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Chiasmus in the Book of Jarom

Stephen Kent Ehat

Abstract: *Jarom strongly evidences the use of chiasmus to structure his short book. This paper seeks to uncover, display, and discuss the chiastic patterning of the book and hopefully suggests an enhanced understanding of the hidden beauty and deep meaning of this brief but important text. The book of Jarom indeed offers more than what may otherwise be revealed by only a cursory reading of its fifteen verses. Awareness of the chiastic pattern of the text reinforces an understanding of Jarom's important message.*

Jarom evidently employed chiasmus to structure his short one-chapter book, a book that stands in our modern-day printings of the Book of Mormon as a text of only fifteen verses. Since 16 August 1967, when John W. Welch first discovered the existence of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon, he and other analysts have proposed the existence of both short and long chiastic structures for various texts within that book of scripture, especially in texts derived from the small plates of Nephi. The book of Jarom is one of those books.

Four prior analysts — Welch (1967 and 1972, both unpublished), Donald W. Parry (1992 and 2007, both published), the author (1995 and 1996, both unpublished), and John Kenton Wyatt (2005, unpublished) — have independently depicted an overall chiasm for that fifteen-verse text. One depiction (mine in 1996) was accompanied by a discussion on which this present paper expands. All seven depictions are largely equivalent in their fundamentals, but each has unique observations.¹ All but one of the depictions are available in the John W. Welch Chiasmus Papers collection at Brigham Young University.

1. Details of the prior depictions and short summaries of the discoveries will be

Welch's initial 1967 discovery is discussed for the first time in this paper. The depiction by only one of the analysts has previously been published (Parry 1992 and 2007).

Preliminary Observations

Many of the words, phrases, and ideas that correspond between the two halves of Jarom's text are easily discovered within the text, especially the correspondences at the extremes (in vv. 1–2 and 14–15). Major chiasmic correspondences appear throughout, such as, for one example, the dual references to the law of Moses. And the text of the central v. 8 can be seen as *synonymia*, as Parry terms it, though Welch adds an even more impressive numerical count of the items mentioned in that v. 8, by means of a “2 4 2 4” enumeration that he supplies in the left margin near his depiction of the text of that v. 8 in his 1972 typescript. Wyatt draws attention to the repeated use of the word *and* in the items he lists from that verse. Welch is the only analyst who offers labels for the conceptual elements of the proposed chapter-wide chiasmus. I recognize here, discuss, and give him credit for preliminarily defining some of those conceptual chiasmic elements.

A good starting point in approaching the prospect of bringing together and perhaps harmonizing the various proposals made by the four separate analysts might be to offer here a cogent observation made recently by Welch as he reviewed an earlier draft of this paper. Though the book of Jarom mentions *God* (vv. 3 and 10), *the Holy Spirit* (v. 4), *the Lord* (vv. 5, 7, 9, and 10), and *the Messiah* (v. 11), we should also observe, as Welch notes, that Jarom only twice mentions his own name (vv. 1 and 14). Says Welch of this feature of the text:

The name *Jarom* in Hebrew would have been understood anciently as already invoking the name of the Lord, since *Ja* (*Ya*) means Yahweh or Jehovah, and *rom* means high or exalted. So Jarom means “Jehovah is Exalted.” See Ricks, Hoskisson, Smith and Gee, *Dictionary of Proper Names and Foreign Words in the Book of Mormon*, p. 161.²

provided in a forthcoming paper. In this paper, attention is devoted to harmonizing the unique contributions of the prior depictions.

2. John W. Welch, email to author, 18 June 2024. See Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Enhanced Brown–Driver–Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000), s.v. “רומ” (*rûm* “vb. be high, exalted, rise”).

Regarding the meaning of Jarom’s name and the correctness (or not) of the rendering *Joram* that appears in the Printer’s Manuscript (at our v. 14), Robert F. Smith notes the following:³

It is not clear how Jarom/Joram should be vocalized:

Jarom title, verse 1, and Omni 1:1 all read **Jarom** in the Printer’s Manuscript, whereas at Jarom 1:14 the Printer’s Manuscript reads **Joram**. We do not know what the reading was in the Original Manuscript. Both forms are well-attested Hebrew names, which mean the same thing. Royal Skousen considers verse 14 a scribal error.⁴

