraphal texts cannot be dismissed out of hand. Latter-day Saint scholars who accept that the Book of Moses preserves genuine antediluvian threads, rather than springing solely from the imagination of Joseph Smith, naturally welcome opportunities to compare ancient texts with modern scripture for evidence that may bear on the plausibility of an Enoch figure who, according to the scripture and teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, lived as an actual person thousands of years earlier.

Although some Latter-day Saint scholars have raised arguments that Enoch and other significant scripture characters were not themselves "historical figures of the material past,"[128] such discussions, though often sincere and worthy of careful consideration, will typically be unpersuasive to believing members of the restored Church.[129] For example, Joseph Smith recorded extensive descriptions of personal visions and manifestations in which he saw and spoke with many prominent characters of the Book of Mormon[130] and the Bible.[131]

Why New Approaches Are Needed

Methodologies for determining when a given text like, say, *3 Enoch* was likely composed in its current form are relatively mature and in widespread use. However, what is more difficult or often nigh impossible is determining the milieu in which the major and minor themes or motifs within such a text are likely to have originated. Consistent with this observation, Reeves and Reed articulate the rationale for newer methods of biblical scholarship that involve "a shift away from the older scholarly obsession with 'origins' whereby the study of scriptures often focused on the recovery of hypothetical sources behind them":[132]

> Scholars of the Hebrew Bible and specialists in ancient Judaism and Christianity have increasingly come into conversation around the trajectories of biblical interpretation and the continued lives of authoritative writings within and between religious communities. Alongside traditional source-critical, redaction-critical, and text-critical inquiries into the Torah/Pentateuch, for instance, new approaches have emerged in the attempt to recover what James Kugel has termed "the Bible as It Was"[133] — that is, not simply the text of this or that biblical book as it came to be fixed in writing, but also the much broader array of common exegetical motifs and legends through which premodern peoples encountered the primeval and patriarchal past. What has emerged, in the process, is a new sense of the degree to which premodern Jews, Christians, and Muslims — as well as Samaritans, Manichaeans, "gnostics," and others — participated in preserving and developing a common store of traditions about figures such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses.
>
> So too with Enoch. The traditions associated with this figure, however, expose the limitations of modern notions of "the

Bible" to capture the scope, dynamism, and complexity of premodern discourses about the biblical past. There has been much attention, for instance, to Jewish and Christian traditions about the fallen angels in relation to the exegesis of Genesis 6. What such studies have shown, however, is the impossibility of accounting for the history of interpretation without a sense of the ample influence of Enochic and other texts now commonly deemed "noncanonical." So too with Genesis 5 and traditions about Enoch, which took form from an ancient matrix of Mesopotamian traditions that continued to be developed in new ways in writings produced alongside and after what we know now as "the Bible."

Traditions surrounding Enoch thus offer especially rich foci for tracing the transmission and transformations of traditions across religious boundaries. In light of new insights into scribal practices and textual fluidity from the biblical and related manuscripts among the Dead Sea Scrolls, it has become clear that the process of the formation of "the Bible" was much longer and more complex than previously imagined. Likewise, the recent growth of concern for the mechanics of written and oral transmission and pedagogy among ancient Jews has redescribed biblical "authorship" in continuum with interpretation, redaction, collection, and transmission — wherein oral/aural and written/visual components, moreover, often remained intertwined in various ways in various settings. Just as these insights lead us to question the assumption of any clear line between scripture and interpretation in relation to the Torah/Pentateuch, so they also open the way for integrating what we know of the formation, transmission, and reception of Enochic literature into a more complete picture of the biblical past as remembered by premodern Jews, Christians, Muslims, and others.

What Remains to Be Done

With all that said, there is much more to be done. For instance, with respect to the subject of the present article, Ben Tov has observed that "a systematic and detailed analysis of other literary influences on Moses 1 or the major additions in Moses 6–8 has not yet been completed."[134] While not sharing Ben Tov's premise that Book of Moses accounts of

the heavenly ascent of Moses (Moses 1) and of the ministry of Enoch (Moses 6–7) can be explained primarily in naturalistic terms — namely, through "literary *influences*" on Joseph Smith — we are convinced of the value of "a systematic and detailed analysis" of ancient literary *affinities* to these works of modern scripture.

We hope to be able to help address the need for such analysis through a current effort sponsored by Book of Mormon Central in collaboration with The Interpreter Foundation. Our methodology will build on the work of others who have offered useful guidelines for avoiding the pitfalls of comparative approaches.[135] Recently, Bradshaw, David J. Larsen, and Stephen T. Whitlock have completed a preliminary study of ancient affinities with Moses 1 that was conducted in this general spirit.[136]

Eventually we also hope to explore whether Moses 6–7 can make a contribution to the ongoing effort by Stuckenbruck and others to reconstruct the outline of the *Book of Giants* narrative through systematic examination of Aramaic and Manichaean fragments containing common elements of the basic storyline.[137] A similar approach that compared Moses 1 to the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, a work of Jewish pseudepigrapha, proved useful in revealing and confirming details in both accounts — shedding light both on the meaning of obscure phrases and also the overall narrative structure.[138]

Naturally, our expectations in this respect must be qualified. Although Joseph Smith's revisions and additions to the Bible sometimes contain stunning echoes of ancient sources, he understood that the primary intent of modern revelation is to give divine guidance to latter-day readers, not to provide precise matches to texts from other times. Thus, it is not our claim that every word of these modern productions is necessarily rooted in ancient manuscripts, nor that every item of preliminary evidence we have presented in this article should be given equal weight. However, to those who accept Joseph Smith's role as a prophet, seer, and revelator it would be no surprise if long, revealed passages such as Moses 1, 6, and 7 were to provide plausible evidence of having been drawn, at least in part, from a common well of ancient textual or oral traditions. Whether or not it can be argued that any elements of these writings reflect modern language and concerns, we concur with Hugh Nibley that if they show "*any tendency at all* to conform to the peculiar conditions" imposed by a relevant ancient milieu, their "critics must be put to a good deal of explaining."[139]

In this respect, we do not envy the position of Joseph Smith's detractors. For (1) if they insist upon wholly naturalistic origins for

correspondences between the Book of Moses Enoch account and ancient Enoch texts, (2) if they agree with Ben Tov's conclusions that the possibility of Joseph Smith's having been aware of *1 Enoch* is increasingly unlikely and moreover that, in any case, "the literary connections between Moses 6–8 and *1 Enoch* are … very loose, and more time and attention should be placed elsewhere,"[140] and (3) if they accept the strong and seemingly incontrovertible evidence that none of the other major ancient Enoch sources now available were known and accessible to Joseph Smith by 1830, then they face daunting challenges.

In light of the considerable challenges to proving that *currently known* Enoch sources influenced Joseph Smith's Enoch account, to plausibly argue that correspondences with ancient traditions came through naturalistic means might instead require the discovery of *new* Enoch sources with an explanatory power greater than that of the combined evidence from extant texts. In addition, these new texts would have to be shown as having been available in English to Joseph Smith. Further, one would have to explain the fact that even the variety of texts already known, though containing many peculiar correspondences to Moses 6–7, overwhelmingly fail to capture the genius and coherence of the account as a whole.

As any alternative currently seems both unlikely and unsupportable, the possibility that the Enoch chapters of the Book of Moses contain divinely revealed, authentically ancient history and teachings becomes increasingly appealing, thus validating the prediction of William W. Phelps that "the world [would] prove Joseph Smith a true prophet by circumstantial evidence."[141]

The Respective Roles of Faith and Argument

Of course, in comparing an ancient text to modern scripture we cannot go beyond arguments for historical plausibility to argue for the historicity of the specific events recounted in Moses 6–7. As Hugh Nibley wrote with respect to the Book of Mormon, the only thing that might be shown with some certainty when evaluating the authenticity of ancient documents is that a given event[142]

> really *could* have happened. Not that it *did* happen: to prove that is neither necessary nor possible. Unique events in history can never be reconstructed with certainty; but characteristic related events — manners, customs, rituals, etc., things that happen not just once but again and again in familiar patterns — may be the object of almost absolute certainty. Hence, they,

and not particular events, are the hardest things to fake; in testing forgeries and identifying documents it is the general pattern that is all-important.

Regarding the value of the "greatness of the evidences" (Helaman 5:50) available to enhance our study of modern scripture, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland has said:[143]

> Our testimonies aren't dependent on evidence — we still need that spiritual confirmation in the heart of which we have spoken — but not to seek for and not to acknowledge intellectual, documentable support for our belief when it is available is to needlessly limit an otherwise incomparably strong theological position and deny us a unique, persuasive vocabulary in the latter-day arena of religious investigation and sectarian debate. Thus armed with so much evidence … we ought to be more assertive than we sometimes are in defending our testimony of truth.

The wealth of evidence for antiquity scattered throughout Joseph Smith's translations not only provides a source of light and understanding for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints but also for some broad-minded scholars outside the faith. For example, as part of a more general discussion of Latter-day Saint theology, Stephen Webb,[144] not a member of the Church, concluded that the Prophet "knew more about theology and philosophy than it was reasonable for anyone in his position to know, as if he were dipping into the deep, collective unconsciousness of Christianity with a very long pen."

Yet, far more significant to believers than the astonishing discovery of ancient echoes in a work of modern revelation is that Joseph Smith recovered a story of Enoch the Seer which manifests a deep understanding of what it means to become a "partaker of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4)[145] and through that process to become a partner with God Himself in the salvation and exaltation of His children,[146] allowing us, like Enoch, "to be raised to a perspective from which [we see] the world through God's eyes."[147]

[**Authors' Note:** Our thanks to Matthew L. Bowen and David Calabro for their contributions to the discussion of the names Mahujah/Mahijah/Mahawai. We are also grateful to Calabro for checking and updating Hugh Nibley's English translation of the Hebrew text of the story of the ascent of Enoch's followers from Jellinek's *Bet ha-Midrasch*.]

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Endnotes

1 Bridgeman Art Library International, image reference: MOK 120180.

2 Terryl L. Givens and Fiona Givens, *The God Who Weeps: How Mormonism Makes Sense of Life* (Salt Lake City: Ensign Peak, 2012), 24.

3 Jeffrey M Bradshaw, *In God's Image and Likeness 1: Creation, Fall, and the Story of Adam and Eve*, rev. ed. (2009; repr., Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2014), 1–9.

4 Neal A. Maxwell, *A Wonderful Flood of Light* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990), 31. For the quantitative comparison, Elder Maxwell cites a letter to him dated August 12, 1988, from Robert J. Matthews, late Latter-day Saint scholar of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. Richard L. Bushman computes a roughly similar ratio (Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling, A Cultural Biography of Mormonism's Founder* [New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005], 138): "In Genesis, Enoch is summed up in 5 verses; in Joseph Smith's revision, Enoch's story extends to 110 verses."

5 The proportion of Joseph Smith's account of Enoch that could have been derived straightforwardly from the five relevant verses in the Bible is very small. Moreover, Joseph Smith's mother (Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001], 344) wrote that as a boy he "had never read the Bible through in his life: he seemed much less inclined to the perusal of books than any of the rest of our children, but far more given to meditation and deep study." Contra Michael Quinn's claim (D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, rev. ed. [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998], 192), Philip Barlow (Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion*, rev. ed. [1991; repr., New York City: Oxford University Press, 2013], 12) sees "no reason to doubt such memories," though he does note the "potent biblicism" of his environs, recollections by a neighbor of Bible study in the Smith home, and how young Joseph "searched the scriptures" as he experienced the "revivalistic fires of the surrounding 'burnt-over district.'" It is hard to imagine, however, that the story of Enoch would have been a focus of attention for any

early encounters that Joseph Smith had with the book of Genesis in his home or community.

Observe also that the "restrained, assured, and polished" nature of Joseph Smith's prose from his later years (ibid., 14) was not evident in his early personal writings to the degree found in his very first translations and revelations. Indeed, Joseph Smith's wife Emma (Joseph Smith, III, "Last testimony of Sister Emma," *Saints' Herald* 26, no. 19 [October 1, 1879]: 289–90, https://ia801300.us.archive. org/6/items/TheSaintsHerald_Volume_26_1879/the%20 saints%20herald%20volume%2026%201879.pdf) testified that during the time he was fully engaged in translation, her husband "could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter; let alone dictating a book like the Book of Mormon. And, though I was an active participant in the scenes that transpired, and was present during the translation of the plates, and had cognizance of things as they transpired, it is marvelous to me, 'a marvel and a wonder,' as much so as to anyone else."

6 For example, John L. Brooke (John L. Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994], 195) seeks to make the case that Sidney Rigdon, among others, was a "conduit of Masonic lore during Joseph's early years" (William J. Hamblin, Daniel C. Peterson, and George L. Mitton, "Mormon in the fiery furnace or Loftes Tryk goes to Cambridge," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6, no. 2 (1994): 52, https://scholarsarchive. byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1207context=msr) and then goes on to make a set of weakly substantiated claims connecting Mormonism and Masonry. These claims, including connections with the story of Enoch's pillars in Royal Arch Masonry, are refuted in ibid., 52–58; cf. William J. Hamblin, "Review of John L. Brooke: The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844," *BYU Studies* 34, no. 4 (1994): 178–79, https://byustudies.byu. edu/content/refiners-fire-making-mormon-cosmology-1644-1844. Non-Mormon scholar Stephen H. Webb (Webb, *Jesus Christ, Eternal God: Heavenly Flesh and the Metaphysics of Matter* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012], 260) agreed with Hamblin, Peterson, and Mitton, concluding that "actual evidence for any direct link between [Joseph Smith's] theology and the hermetic tradition is tenuous at best, and given that scholars vigorously debate whether hermeticism even constitutes a coherent and organized tradition,

Brooke's book should be read with a fair amount of skepticism." See also Philip L. Barlow, "Decoding Mormonism," *Christian Century* 113, (January 17, 1996): 52–55; Richard Bushman, "The Mysteries of Mormonism," *Journal of the Early Republic* 15, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 501–8; Jan Shipps, *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 204–17. Noting the unconvincing nature of Brooke's arguments about hermeticism, Stephen J. Fleming has recently argued for similarities to a collection of ideas associated with what sometimes has been termed Christian Platonism (Stephen Joseph Fleming, "The Fulness of the Gospel: Christian Platonism and the Origins of Mormonism" [PhD Dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2014]). Elsewhere I have summarized the history and important role of Freemasonry in Nauvoo, while highlighting difficulties in the argument that modern temple ordinances are a simple derivation from Freemasonry (Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, "Freemasonry and the Origins of Modern Temple Ordinances," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 15 [2015]: 159–237, http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/freemasonry-and-the-origins-of-modern-temple-ordinances.) In a separate study, Matthew B. Brown presents evidence for similar conclusions (Matthew B. Brown, *Exploring the Connection Between Mormons and Masons* [American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 2009]). A manuscript by Brown that deals with this topic in more depth still awaits publication.

7   For an annotated bibliography of Enoch pseudepigrapha, see Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and David J. Larsen *In God's Image and Likeness 2: Enoch, Noah, and the Tower of Babel* (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2014), 468–77. The lead author for the section on *1 Enoch* was Colby Townsend.

8   See Jude 1:14–15. Cf. *1 Enoch* 1:9.

9   E.g., within 1 Peter and 2 Peter. For an overview of the confluences between Enoch and the Petrine literature, see Kelley Coblentz Bautch, "Peter and the Patriarchs: A confluence of traditions?" in *With Letters of Light: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Early Jewish Apocalypticism, Magic, and Mysticism*, eds. Daphna V. Arbel and Andrei A. Orlov (Berlin, DEU: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 13–27.

10 Józef Tadeusz Milik and Matthew Black, eds., *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments from Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

11 Hugh W. Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 2:276–81.

12 See Bradshaw and Larsen, *In God's Image and Likeness*, 2:33–196. Earlier discussion of the Book of Moses account of Enoch in light of ancient Enoch documents appeared in Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and David J. Larsen. "Ancient affinities within the LDS book of Enoch, Part One," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 4 (2013): 1–27, http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/ancient-affinities-within-the-lds-book-of-enoch-part-one/; Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, "Ancient affinities within the LDS book of Enoch, Part Two," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 4 (2013): 29–74, http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/ancient-affinities-within-the-lds-book-of-enoch-part-two/; Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, "The LDS book of Enoch as the culminating story of a temple text," *BYU Studies* 53, no. 1 (2014): 39–73, http://www.templethemes.net/publications/140224-a-Bradshaw.pdf. For an updated summary of these resemblances, see Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, "Could Joseph Smith Have Drawn on Ancient Manuscripts When He Translated the Story of Enoch?" in *Interpreter Foundation Old Testament KnoWhy JBOTL05C*, January 26, 2018, https://interpreterfoundation.org/knowhy-otl05c-could-joseph-smith-have-drawn-on-ancient-manuscripts-when-he-translated-the-story-of-enoch/.

13 *Chester Beatty Papyri*, 4th century, manuscript, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ireland, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:P._Chester_Beatty_XII,_leaf_3,_verso.jpg.

14 Jude 1:14–15. For evidence of Joseph Smith's awareness of these verses, see Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 1:132.

15 Salvatore Cirillo, "Joseph Smith, Mormonism, and Enochic Tradition" (Master's Thesis, Durham University, 2010), http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/236/.

16 Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 193.

17 Cirillo, "Joseph Smith, Mormonism, and Enochic Tradition," 126.

18 Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 138.

19 Citing Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 190–92, Bushman notes (*Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 591n52),

>   Michael Quinn claims there is a link to Laurence's 1821 translation of Enoch and cites a reference to Enoch in a book advertised in a Palmyra newspaper. He does not find the actual Book of Enoch in Palmyra or vicinity, only this reference in a scholarly commentary.

20 Yakov Ben Tov, "The Book of Enoch, the Book of Moses, and the Question of Availability," *Faith-Promoting Rumor* (blog), https://faithpromotingrumor.com/2017/09/24/the-book-of-enoch-the-book-of-moses-and-the-question-of-availability/. Note that this blog post has since been removed without explanation, but was not disavowed by the author and may be accessed currently at https://web.archive.org/web/20181217192041/https://faithpromotingrumor.com/2017/09/24/the-book-of-enoch-the-book-of-moses-and-the-question-of-availability/.

21 Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 138. Cf. Jed L. Woodworth, "Extra-biblical Enoch texts in early American culture," in *Archive of Restoration Culture: Summer Fellows' Papers 1997–1999*, ed. Richard Lyman Bushman (Provo, UT: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History, 2000), 190–92.

22 For further discussion, see Bradshaw and Larsen, *In God's Image and Likeness*, 2:36, 78–79, 117, 153–54.

23 George W. E Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, eds., *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 37–82* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 46:2–4, 153; 48:2, 166; 60:10, 233; 62:5, 7, 9, 14, 254; 63:11, 255; 69:26–27, 29, 311; 70:1, 315; 71:14, 17, 321.

24 Moses 7:24, 47, 54, 56, 59, 65.

25 Moses 7:39. Cf. Moses 4:2. See Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 39:6, 111; 40:5, 130; 45:3–4, 148; 49:2, 4, 166; 51:5a, 3, 180; 52:6, 9, 187; 53:6, 194; 55:4, 198; 61:5, 8, 10, 243, 247; 62:1, 254.

26 I.e., Messiah. See Moses 7:53. See Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 48:10, 166; 52:4, 187.

27 Moses 6:57; 7:45, 47, 67. See Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 38:2, 95; 53:6, 194. The term also appears by implication in 39:6, 111; 46:3, 153; 49:2, 166; 62:2–3, 254.

28 Photograph DSC05339, 13 October 2012. Copyright Jeffrey M. Bradshaw.

29 Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 119, emphasis added. The entire discussion is found on 113–23. For additional discussion of the "Son of Man" title from a Latter-day Saint perspective, see S. Kent Brown, "Man and Son of Man: Issues of theology and Christology," in *The Pearl of Great Price: Revelations from God*, eds. H. Donl Peterson and Charles D. Tate, Jr. (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1989), 57–72. For more on the debate surrounding the title "Son of Man," see Bradshaw and Larsen, *In God's Image and Likeness*, 2:191–92nM7–16.

30 Although the title "Son of Man" is applied preeminently to Jesus Christ, the story of Enoch's exaltation to become a "son of Man" provides a precedent for others to be raised and receive a similar title (Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 71:14, 321).

31 Cf. John 5:27: "And [the Father] hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." For a comparison of the claims of Jesus in this verse to related ideas in the Old Testament (Moses, Daniel) and the pseudepigraphal literature, see Craig S Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 2 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 1:651–52.

32 E.g., Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 69:27, 311: "and the whole judgment was given to the Son of Man." For a summary of this issue, see ibid., 119–20.

33 See Bradshaw, "The LDS book of Enoch as the culminating story of a temple text," 65–71. For an excellent discussion of the place of the *Book of Parables* among the other books of *1 Enoch,* especially in its different focus on heavenly ascent in contrast to a critique of the Jerusalem temple, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, "The Temple According to 1 Enoch," *BYU Studies* 53, no. 1 (2014): 7–24.

34 These include elements of Enoch's call, the oaths of the conspirators, the motif of weeping, which is also found in *2 Enoch* (Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, Jacob Rennaker, and David J. Larsen, "Revisiting the forgotten voices of weeping in Moses 7: A comparison with ancient texts," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 2 [2012]: 41–71), the rise of secret combinations (also found in the *Book of Giants*), allusions to Enoch's "land

of righteousness" and his journey to the "sea east"/"waters of Dan," allusions to a "book of remembrance" (also found in the *Book of Giants* and other ancient sources), and destruction and imprisonment of the wicked. A more complete and systematic comparison of resemblances between Moses 6–7, *1 Enoch*, and other Enoch pseudepigrapha is underway, as we discuss below.

We note that Bruno (Cheryl L. Bruno, "Congruence and concatenation in Jewish mystical literature, American Freemasonry, and Mormon Enoch Writings," *Journal of Religion and Society* 16 (2014), 2, https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/d1a4/8b6 dc49647fe1d886d41cc59c468e6eff467.pdf) lists additional parallels with *1 Enoch*, some of which are so loose as to be nonsensical (e.g., *1 Enoch* 10:4–5, an account of Asael's binding that is described by Bruno as an instance of "Foreknowledge and prophetic warning of the destruction of the world," is compared with Moses 7:41–67; *1 Enoch* 60, an account of the flood and final judgment that is described as "A revolutionary social order," is compared with Moses 7:18–19, etc.).

35   The conclusions of Woodworth in context read as follows (Woodworth, "Extra-biblical Enoch texts in early American culture," 190, 192):

> While I do not share the confidence the parallelist feels for the inaccessibility of Laurence to Joseph Smith, I do not find sharp enough similarities to support the derivatist position. The tone and weight and direction of [*1 Enoch* and the Book of Moses] are worlds apart. … The problem with the derivatist position is [that] … Laurence as source material for Joseph Smith does not make much sense if the two texts cannot agree on important issues. The texts may indeed have some similarities, but the central figures do not have the same face, do not share the same voice, and are not, therefore, the same people. In this sense, the Enoch in the Book of Moses is as different from the Enoch of Laurence as he is from the Enoch in the other extra-Biblical Enochs in early American culture. Same name, different voice.

36   Ben Tov, "The Book of Enoch, the Book of Moses, and the Question of Availability."

37 Bruno, "Congruence and concatenation in Jewish mystical literature," 1–19.

38 Ibid., 2.

39 Ibid., 10.

40 Ibid., 12.

41 Ibid., 2.

42 Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran: Texts, Translation, and Commentary* (Tübingen, DEU: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 31 dates the *Book of Giants* to "sometime between the late 3rd century and 164 BCE." For a more recent summary of the literature concerning dating and geographical origins of the book, see Joseph L. Angel, "Reading the Book of Giants in Literary and Historical Context," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 21 (2014): 315n5. Angel generally agrees with Stuckenbruck's dating. See Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran* for a summary of evidence relating to Mesopotamian and Hellenistic influences in the *Book of the Giants.*

Caution should be exercised in concluding a dependence of *Book of Giants* on *1 Enoch*. For example, comparing Ezekiel 1, Daniel 7, *1 Enoch* 14, and the *Book of Giants,* Amanda M. Davis Bledsoe, "Throne theophanies, dream visions, and righteous(?) seers," in *Ancient Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan: Contexts, Traditions, and Influences*, eds. Matthew Goff, Loren T. Stuckenbruck, and Enrico Morano (Tübingen, DEU: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 85 argues that *1 Enoch* 14's adoption of the Danielic idea of the deity shows only that this idea was "accepted even at a late period, and does not automatically make [*1 Enoch* 14] older even if the tradition may be observed in generally more ancient writings." More generally, ibid., 90 concludes "that all three of these texts drew from a common tradition(s) regarding the heavenly throne and then adapted it to fit within their individual context."

Regarding Angel's thesis that the *Book of Giants*, as we have it, reflects "the realities of life under Hellenistic imperial occupation," the author himself hints at more ancient and complex roots for the story (Joseph L. Angel, "The humbling of the arrogant and the 'wild man' and 'tree stump' traditions in the Book of Giants and Daniel 4," in *Ancient Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan: Contexts, Traditions, and Influences*, eds. Matthew Goff,

Loren T. Stuckenbruck, and Enrico Morano [Tübingen, DEU: Mohr Siebeck, 2016], 80):

> There are hints in the *Book of Giants* that signal a more nuanced and developed plot. The giants argue with one another and there are perhaps different factions among them. Thus, if I am correct that the *Book of Giants* models the humbling of Hellenistic figures of power, it seems that the composition now before us preserves only the remains of a complex allegory, whose original referents cannot be recovered.

43 Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr., and Edward Cook, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (New York City: Harper-Collins, 1996), 290.

44 George W. E. Nickelsburg, ed. *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36; 81–108* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 11.

45 The current convention of using terms that correspond to "giants" to refer to the *gibborim* is due largely to the later influences of the Greek *Septuagint* translation of the Hebrew Bible (see, e.g., Archie T. Wright, *The Origin of Evil Spirits* [Tübingen, DEU: Mohr Siebeck, 2005], 83–84) and of widespread transmission of various translations of the *Book of* Giants within the works of Mani. Though the title of Mani's *Book of Giants* appears "in several Manichaean and anti-Manichaean documents scattered throughout Europe and through Africa as far as Asia Minor and Chinese Turskistan, almost nothing was known of the contents of this document before the appearance of the remarkable article by W. B. Henning" in 1943 (Milik and Black, *The Books of Enoch*, 298; W. B. Henning, "The Book of the Giants," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 11, no. 1 [1943], 52–74, http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/giants/giants.htm).

Wright gives two possibilities for the somewhat unexpected use of *gigantes*, the Greek word for *giants* in the *Septuagint* (Wright, *The Origin of Evil Spirits*, 92):

> It may be suggested that the Greek translators of the Hebrew Bible had difficulty in understanding some of the Hebrew terminology (e.g., *nephilim* and *gibborim*) in the text and therefore translated the terms

imprecisely, thus enhancing the ambiguity of the passage. Another possibility is that modern scholars have misunderstood what the Greek translators meant by their use of the term [*gigantes*]. It appears that more work needs to be done in order to discover the use of this term in the Greek literature prior to the translation of the [*Septuagint*].

For more on the impact of the *Septuagint* on later traditions and on interaction among related Jewish and Greek conceptions of the "giants," see Michael Tuval, "'Συναγωγὴ Γιγάντων' (Proverbs 21:16): The giants in Jewish literature in Greek," in *Ancient Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan: Contexts, Traditions, and Influences*, eds. Matthew Goff, Loren T. Stuckenbruck, and Enrico Morano (Tübingen, DEU: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 41–57; Samantha Newington, "Greek titans and biblical giants," in *Ancient Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan: Contexts, Traditions, and Influences*, eds. Matthew Goff, Loren T. Stuckenbruck, and Enrico Morano (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 33–40. For Mesopotamian influences in descriptions of the "giants" in *1 Enoch*, see Henryk Drawnel, "The Mesopotamian background of the Enochic giants and evil spirits," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 21 (2014), 14–38.

46 See, e.g., this sense of *gibborim* in Moses 8:21 (the children of the self-proclaimed "sons of God"), Genesis 10:8–9 (Nimrod), Genesis 10:25 (Peleg), Genesis 11:4 (the builders of the Tower of Babel who wanted to make themselves a name).

47 John C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony: Studies in the Book of Giants Traditions. Monographs of the Hebrew Union College* 14 (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1992), 69–70 gives the following summary of the complex and somewhat controversial meanings that have been attributed to these terms, as well as to the semidivine "Watchers" (see also Wright, *The Origin of Evil Spirits*, 79–95):

> The term *gbryn* is the Aramaic form of Hebrew *gibborim* (singular *gibbor*), a word whose customary connotation in the latter language is "mighty hero, warrior," but which in some contexts later came to be interpreted in the sense of "giants." [The term is translated seventeen times with the Greek word for

giants in the *Septuagint*.] … Similarly *nplyn* is the Aramaic form of the Hebrew *np(y)lym* (i.e., *nephilim*), an obscure designation used only three times in the Hebrew Bible. Genesis 6:4 refers to the *nephilim* who were on the earth as a result of the conjugal union of the ["sons of God" and the "daughters of Adam"] and further qualifies their character by terming them *gibborim*. [More plausibly, Wright (ibid, 81–82) argues for Genesis 6:1–4 as being a chronological description, concluding that the *nephilim* were on the earth prior to this conjugal union between the "sons of God" and the "daughters of Adam."] Both terms are translated in [*Septuagint*] Genesis 6:4 by ["giants"] and in *Targum Onkelos* by *gbry'*. Numbers 13:33 reports that gigantic *nephilim* were encountered by the Israelite spies in the land of Canaan; here the *nephilim* are associated with a (different?) tradition concerning a race of giants surviving among the indigenous ethnic groups that inhabited Canaan. A further possible reference to both the *nephilim* and *gibborim* of Genesis 6:4 occurs in Ezekiel 32:27. The surrounding pericope presents a description of slain heroes who lie in Sheol, among whom are a group termed the *gibborim nophelim* [sic] *me'arelim*. The final word, *me'arelim*, "from the uncircumcised," should probably be corrected on the basis of the *Septuagint* … to *me'olam*, and the whole phrase translated "those mighty ones who lie there from of old." …

The conjunction of *gbryn wnpylyn* in QG1 1:2 may be viewed as an appositional construction similar to the expression *'yr wqdys* — "Watcher and Holy One." … However, the phrase might also be related to certain passages that suggest there were three distinct classes (or even generations) of Giants, names for who of which are represented in this line. … [C]ompare Jubilees 7:22: "And they bore children, the *Naphidim* [sic] … and the Giants killed the *Naphil*, and the *Naphil* killed the *'Elyo*, and the *'Elyo* [killed] human beings, and humanity (killed) one another."

48   Moses 7:14–15.

49 Florentino Garcia Martinez, ed. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English*, trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 260–62.

50 Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "The *Book of Giants* among the Dead Sea Scrolls: Considerations of method and a new proposal on the reconstruction of 4Q530," in *Ancient Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan: Contexts, Traditions, and Influences*, eds. Matthew Goff, Loren T. Stuckenbruck, and Enrico Morano (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 134.

51 See the discussion in Angel, "The humbling of the arrogant and the 'wild man' and 'tree stump' traditions in the Book of Giants and Daniel 4," 66–68. For an earlier discussion of translation difficulties in this passage, see Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran*, 163. Edward Cook's "preferable" (see Angel, "The humbling of the arrogant and the 'wild man' and 'tree stump' traditions in the Book of Giants and Daniel 4," 67) translation is: "[ ] of the wild beast has come, and the wild man they call [me]" (Edward Cook, "4Q531 (4QEnGiants(c) ar)," in *Parabiblical Texts*, eds. Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov [Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2005], 22:8, 495). Others, going further than Stuckenbruck's more conservative reading of "*rh* of the beasts of the field is coming" (Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran*, 164), understand the phrase as "the roar of the wild beasts has come" (Florentino Garcia Martinez, "The Book of Giants (4Q531)," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English*, trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996], 22:8, 262) or "the roaring of the wild beasts came" (Milik and Black, *The Books of Enoch*, 208).

52 Brian R. Doak, "The giant in a thousand years: Tracing narratives of gigantism in the Hebrew Bible and beyond," in *Ancient Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan: Contexts, Traditions, and Influences*, eds. Matthew Goff, Loren T. Stuckenbruck, and Enrico Morano (Tübingen, DEU: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 24. Just before the passage cited, Doak insightfully observes (ibid., 24):

> As human-like embodiments of that which is wild and untamed, the biblical giant takes on the role of "wild man," "freak," and "elite adversary" for heroic displays of fighting prowess. In the pre-modern world, as Richard Bernheimer argues, "wildness" was a very

potent category, encompassing all that "was uncanny, unruly, raw, unpredictable, foreign, uncultured, and uncultivated. It included the unfamiliar as well as the unintelligible." Moreover, the giant's "wild" status, at least in the developed anthropological theology of the Middle Ages, posed difficult questions about the giant's origins, and thus questions about the status of the giant's soul (do giants have a soul or not?) and the categorization of giants as a type of non-human animal. Ancient Mesopotamian kings routinely bragged of their hunting exploits, the prey being exotic animals in faraway lands; the Assyrian royal lion hunt represents the apex of this tradition insofar as it has been passed down to us visually.

53 "he has imprisoned us and overpowered you" (Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "The Book of Giants," in *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture*, eds. Louis H. Feldman, James L. Kugel, and Lawrence H. Schiffman [Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2013], 1:226); "he imprisoned us and has power [ov]er [us]" (Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony*, 66). Cf. Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 10:4–6, 215, 221–22; traditions about the imprisonment of the giants in *Book of Giants* texts among the Chinese Manichaica (Gábor Kósa, "The Book of Giants tradition in the Chinese Manichaica," in *Ancient Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan: Contexts, Traditions, and Influences*, eds. Matthew Goff, Loren T. Stuckenbruck, and Enrico Morano [Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2016], 175–76).

54 For more about these and other examples, see Bradshaw and Larsen, *In God's Image and Likeness*, 2:41–49; Bradshaw, "Could Joseph Smith Have Drawn On Ancient Manuscripts When He Translated the Story of Enoch?"

55 Cirillo, "Joseph Smith, Mormonism, and Enochic Tradition," 126. For more on Barak Ale/Baraq'el, see Bradshaw and Larsen, *In God's Image and Likeness*, 2:96–97nM6–19.

56 See Bradshaw, "Freemasonry and the Origins of Modern Temple Ordinances."

57 Photograph of 4QEn Giants[a] [4Q203], Fragment 7, column ii from Plate 31, Milik and Black, *The Books of Enoch*. By permission of Oxford University Press (http://www.oup.com).

58 In evaluating Nibley's suggestion, LDS scholar David Calabro observes that Nibley, while brilliant, was more of a philologist than a linguist, "and as such he did not generally focus on laying out the details of linguistic connections. He was also treating connections at a broad literary level, taking for granted that words and names sometimes get garbled in transmission" (David Calabro, email messages to Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, January 23 and 24, 2018).

While maintaining the possibility of a correspondence between the ancient equivalent of these names, Calabro explains why we cannot posit a direct equivalence between all of them (including the related names Mahujael/Mahijael in Genesis 4:18) in their current forms (ibid.):

> The -ah in Mahujah and Mahijah is problematic if you are interpreting the current forms of these names as equivalents of both Mahawai and also of Mehuja-/Mehija- in Mahujael/Mahijael at the same time. In other words, Mahujah can = MHWY + Jah or Mehjael can = Mahujael can = Mahujah + El, but both equations can't be applied to the current forms of these names at the same time.

Of course, Calabro observes, the rules were different in earlier times, since "dropping of final vowels only happened sometime between 1200 and 600 BCE" (ibid.):

> But it's unlikely that the names in Moses are making a point of this. Joseph left the rest of the biblical names untouched. And if Lehi, Paul, and Jude all had access to the Book of Moses (as I believe they did), the name would have dropped any final short vowels before the text was finished being transmitted.

When translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith was very careful about the spelling of proper names, especially the first time they occurred. It seems reasonable that this was the case with the Book of Moses also.

That said, Calabro goes on to explain why the connections between these names are not unlikely, even in the face of these considerations (ibid.):

> Very often in pseudepigraphal traditions, you get names that sound similar (or sometimes not even

similar), just garbled a bit. It's frequent in Arabic forms of biblical names: Ibrahim for "Abraham" (perhaps influenced by Elohim or some other plural Hebrew noun), 'Isa for Yasu' "Jesus," etc. So Mahujah, Mahijah, Mehujael/Mehijael, and MḤWY could all be connected, with something getting mixed up in transmission.

With respect to correspondences between Mahujah and Mahijah, Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet*, 2:278 argues that they are variants of the same name, given that "Mehuja-el" appears in the Greek *Septuagint* as "Mai-el" (Cécile Dogniez and Marguerite Harl, eds. *Le Pentateuque d'Alexandrie: Texte Grec et Traduction. La Bible des Septante* [Paris, France: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2001], 145; Melvin K. H. Peters, ed. *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under that Title: Deuteronomy* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004], 8, http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/deut.pdf) and in the Latin Vulgate as Mawiah-el (Robert Weber, ed., *Biblia Sacra Vulgata*, 4th ed. [Philadelphia: American Bible Society, 1990], 9). Since the Greek version had no internal "Ḥ," Nibley reasons that "Mai-" could come only from "Mahi-" (MḤY-).

J. W. Wevers likewise writes that "the Septuagint spelling of Mai-el [in Genesis 4:18] follows the Samaritan tradition [Mahi-el], the only difference being the dropped 'h' The [Mahawai] version that we see in the Book of Giants, which is probably related to Genesis 4:18, shows up in the Latin Vulgate as Maviahel, likely owes to the fact that Jerome went to the Hebrew version for his translation. He didn't use the 'Ḥ' either and made the 'W' a consonant ('v') instead of a vowel ('u') in his transliteration. This is why in the Douay-Rheims Bible (based on the *Vulgate*), we see the name rendered as Maviael" (John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993], 62n4:18). See more on Genesis 4:18 below.

Note that the grandfather of the prophet Enoch also bore a similar name to Mahawai/Mahujah: Mahalaleel (Genesis 5:12–17; 1 Chronicles 1:2; Moses 6:19–20. See also Nehemiah 11:4). As a witness of how easily such names can be confused, observe that the Greek manuscript used for Brenton's translation of the Septuagint reads "Maleleel" for "Maiel" in Genesis 4:18 (Lancelot

C. L. Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005], 5).

59 Though the Ḥ is difficult to see in the photograph of the manuscript we have reproduced here, Florentino Garcia Martinez, "The Book of Giants (4Q203)," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English*, trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), Fragment 7, column ii, lines 5–7, 260, reads the end of line 5 as "MḤ." Milik also sees an "MḤ" on line 5 and interprets it as being the first part of the name MḤWY (Milik and Black, *The Books of Enoch*, 314). By way of contrast, Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran*, 84, and Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony*, 110 see only "M" and not "MḤ" in this particular fragment. Although only the first one or two letters of the name MḤWY are extant in Fragment 7 of 4Q203, the full name Mahawai/Mahujah appears in other, more complete fragments from the *Book of Giants* (e.g., 4Q530, 7 ii).

60 Cirillo, "Joseph Smith, Mormonism, and Enochic Tradition," 97. Cf. Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran*, 27.

61 Moses 7:2: "As I was journeying, and stood upon the place Mahujah, and cried unto the Lord, there came a voice out of heaven, saying — Turn ye, and get ye upon the mount Simeon." On the basis of the pronoun "I" that is present in the OT1 manuscript (see Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* [Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004], 103) and the use of the second-person plural "ye" that appears twice later in the verse, Cirillo argues for an alternate reading: "As I was journeying and stood in the place, Mahujah and I cried unto the Lord. There came a voice out of heaven, saying — Turn ye, and get ye upon the mount Simeon" (Cirillo, "Joseph Smith, Mormonism, and Enochic Tradition," 103, punctuation modified). This turns the name Mahujah into a personal name instead of a place name, i.e., Enoch is "standing *with*" Mahujah, "not *on* Mahujah" (ibid., 103). An issue with this reading is that afterward, Enoch went up to meet God alone ("I turned and went up on the mount; … I stood upon the mount" [Moses 7:3]). The only way to reconcile the absence of Mahujah in subsequent events would be if he did not follow Enoch to the mount as he had been commanded to do in Moses 7:2 (taking the "Turn ye" to be plural).

As a second option, David Calabro points out that Moses 7:2 "As I was journeying … and I cried" "could be an example of the use of 'and' to introduce a main clause after a circumstantial clause, which is a Hebraism that is frequently found in the earliest Book of Mormon text" (David Calabro, email messages to Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, January 23 and 24, 2018). In this case, the "ye" in "Turn ye" would have to be interpreted as singular rather than plural.

If the name for mount Mahujah on which Enoch ascended to pray indeed relates to the idea of questioning (as proposed in a note by Nibley below), it would provide a neat counterpart to the name of the mount Simeon (Hebrew *Shi'mon* = he has heard), where Enoch was commanded to go in order to receive his answers. Note Al-Tha'labi's account of Adam and Eve being rejoined after their separation when "they recognized each other by questioning on a day of questioning. So the place was named *'Arafat* (= questions) and the day, *'Irfah*." (Abu Ishaq Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim al-Tha'labi, *'Ara'is Al-Majalis Fi Qisas Al-Anbiya'* or *"Lives of the Prophets,"* trans. William M. Brinner [Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2002], 54; cf. al-Tabari, *The History of al-Tabari: General Introduction and From the Creation to the Flood*, trans. Franz Rosenthal [Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989], 291).

62   The use of two variations of the same name in one statement is not uncommon in the Hebrew Bible. In this case, the Masoretic text of Genesis 4:18 includes both spellings of the name (Mehuja-el and Mehija-el) one right after the other, and in a context that leaves no doubt that the two occurrences refer to the same individual (see, e.g., Barry L. Bandstra, *Genesis 1–11: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, ed. W. Dennis Tucker Jr. [Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008], 268). Ronald S. Hendel, *The Text of Genesis 1–11: Textual Studies and Critical Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 47–48 attributes this phenomenon either to a graphic confusion of "Y" and "W" (cf. Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet*, 2:278; Hugh W. Nibley, "Churches in the wilderness," in *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989], 289–90), or to linguistic modernization of what seems to be the older form (Mehuja-el). Note that instead of featuring two different forms of the name in succession as in the Masoretic text, some other texts render the names consistently. For example, the Cairo Geniza manuscript gives Mehuja-el twice, while the Samaritan version has Mahi-el (cf. Mehijael) twice (Mark Shoulson, ed. *The Torah:*

Jewish and Samaritan Versions Compared [LightningSource, 2008], 11; Benyamim Tsedaka and Sharon Sullivan, eds. *The Israelite Samaritan Version of the Torah*, trans. Benyamim Tsedaka [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2013], 12).

Calabro points out that in order to posit an equivalence between Mahujah and Mehuja-el, one must, of course, "say that MḤWY is the 'hypocoristic' form (i.e., the form of the name minus the divine name element of Mahujah" (David Calabro, email messages to Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, January 23 and 24, 2018).

63   Because Joseph Smith retained the "-el" suffix in Moses 5:43 (= Genesis 4:18) rather than making the name agree with its Book of Moses equivalents, it is reasonable to assume that he did not himself recognize an equivalence among Mahujah, Mahijah, and Mehuja-el.

64   As an exception to Bible manuscripts that otherwise always add -el to the end of the name, Wevers mentions the existence of "Mehuja" as a variant spelling of Mehuja-el in a Greek manuscript of Genesis 4:18 (Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis*, 62n4:18).

Richard Hess gives two possible meanings of the name Mehuja-el: 1. god/El enlivens; 2. life of god/El, i.e., divine life (Richard S. Hess, *Studies in the Personal Names of Genesis 1–11* [Winona Lake,IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009], 41–43). Hess sees the former meaning as more probable. Sarna proposes two additional alternatives: "from *m-ḥ-h*, meaning 'blotted out by God'; and from Akkadian *maḫḫû*, 'an ecstatic,' meaning 'seer of God'" (Nahum M. Sarna, ed. *Genesis. The JPS Torah Commentary* [Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989], 36). Matthew L. Bowen comments as follows (Matthew L. Bowen, email message to Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, January 23, 2018):

> I … think it's interesting that JST has Mahujah instead of Mehujah, which the MT also has written as Mehijael (same w/y spelling issue as in Mahujah and Mahijah - the LXX-A, Peshitta, and Vulgate all point to Mehijael or Mahijael), I'm drawn to the idea that the name derives from ḤYY/ḤYH and means "God gives life" (Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, Johann Jakob Stamm, M. E. J. Richardson, G. J. Jongeling-Vos, and L. J. de Regt. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* [Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1994],

568). However, a paronomastic connection with MḤY/ MḤH ("wipe out," "annihilate" — i.e., "blot out") is also intriguing, especially since this name occurs in the degenerate line of Cain before the Flood (cf. the use of this verb in Genesis 6:7 and 7:4). I'm even more intrigued by a possible connection between this root and the name-title "Mahan" in "Master Mahan," which could easily be MḤN (with N as an appellative), which might suggest the idea of "destroyer" or "annihilator."

65 Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet*, 2:278. Noting the possibility of wordplay, Nibley conjectures that "what the Ma- [in Mahijah] most strongly suggests is certainly the all-but-universal ancient interrogative, *Ma* ("who?" or "what?"), so that the names Mahujah and Mahijah both sound to the student of Semitics like questions" (Nibley, "Churches in the wilderness," 290).

66 Wise, Abegg, and Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 292. Regarding the details of the first dream, see Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony*, 84–90, 95–102. On the second dream, see ibid., 92–93. For more on the interpretation of the dreams, including a discussion of resonances between the *Book of Giants* and *3 Baruch*, see Andrei A. Orlov, "The flooded arboretums: The garden traditions in the Slavonic version of 3 Baruch and the *Book of Giants*," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (April 2003), 184–201, https://www.marquette.edu/maqom/arboretums.pdf.

67 Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony*, 84. Davis Bledsoe, "Throne theophanies, dream visions, and righteous(?) seers," 95 fruitfully compares this sequence to Daniel 4:

That the giants look for a Jewish sage to explain the meaning of their dreams is not so surprising. Indeed, when we look at other cases of non-Jews receiving symbolic dream-visions in the Hebrew Bible, they too lack understanding of their dreams and must seek out an interpreter upon waking. Perhaps the closest parallel to our text is Daniel 4, where King Nebuchadnezzar receives a frightening dream, which only Daniel is able to interpret. Like our text, the focus of the narrative is on the gentile dreamer, who often speaks in the first person, while the Jewish interpreter plays only a minor role. Perhaps another point of comparison can be found in

that Daniel 4 tells not only of Nebuchadnezzar's judgment but also of his subsequent rehabilitation and restoration — the Greek edition even has him convert. Perhaps, like Nebuchadnezzar, some of the giants are likewise granted an opportunity for repentance and rehabilitation.

However, in the case of the throne theophany of Daniel 7, *1 Enoch* 14, and the *Book of Giants* (vs. King Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 4), Davis Bledsoe notes that the *Book of Giants* is "noticeably different from the other two in that it is not a righteous Jewish seer who experiences the dream vision (and sees the throne theophany), but a culpable giant" (ibid., 82). For additional comparisons of the *Book of Giants* and Daniel 4, see Angel, "The humbling of the arrogant and the 'wild man' and 'tree stump' traditions in the *Book of Giants* and Daniel 4," 61–80.

68 Florentino Garcia Martinez, "The Book of Giants (4Q530)," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English*, trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson, 261–62 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 2:20–23, 261. Cf. the word "go" in Enoch's formal commission (Moses 6:32). For more about the use of this form in the commissioning of Mahujah and in similar contexts in the Enoch literature, see Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony*, 93–94.

An additional phrase in Vermes' translation (Geza Vermes, ed., *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 550) implies that Mahujah was chosen because he had been to Enoch for advice before: "previously you listened to his [Enoch's] voice" (cf. Wise, Abegg, and Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 294: "you have heard his voice"). This may correspond to Mahujah's assertion that this is the second request he has made of Enoch (Martinez, "The Book of Giants (4Q530)," 3:7, 261: "For a second time I beg you for an oracle"). "Beyer understands this … passage to signify … that [Mahujah] was the only Giant capable of executing this mission due to his personal acquaintance with Enoch" (Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony*, 94n23). Affirming the idea that Enoch and Mahujah had been previously acquainted, Stuckenbruck cites the Manichaean Uygur fragment in which Enoch calls out Mahujah's name "very lovingly" (Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran*, 127n140. See also Henning, cited in Milik and Black, *The Books of Enoch*, 307).

69 Or "the scribe [who is] set apart" (Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony*, 91), taking the Aramaic term to describe the separation of Enoch from human society by way of analogy to the description of how Joseph was "set apart from his brethren" (Genesis 49:26) when he went to Egypt (ibid., 77). Rashi understood "set apart" in the sense of "separated" or "isolated" (ibid., 139n107; Rashi, *The Torah with Rashi's Commentary Translated, Annotated, and Elucidated*, trans. Rabbi Yisrael Isser Zvi Herczeg (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 1995), 4:559).

70 Cirillo, "Joseph Smith, Mormonism, and Enochic Tradition," 105. Looking for additional ideas besides the *Book of Giants* for what he takes to be a necessary manuscript source for ancient parallels to Joseph Smith's Enoch, Cirillo argues (ibid., 105–6): "This journey … is not unique to the [*Book of Giants*], it is also found (and likely based on) the journey of Methuselah in *1 Enoch* (*The Birth of Noah*, Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 536–37). … This format, for one person journeying to Enoch to question him, is evident once more in *1 Enoch* (*The Apocalypse of Noah*, Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 273–74)." However, a careful reading of the *1 Enoch* accounts will show that evidence for a resemblance to the Book of Moses is strained. Moreover, unlike the *Book of Giants,* there is no mention in *1 Enoch* of Mahijah or Mahujah.

71 Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "The *Book of Giants* among the Dead Sea Scrolls," 134–35.

72 National Portrait Gallery, London, https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp77746/matthew-black.

73 William McKane, "Matthew Black," in *Obituaries of Past Fellows, Royal Society of Edinburgh,* http://www.royalsoced.org.uk/cms/files/fellows/obits_alpha/black_matthew.pdf, with permission.

74 Gordon C. Thomasson, "Items on Enoch — Some Notes of Personal History. Expansion of remarks given at the Conference on Enoch and the Temple, Academy for Temple Studies, Provo, UT, February 22, 2013 (unpublished manuscript, February 25, 2013)," 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EaRw40r-TfM. The expanded, written version of Thomasson's remarks were reviewed, corrected, and approved for publication by Thomasson. (See Gordon C. Thomasson, email message to Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, April 7, 2014.)

75 Hugh W. Nibley, *Teachings of the Pearl of Great Price* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS), Brigham Young University, 2004), 269. For the complete account, see 267–69.

76 John C. Reeves and Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Sources from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

77 See, for example, Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Ronald S. Hendel, "Historical context," in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, eds. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012), 73–84; David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4–7, 13–36.

78 E.g., Brant A. Gardner, "Literacy and orality in the Book of Mormon," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 9 (2014), 29–85, https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/literacy-and-orality-in-the-book-of-mormon/. Of course, modern scripture also emphasizes the important role of the written record going back to the earliest times (e.g., Moses 6:5–8, 46).

79 Note that valuable religious traditions are not confined to accounts from Abrahamic lands and faiths (see Bradshaw, *In God's Image and Likeness*, 1:29n0–36). As God pointedly told Nephi: "I shall also speak unto *all nations of the earth* and they shall write it" (2 Nephi 29:12, emphasis added; cf. Alma 29:8, Gerald E. Jones, "Apocryphal literature and the Latter-day Saints," in *Apocryphal Writings and the Latter-day Saints*, ed. C. Wilfred Griggs (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1986), 28–29; cf. Brigham Henry Roberts, *Defense of the Faith and the Saints* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1907, 1912], 1:512; Joseph Smith Jr., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969], 10–11, 61).

Considering this fact, it should not be at all surprising if genuinely revealed teachings, promulgated at one time but subsequently lost or distorted (see Bradshaw, *In God's Image and Likeness*, 1:29n0–37), may sometimes appear to have survived in heterodox strands of religious traditions the world over (see Spencer W. Kimball, N. Eldon Tanner, and Marion G. Romney, "Statement of the First Presidency: God's Love for All Mankind (February 15, 1978),"

excerpted in Spencer J. Palmer, "World Religions, Overview," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow [New York City: Macmillan, 1992], 4:1589, http://www.lib.byu.edu/Macmillan/; Spencer J. Palmer, ed. *The Expanding Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), v; Orson F. Whitney, "Discourse (April 1928)," in *General Conference Report of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Ninety-Eighth Annual Conference* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1928), 59, https://archive.org/details/conferencereport1928a; "Respect for diversity of faiths," *Newsroom: The Official Resource for News Media, Opinion Leaders, and the Public*, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/commentary/respect-for-diversity-of-faiths).

80   In evaluating evidence of antiquity for traditions preserved in extracanonical literature, scholars must maintain the careful balance articulated by Nickelsburg: "One should not simply posit what is convenient with the claim that later texts reflected earlier tradition. At the same time, thoroughgoing skepticism is inconsonant with the facts as we know them and as new discoveries continue to reveal them: extant texts represent only a fragment of the written and oral tradition that once existed. Caution, honest scholarly tentativeness, and careful methodology remain the best approach to the data" (George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 25–26).

81   For a discussion of the difficulties in teasing out, e.g., Jewish from Christian contributions to the pseudepigrapha, see Robert A. Kraft, "The pseudepigrapha in Christianity," in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, ed. John C. Reeves (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 55–86.

82   For example, Schwartz asserts that "a great many rabbinic myths, as found in the Midrashim, are not new creations of the rabbis, as might appear to be the case. Rather they are simply the writing down of an oral tradition that was kept alive by the people, when there was no need to suppress it any longer" (Howard Schwartz, *Tree of Souls: The Mythology of Judaism* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004], lxiv, https://archive.org/details/TreeOfSoulsTheMythologyOfJudaismSchwartzHoward2004/page/n3). Moreover, he points out that "the rabbinic texts themselves claim that these traditions are part of the Oral Torah,

handed down by God to Moses at Mount Sinai, and are therefore considerably ancient" (ibid., lxxxiv n119).

83 For example, Reeves has concluded "that the Qur'an, along with the interpretive traditions available in Hadīth, commentaries, antiquarian histories, and the collections of so-called 'prophetic legends' (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*), can shed a startling light on the structure and content of certain stories found in Bible and its associated literatures (such as Pseudepigrapha and Midrash). [Thus, the] Qur'an and other early Muslim biblically-allied traditions must be taken much more seriously as witnesses to 'versions of Bible' than has heretofore been the case" (John C. Reeves, "The flowing stream: Qur'anic interpretations and the Bible," *Religious Studies News: SBL Edition 2*, no. 9 [December 2001], https://www.sbl-site. org/publications/article.aspx?articleId=58; see also Tarif Khalidi, ed. *The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 7–9, 16–17.

Wasserstrom refers to "arguments to the effect that active reading of 'biblical' or 'extrabiblical' narratives by Muslims was an exercise which reflexively illuminates those 'original' sources'" and cites Halperin's argument that transmitters of these stories in the Islamic tradition "tended to make manifest what had been typically left latent in the Jewish version which they had received" (Steven M. Wasserstrom, "Jewish pseudepigrapha in Muslim literature: A bibliographical and methodological sketch," in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, ed. John C. Reeves (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 100.

84 For example, as Lipscomb observes, even some of the late medieval compositions that "do not derive directly from earliest Christianity" may be of "great importance … in the antiquity of some of the traditions they contain, the uniqueness of some of their larger contribution to the development and understanding of Adam materials and of medieval Christianity" (W. Lowndes Lipscomb, ed. *The Armenian Apocryphal Literature. University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies 8* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1990], 6).

85 See, e.g., James L. Kugel, "Some instances of biblical interpretation in the hymns and wisdom writings of Qumran," in *Studies in Ancient Midrash*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 155–69. Kugel observes: "To make sense of these [brief and sometimes]

offhand references — indeed, even to identify them as containing exegetical motifs — it is necessary to read the text in question against the background of the whole body of ancient interpretations" (ibid., 156).

86 See, e.g., Hugh W. Nibley, "Myths and the scriptures," in *Old Testament and Related Studies*, eds. John W. Welch, Gary P. Gillum, and Don E. Norton (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 42.

87 Annette Yoshiko Reed, "The legacy of Enoch from the Middle Ages (Paper prepared for pre-circulation for the Tenth Enoch Seminar, June 2019 [DRAFT])," in Semantic Scholar, https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6a11/85baa184d38127d7784ab8161ea7e5634388.pdf.

88 Jacques P. Migne, "Livre d'Adam," in *Dictionnaire des Apocryphes, ou, Collection de tous les livres Apocryphes relatifs a l'Ancien et au Nouveau Testament, pour la plupart, traduits en français, pour la première fois, sur les textes originaux, enrichie de préfaces, dissertations critiques, notes historiques, bibliographiques, géographiques et théologiques*, ed. Jacques P. Migne (Paris: Jacques P. Migne, 1856), 169, http://books.google.com/books?id=daUAAAAAMAAJ. English translation by Bradshaw. Compare the translation of Migne given by Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet*, 2:210. Migne's original reads:

> La Vie [souveraine] lui répondit : Lève-toi, prends ta course vers la source de l'eau, détournes-en le cours, et que cette eau vive et subtile, tombant dans l'eau profonde, en adoucisse l'amertume en s'y mêlant, et que les hommes qui la boivent deviennent semblables à la Vie souveraine.
>
> A ce commandement Tavril détourna en effet le cours de l'eau subtile, et la dirigeant dans l'eau amère, il en adoucit l'amertume, en sorte que les hommes se réjouissaient en la buvant.

Cf. Mark Lidzbarski, ed. *Ginza: Der Schatz oder das Grosse Buch der Mandäer. Quellen der Religionsgeschichte, der Reihenfolge des Erscheinens* 13:4 [Göttingen and Leipzig, Germany: Vandenhoeck Ruprecht, J. C. Hinrichs'sche, 1925], 266–67, https://ia802305.us.archive.org/7/items/MN41563ucmf_2/MN41563ucmf_2.pdf:

> *Da sprach das große Leben zu Mandä dHaije: „Mache
> du dich auf, geh an der Spitze des Wassers hin und
> ziehe einen dünnen Zug lebenden Wassers hin. Es soll
> hingehen, in das trübe Wasser fallen, und das Wasser
> werde schmackhaft, auf daß die Menschenkinder es
> trinken und dem großen Leben gleich werden.“*

> *Da sprach er zu Taurel-Uthra, dieser machte sich ans
> Werk, er zog einen dünnen Zug Wassers hin, es fiel in
> die Tibil, in das Wasser, das nicht schmackhaft war,
> und das Wasser der Tibil wurde schmackhaft, daß die
> Menschenkinder es trinken und es ihnen schmecke.*

In this case, the turning of the water's course allowed "living water" to become available for Mandaean baptism, which includes immersion, drinking of the water, and a series of sacred handshakes. The first phase of the rite is described by Jorunn Jacobsen Buckley as follows (Jorunn Jacobsen Buckley, *The Mandaeans: Ancient Texts and Modern People*, ed. Paul B. Courtright [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002], 82):

> The priest submerges the person three times and uses
> his wet finger to draw a line three times across the
> person's forehead, from the right to the left ear. Again
> thrice, the person in the water receives a palm full
> of water to drink. The sacred handshake, the *kushta*,
> takes place between the two.

Erik Langkjer further elaborates (Erik Langkjer, "From 1 Enoch to Mandaean religion," Academia.edu, https://www.academia. edu/8438522/From_1.Enoch_to_Mandaean_Religion):

> Tauriel[, the name of the angel,] is the old god "El, the
> bull", *tr il*, acc. to the Ugarit texts having his throne
> by the double offspring of the water-brooks in the
> mountain Lel. In the Mandaean baptismal ritual any
> river used for baptism is called Jordan (Jardna) and
> baptism can only be done in running water (not in
> "cut off water" in a font or basin). Lidzbarski thinks
> that this reflects an old belief in the Jordan as the
> paradise-river from Hermon, the mountain of the
> sons of God in the North ("as no other river in Asia it
> runs in a straight direction north-south" [Lidzbarski,
> *Ginza*, v, 13–15]). Lidzbarski does not mention Psalm

> 133:3: The unction on the head of the high priest is "like the dew of Hermon falling on the mountains of Zion. There the Lord sends down blessing, Life eternal." In Temple Theology the dew in the morning and the unction is identified with the "Water of Life" from the mountain of the sons of God.

In Mandaean scripture, Enoch is one of three semidivine messengers (*uthra*, along with "Seth" and "Abel") that are sent down from the "Lightworld" in the beginning to instruct Adam and Eve in ordinances and prayer (Kurt Rudolph, "Part 2: Mandean [sic] Sources," in *Coptic and Mandaic Sources*, ed. Werner Foerster [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974], 197; Lidzbarski, *Ginza*, 119). Although Enoch's role in the *Ginza* relates mainly to his role as an *uthra*, the accounts draw on themes and roles found in extracanonical Enoch sources (e.g., role as a scribe and teacher of writing [E. S. Drower, *The Mandaeans of Iraq and Iran* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), 4; cf. Idris (Enoch, Ezra) in Islam ibid., xxiv]; divine protection in the course of battles with formidable enemies (see below), etc.).

Nibley observes that the references to "little Enoch" within the account correspond to his appellation as a "lad" in *2 Enoch*, *3 Enoch*, and Moses 6:31 (Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet*, 2:201. See F. I. Andersen, "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1983), 119; P. Alexander, "3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1983), 2:2, 357, 3:2, 257, 4:1, 258, 4:10, 259; and Charles Mopsik, ed. *Le Libre hébreu d'Hénoch ou Livre des Palais. Les Dix Paroles* (Lagrasse, FRA: Éditions Verdier, 1989), 156 (97). For discussions of these and similar ancient references to Enoch as a "lad," see, e.g., ibid., 188–90; Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet*, 2:208–9; Andrei A. Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition: Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism* 107 (Tübingen, Germany Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 133–36; Bradshaw and Larsen, *In God's Image and Likeness*, 2:37–39.

89   Reeves and Reed, *Sources from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, 157.

90   Ibid., 157, 174–75.

91 Ibid., 157n227.

92 In the Islamic account, the questions of Yamahuel were directed to Iblis [Satan] rather than to Enoch, i.e., "What is this?" and "Can you bring about his demise?"

93 Reproduced in Martin Butlin, *William Blake* (London: Tate Gallery Publications, 1978), 36. Steigal Fine Art Ltd, Edinburgh, is listed as the owner in that publication, but they are no longer in business. Clive Coward of the Tate Museum could not locate the work in their collection, neither was it in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum or the British Museum. After a continued, unfruitful search for any copyright holder, we decided to use the image. We would welcome contact with any party claiming to hold a copyright for this image.

94 Migne, "Livre d'Adam," 167. English translation by Bradshaw. Migne's original reads:

> *Quand je me vis ainsi entouré d'ennemis, je m'enfuis, et, levant les yeux vers le séjour de la lumière, j'appelai à mon secours l'ange de la Vie. … Et depuis ce temps, les yeux fixés sur la route, je regardais si mes frères venaient à moi, si l'ange de la Vie venait à mon secours. Tout à coup je vis la porte du ciel ouverte.*

Cf. Lidzbarski, *Ginza*, 264:

> *Täglich, alltäglich suche ich ihnen zu entrinnen, da ich allein in dieser Welt dastehe. Meine Augen blicken zu Mandä dHaije empor. …Täglich blicken meine Augen zu dem Wege empor, den meine Brüder gehen, und zu dem Pfade, auf dem Mandä dHaije kommt. Ich schaue hin und sehe, daß die Pforte des Himmels sich öffnete.*

95 Migne, "Livre d'Adam," 170. English translation by Bradshaw. Migne's original reads:

> *En vain nous avons essayé contre eux le meurtre et le feu ; rien n'a pu les atteindre. Ils sont maintenant à l'abri de nos coups.*

Cf. Lidzbarski, *Ginza*, 268:

> *Bei seinen Brüdern wurde Feuer und Schwert weggenommen, und sie konnten an sie nicht heranreichen, jetzt […], daß sie für sich dastehen.*

96   Migne, "Livre d'Adam," 170. English translation by Bradshaw. Migne's original reads:

>   C'est en fuyant, c'est en se cachant, que les hommes d'en haut ont monté plus haut que nous. Nous ne les avons jamais connus. Les voici pourtant couverts de gloire et de splendeurs qui nous apparaissent dans tout l'éclat de leur triomphe.

Cf. Lidzbarski, *Ginza*, 268:

>   Sei es daß sie vor uns davongelaufen sind, sei es daß sie sich vor uns versteckt haben, sie zeigten sich uns nicht. Jetzt zeigten sie sich uns in ihrem reichen Glänze und ihrem großen Lichte.

97   Cf. Moses 7:13.

98   Martinez, "The Book of Giants (4Q531)," 2:6, 262. Cf. Milik and Black, *The Books of Enoch*, 308: "they dwell in [heaven]s and they live in the holy abodes"; Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran*, 164: "and in the heavens are seated, and among the holy places they dwell"; Wise, Abegg, and Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 293: "my opponents [are angels who] reside in [Heav]en, and they dwell in the holy places." Cf. Nibley, *Teachings of the Pearl of Great Price*, 269.

Compare also Henning, "The Book of the Giants," Text A, fragment i (M101i), where the angels are said to have "veiled [or: covered, or: protected, or: moved out of sight] Enoch." A similar veiling is described in a Parthian fragment (M291) in relation to "a later sequence of events" (Jens Wilkens, "Remarks on the Manichaean *Book of Giants*: Once again on Mahaway's mission to Enoch," in *Ancient Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan: Contexts, Traditions, and Influences*, eds. Matthew Goff, Loren T. Stuckenbruck, and Enrico Morano [Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2016], 225). Wilkens notes the passages from Henning as an explanation for "the fact that there is no direct contact between Mahawai and Enoch" (ibid., 225) in the Uyghur fragment, lines 11 and 12: "But I did not see him in person" (ibid., 224). Cf. "he dwelt [not] among human beings" (Stuckenbruck, "The Book of Giants," 233); "his dwelling is with the angels" (Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 106:7, 536. See also 12:1–2, 233).

99   As far as the size of Enoch's band goes, the Mandaean texts envision of group of three: Enoch and his companion *uthras*. Within the Aramaic

Book of Giants, the size of his group that opposed the *gibborim* in battle is unspecified. However, the following account provides an explicit analog to the Book of Moses idea that a sizeable group of people ascended with Enoch (Adolph Jellinek, ed. *Bet ha-Midrasch. Sammlung kleiner midraschim und vermischter Abhandlungen aus der ältern jüdischen Literatur* [Leipzig, Germany: C. W. Vollrath, 1857], 7–8, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/87/ Adolph_Jellinek._Bet_Ha-Midrasch._Vol.IV.pdf):

> It happened at that time, that as the children of men were sitting with Enoch he was speaking to them, that they lifted up their eyes and saw something like a great horse coming down from heaven, and the horse moving in the air [wind] to the ground, And they told Enoch what they had seen. And Enoch said to them, "It is on my account that that horse is descending to the earth; the time and the day have arrived when I must go away from you and no longer appear to you." And at that time that horse came down and stood before Enoch, and all the people who were with Enoch saw it. And then Enoch commanded, and there came a voice to him [literally "a voice passed over him"] saying, "Who is the man who delights to know the ways of the Lord his God? Let him come this day to Enoch before he is taken from us" ["him" is emended to read "us"]. And all the people gathered together and came to Enoch on that day. … And after that he got up and rode on the horse, and he went forth, and all the children of men left and went after him to the number of 800,000 men. And they went with him for a day's journey. Behold, on the second day he said to them, "Return back to your tents; why are you coming?" And some of them returned from him, and the remainder of them went with him six days' journey, while Enoch was saying to them every day, "Return to your tents lest you die." But they did not want to return and they went with him. And on the sixth day men still remained, and they stuck with him. And they said to him, "We will go with thee to the place where thou goest; as the Lord liveth, only death will separate us from thee!" [cf. 2 Kings 2:2, 4, 6;

Ruth 1:17] And it came to pass that they took courage to go with him, and he no longer addressed [i.e., "remonstrated with"] them. And they went after him and did not turn away. And as for those kings, when they returned, they made a count of all of them (who returned) to know the number of men who remained, who had gone after Enoch. And it was on the seventh day, and Enoch went up in a tempest [i.e., "whirlwind"] into heaven with horses of fire and chariots of fire. And on the eighth day all the kings who had been with Enoch sent to take the number of the men who had stayed behind with Enoch [when the kings left him] at the place from which he had mounted up into the sky. And all the kings went to that place and found all the ground covered with snow in that place, and on top of the snow huge blocks [literally "stones"] of snow. And they said to each other, "Come, let us break into the snow here to see whether the people who were left with Enoch died under the lumps of snow." And they hunted for Enoch and found him not because he had gone up into the sky.

The account recorded by Jellinek is almost identical to the one found in Mordecai M. Noah, ed. *The Book of Jasher*, trans. Moses Samuel (Salt Lake City: Joseph Hyrum Parry, 1887), 7–8. Louis Ginzberg, ed. *The Legends of the Jews*, trans. Henrietta Szold and Paul Radin (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1909), 1:129–30 summarizes this account. He makes an addition to the story on his own authority, recounting that when the people searched for those who had gone with Enoch "they discovered the bodies." Though this idea might be reasonably inferred, it is found explicitly in neither of the two older accounts with which we are familiar.

For additional discussion of accounts from the ancient world that describe whole communities ascending to heaven (both literally and figuratively), see David J. Larsen, "Enoch and the City of Zion: Can an entire community ascend to heaven?" Presentation at the Academy of Temple Studies Conference on Enoch and the Temple, Logan, UT and Provo, UT, February 19 and 22, 2013.

100   Reeves and Reed, *Sources from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, 320–21.

101   Ibid., 157.

102   Ibid., 190.

103   Ibid., 196.

104   Ibid., 334.

105   Cf. Deuteronomy 4:35; 32:39.

106   Reeves and Reed, *Sources from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, 140. Cf. Similar passages from other accounts in ibid., 163–64.

107   Ibid., 130.

108   Ibid., 148.

109   Ibid., 194, 196.

110   Ibid., 78.

111   See ibid., 108, 112–13, 146, 150, 152, 161, 162, 163.

112   Moses 7:22 is sometimes discussed in connection with the "mark of Cain" (Moses 5:40). However, it is not a straightforward matter to decode the nature of that mark (Bradshaw and Larsen, *In God's Image and Likeness*, 2:139):

Though readers have often assumed that the mark was a dark skin, the text of the verse itself fails to give warrant for any particular conclusion about the nature of the mark given to Cain. Nor is the verse explicit about whether the mark was passed on to his descendants (For arguments that it was not passed on, see, e.g., Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis. Vol. 1: From Adam to Noah,* trans. Israel Abrahams [Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1998], 227–28; Claus Westermann, ed., *Genesis 1–11: A Continental Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994], 312–13). Of possible relevance to this question is Moses 7:22, which states that "the seed of Cain were black." Cf. Smith, *Documentary History*, January 25, 1842, 4:501. Note also the statement that a "blackness came upon all the children of Canaan," seemingly in direct consequence of a notable act of genocide

[Moses 7:7–8]. See Marcus H. Martins, *Blacks and the Mormon Priesthood: Setting the Record Straight* (Orem, UT: Millennial Press, 2007), 10–11. Allred, however, finds even this statement inconclusive, arguing that it could be a figurative expression referring to "those who followed Cain in his wicked practices," referring to them "in the same manner that the Jews were called the children of the Devil" (Alma Allred, "The traditions of their fathers: Myth versus reality in LDS scriptural writings," in *Black and Mormon*, ed. Newell G. Bringhurst and Darron T. Smith [Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004], 49n15. See John 8:44). Similarly, Goldenberg has argued that, as with the four horsemen of Revelation 6:1–8, the blackness of individuals depicted in *1 Enoch* and in other ancient Near Eastern sources is used in a purely symbolic fashion to represent evil and exclusion from the covenant community (David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003], 152–54; cf. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 85:3–88:3, 364. See also manuscript versions of Moses 1:15 (Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible*, OT1, 84, OT2, 592), as well as Bradshaw, *In God's Image and Likeness*, 1:55). He conjectures that beliefs about Cain's skin becoming black were the result of textual misunderstandings (Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, 178–82). For similar conclusions relating to the mark imposed upon the Lamanites in the Book of Mormon (e.g., 1 Nephi 12:23, 2 Nephi 5:21–24, Alma 3:6–19, 3 Nephi 2:14–16), see Brant A. Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical and Contextual Commentary of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2007), 2:108–23; John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 90.

Consistent with this view is al-Kisa'i's report of a tradition that Lamech (the son of the Sethite Methuselah — not to be confused with the Cainite

Lamech of Moses 5:43–54) married Methuselcha, a descendant of Cain. Though mentioning the fact that there was "enmity that existed between the children of Seth and the children of Cain," the story implies that there was nothing in their outward appearance that would identify them as being of different lineages, since Lamech had to tell her his parentage explicitly. Described in wholly positive terms, Methuselcha was said in this tradition to have become the mother of Noah (Muhammad ibn Abd Allah al-Kisa'i, *Tales of the Prophets (Qisas al-anbiya)*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston Jr. [Chicago: KAZI Publications, 1997], 91–93).

113 Reeves and Reed, *Sources from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, 132.

114 Ibid., 197.

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid. Cf. Pseudo-Asma'I (ibid., 191); 2 Enoch 42:1–2 (long); 13:25–26 (short).

117 Reeves and Reed, *Sources from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, 204.

118 Ibid., 198.

119 See 1 Nephi 8:24 and John W. Welch, "The narrative of Zosimus and the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 22, no. 3 (1982): 311–22, https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/narrative-zosimus-and-book-mormon.

120 Rodney Stark, "The rise of a new world faith," *Review of Religious Research* 26, no. 1 (September 1984), 19, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3511039.

121 Terryl L. Givens and Brian M. Hauglid, *The Pearl of Greatest Price: Mormonism's Most Controversial Scripture* (New York City: Oxford University Press, 2019), Kindle edition.

122 Ibid. See, e.g., Bradshaw, "The LDS book of Enoch as the culminating story of a temple text"; Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Book of Moses* (Salt Lake City: Eborn Publishing, 2014).

123 Harold Bloom, *Jesus and Yahweh: The Names Divine* (New York City: Riverhead Books [Penguin Group], 2005), 25. Hugh Nibley concurs

with this assessment, noting that the Pearl of Great Price "has received less attention than the other writings and has been studied only superficially" (Hugh W. Nibley and Michael D. Rhodes, *One Eternal Round* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010], 18). Terryl Givens writes that the Pearl of Great Price is "the least studied, written about, understood, and appreciated book in the LDS canon, but it outweighs in theological consequence and influence all the rest" (Givens and Hauglid, *The Pearl of Greatest Price*).

124 H. Donl Peterson, *The Story of the Book of Abraham: Mummies, Manuscripts, and Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995); Hugh W. Nibley, "A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price," *Improvement Era* 1968–1970 (Provo, UT: FARMS, Brigham Young University, 1990).

125 Notable longer studies on the Book of Abraham include John Gee and Brian M. Hauglid, eds., *Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS), Brigham Young University, 2005); E. Douglas Clark, *The Blessings of Abraham: Becoming a Zion People* (American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 2005); Hugh W. Nibley, "Abraham's temple drama," in *The Temple in Time and Eternity*, eds. Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, UT: The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 1999), 1–42, reprinted as Hugh W. Nibley, "Abraham's temple drama," in *Eloquent Witness: Nibley on Himself, Others, and the Temple*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008), 445–82; Hugh W. Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000); Michael D. Rhodes, ed. *The Hor Book of Breathings: A Translation and Commentary* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 2002); John A. Tvedtnes, Brian M. Hauglid, and John Gee, eds., *Traditions about the Early Life of Abraham. Studies in the Book of Abraham 1*, ed. John Gee (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 2001); Hugh W. Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005); Nibley, *Teachings of the Pearl of Great Price*; John Gee, *An Introduction to the Book of Abraham* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2017); Brian M. Hauglid, ed. *A Textual History of the Book of Abraham: Manuscripts and Editions* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, Brigham Young University, 2010); *The Joseph Smith Papers,*

Revelations and Translations, Vol. 4: Book of Abraham and Related Manuscripts, eds. Robin Scott Jensen and Brian M. Hauglid (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2018); Givens and Hauglid, *The Pearl of Greatest Price*; Hugh W. Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Abraham* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS), 2009); Michael D. Rhodes, ed. *Books of the Dead Belonging to Tshemmin and Neferirnub: A Translation and Commentary* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, Brigham Young University, 2010); Richard D. Draper, S. Kent Brown, and Michael D. Rhodes, *The Pearl of Great Price: A Verse-by-Verse Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005). For additional books and articles, see www.interpreterfoundation.org, www.pearlofgreatpricecentral.org/.

126 More than fifty years ago Richard P. Howard (Richard P. Howard, *Restoration Scriptures* (Independence, MO: Herald House, 1969) and Robert J. Matthews (Robert J. Matthews, *"A Plainer Translation": Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible — A History and Commentary* [Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1975]) began publishing their pioneering studies of the Joseph Smith Translation or JST, of which the Book of Moses is an extract. The wide availability of Matthews' exhaustive study, in particular, was very effective in abating the qualms of Latter-day Saints (Thomas E. Sherry, "Changing attitudes toward Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible, in *Plain and Precious Truths Restored: The Doctrinal and Historical Significance of the Joseph Smith Translation*, eds. Robert L. Millet and Robert J. Matthews [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995], 187–226), who had not yet had an opportunity to compare the RLDS (now Community of Christ) publication of Joseph Smith's "Inspired Version" of the Bible (Joseph Smith Jr., ed., *The Holy Scriptures: Translated and corrected by the spirit of revelation by Joseph Smith, Jr., the Seer* [Plano: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1867], https://archive.org/details/holyscripturestr00smituoft) with the original manuscripts. Such qualms proved by and large to be unfounded. Matthews clearly established that recent editions of the "Inspired Version," notwithstanding their shortcomings, constituted a faithful rendering of the work of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his scribes — insofar as the manuscripts were then understood (Matthews, *"A Plainer Translation,"* 200–201; see also Kent P. Jackson, *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation*

Manuscripts (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 2005), 20–33, https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/book-moses-and-joseph-smith-translation-manuscripts. Four years later, in 1979, the status of the JST was further enhanced by the inclusion of selections from the translation in the footnotes and endnotes of a new Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Bible. Elder Boyd K. Packer heralded this publication event as "the most important thing that [the Church has] done in recent generations" (Boyd K. Packer, "Scriptures," *Ensign 12* (November 1982), 53, https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1982/10/scriptures?lang=eng; cf. Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrines of the Restoration: Sermons and Writings of Bruce R. McConkie* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989], 236). Twenty-five years later, in 2004, with painstaking effort by editors Scott Faulring, Kent Jackson, and Robert Matthews and the generous cooperation of the Community of Christ, a facsimile transcription of all the original manuscripts of the JST was at last published (Faulring Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible*). In 2005, as an important addition to his ongoing series of historical and doctrinal studies, Kent Jackson provided a detailed examination of the text of the portions of the JST relating to the Book of Moses (Jackson, *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts*). Richard Draper, Kent Brown, and Michael Rhodes' verse-by-verse commentary on the Pearl of Great Price, also published in 2005, was another important milestone (Draper, Brown, and Rhodes, *The Pearl of Great Price*). Others have also made significant contributions. Taken together, all these studies allow us to see the process and results of the Prophet's work of Bible translation with greater clarity than ever before. See Royal Skousen for a review of these recent studies of the original JST manuscripts (Royal Skousen, "The earliest textual sources for Joseph Smith's "New Translation" of the King James Bible," *The FARMS Review* 17, no. 2 (2005), 451–70, https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/msr/vol17/iss2/13). Additional volumes with significant perspectives on the Book of Moses appeared in 2012 and 2019 (Givens and Givens, *The God Who Weeps*; Givens and Hauglid, *The Pearl of Greatest Price*). Two volumes of detailed commentary on the Book of Moses and the book of Genesis through chapter 11 appeared in 2014 (Bradshaw, *In God's Image and Likeness*). For

additional books and articles, see www.interpreterfoundation.org, www.pearlofgreatpricecentral.org/.

127 Image from the Canterbury Cathedral website, https://www. canterbury-cathedral.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Enoch-large.jpg, with thanks to Cressida Williams (Mrs.), Cathedral Archivist; Head of Archives and Library, Canterbury Cathedral.

128 David E. Bokovoy, *Authoring the Old Testament: Genesis-Deuteronomy* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2014), 133.

129 Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, "Sorting out the sources in scripture," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 9 (2014): 215–72. For more on this subject, see Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, "Beauty and Truth in Moses 1," in *Proceedings of the 2018 Temple on Mount Zion Symposium*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks, Temple on Mount Zion, in preparation (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation); Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, "Did Moses Write the Book of Genesis?" in *Interpreter Foundation Old Testament KnoWhy JBOTL03B*, https://interpreterfoundation.org/knowhy-otl03b-did-moses-write-the-book-of-genesis/; David Rolph Seely, "'We believe the Bible to be the word of God, as far as it is translated correctly': Latter-day Saints and historical biblical criticism," *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 8 (2016), 64–86, https://publications.mi.byu. edu/fullscreen/?pub=6153index=5.

130 These included Lehi, Nephi, Moroni, and apparently others. See Trevan G. Hatch, *Visions, Manifestations, and Miracles of the Restoration* (Orem, UT: Granite Publishing, 2008), 129–31.

131 These included, among others, the Old Testament figures of Adam, Noah, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Elias, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Elijah. New Testament figures included John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Paul, Stephen, Philip, Matthew, James the Lesser, Matthias, Andrew, Mark, Jude, Bartholomew, Thomas, Luke, Simon, Barnabas, and others of the Apostles — and, of course, Jesus Christ Himself. See ibid., 135–55. For a useful collection of additional accounts of divine manifestations to the Prophet, see John W. Welch and Erick B. Carlson, eds., *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005).

132 Reeves and Reed, *Sources from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, 7–9.

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

134 Ben Tov, "The Book of Enoch, the Book of Moses, and the Question of Availability."

135 E.g., 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/; Benjamin L. McGuire, "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/.

136 Jeffrey M., Bradshaw, David J. Larsen, and Stephen T. Whitlock, "The Heavenly Ascent of Moses 1 as a Prelude to a Temple Text: New Light from the *Apocalypse of Abraham*," submitted for publication.

137 See, for example, the current best-guess reconstruction proposed by Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "The *Book of Giants* among the Dead Sea Scrolls."

138 Bradshaw, Larsen, and Whitlock, "The Heavenly Ascent of Moses 1 as a Prelude to a Temple Text."

139 Hugh W. Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 114.

140 Ben Tov, "The Book of Enoch, the Book of Moses, and the Question of Availability."

141 "Facts are stubborn things," *Times and Seasons* (Nauvoo, IL), September 15, 1842, 921–22, https://archive.org/stream/TimesAndSeasonsVol3/Times_and_Seasons_Vol_3#page/n551/mode/2up. Cf. Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 267. William W. Phelps' biographer, Bruce A. Van Orden lists the article in which this statement appeared as among those that were attributed to Joseph Smith in his role of editor, yet "ghostwritten by W. W. Phelps" (Bruce A. Van Orden, *We'll Sing and We'll Shout: The Life and Times of W. W. Phelps* [Provo, UT and Salt Lake City: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University and Deseret Book, 2018], 412). Van Orden comments: "Phelps repeatedly

indicated that [John Lloyd Stephens's 1841 publication of *Incidents of Travel in Central America*] helped prove the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. Joseph [Smith] certainly agreed with Phelps' conclusions" (ibid., 332; cf. ibid., 407–8).

142 Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*, 114.

143 Jeffrey R. Holland, "The greatness of the evidence" (Talk given at the Chiasmus Jubilee, Joseph Smith Building, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, 16 August 2017), 3. In Newsroom. https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/transcript-elder-holland-speaks-book-of-mormon-chiasmus-conference-2017.

144 Webb, *Jesus Christ, Eternal God*, 253.

145 For more on this verse see James Starr, "Does 2 Peter 1:4 speak of deification?" in *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions*, eds. Michael J. Christensen and Jeffery A. Wittung (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 81–92, and Blake T. Ostler, *Of God and Gods: Exploring Mormon Thought 3* (Draper, UT: Greg Kofford Books, 2008), 392–95.

146 Elder John A. Widtsoe, cited in Archibald F. Bennett, *Saviors on Mount Zion: Course No. 21 for the Sunday School* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union Board, 1950), 11–12; Boyd K. Packer, *The Holy Temple* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 216.

147 Givens and Givens, *The God Who Weeps*, 105. Similarly, Eliza R. Snow wrote that Enoch became "assimilated to the character — the likeness of the great 'I Am'" (Eliza Roxcy Snow, "Time and Change," in *Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry*, eds. Jill Mulvay Derr and Karen Lynn Davidson [Provo and Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University Press and University of Utah Press, 2009], 144).