Hebrew ירם *Yārōm* or ירום *Yārûm* means “He is exalted” (Isaiah 52:13, Psalms 18:47, 61:3),⁵ and may be a hypocoristic form⁶ of Jeremiah ירמיהו *yirmiyyāh(û)* “Yahu exalts,” from Hebrew root רוּם *rûm*; John A. Tvednes cites that short-form’s appearance in several Hebrew inscriptions: “a seventh-century B.C.E. seal found in Egypt, a jug inscription from Tel esh-Shari’ah, and an ostrakon and bulla in the Moussaieff collection.”⁷

3. Robert F. Smith, email to author, 8 July 2024. The footnotes in the following four-paragraph quotation of Smith’s email were provided by Smith. His footnote numbers were 56 through 59, and they are here numbered as my footnotes 5, 6, 7, and 8, with hyperlinks within the footnotes here updated to current URLs, sometimes presenting paywalls.

4. Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon*, Part Two: *2 Nephi 12–Mosiah 13*, 2nd ed. (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies [FARMS], 2017), 1146.

5. L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1994–2000), 2:437, 439.

6. Just as Joram is hypocoristic for Jehoram (see the Bible Dictionary in the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Bible, 710); Ran Zadok, *Pre-Hellenistic Israelite Anthroponomy and Prosopography* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1988), 10–11, 134 §21367.

7. John A. Tvednes, “Hebrew Names in the Book of Mormon” (presentation, Book of Mormon Archaeological Forum 2005 Conference, Thanksgiving Point, Utah, September 2005), 4. Tvednes adds, “Evidently the shortened form of ירמיהו, it can be compared to the Book of Mormon name Jarom (Jarom 1:1, 14).” John A. Tvednes, John Gee, and Matthew Roper, “Book of Mormon Names Attested in Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 9, no. 1 (2000): 49, scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jbms/vol9/iss1/11/. John A. Tvednes, “Hebrew Names in the Book of Mormon,” in G. Khan et al., eds., *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 2:787–88, referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/encyclopedia-of-hebrew-language-and-linguistics.

KJV Joram MT Hebrew personal name יֹרָם *yôrām* (2 Samuel 8:10, 2 Chronicles 25:5; Matthew 1:8 *iōram*), which is short for יהורם *Jehoram* “Yeho-exalts” (1 Kings 22:51), just as Jonathan is short for Jehonathan, and Joash for Jehoash. The Hebrew orthography and meaning would be the same in either case, although יֹ JO- would likely be the Northern Hebrew dialectical variant of the theophoric name of the Lord. Since such variants occur biblically, they ought to be respected and allowed within the Book of Mormon as well.

Clearly Smith’s observation differs from Skousen’s on this account. Skousen’s reasoning regarding the spelling “Joram” in Jarom 1:14 is as follows:

Here Oliver Cowdery spelled *Jarom* as *Joram*. The three other occurrences of the name are consistently spelled as *Jarom* (including the first one, found in the title of the book):

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| title of the book | The book of Jarom |
| Jarom 1:1 | Now behold I Jarom write a few words |
| Omni 1:1 | I Omni being commanded by my father Jarom that . . . |

Two of these correct spellings precede Jarom 1:14 in the text. Thus the spelling in P of *Joram* is undoubtedly an error, a simple switching of the vowels, perhaps under the influence of the name *Jordan*. (It is doubtful that the considerably less familiar biblical name *Joram* led to this error.)⁸

I take no position regarding the analysis whether the *Joram* of v. 14 is or is not an error or an acceptable variant. I do note, however, that regardless of whether *Joram* is an error or an acceptable variant, apparently both *Joram* and *Jarom* have the same meaning: *Jehovah is exalted* or *He is exalted*. The two appearances of the name are chiastically related to one another.

I will discuss immediately below both (1) a proposal based on themes, analyzing the ideas or concepts that form the chiasm of the book and (2) a proposal based on the full text, analyzing the chiasm in light of all of the words and phrases from the full text of the book.

8. Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants*, 2:1146.

Verbal and thematic chiasmus

Chiasms feature comparisons between words, phrases, and ideas that appear twice in a text, with words, phrases, and ideas stated earlier in the text being repeated in reverse sequence in the latter part of the text. Depictions of chiasms generally represent correspondences by setting forth words, phrases, or ideas, known as "elements" of the chiasm, with letters of the alphabet attached to them and commonly depicted with indented left margins (for texts analyzed in left-to-right English-language translation). In the samples in table 1, a chiasm founded on ideas or concepts developed within a text (thematic chiasmus) appears on the left and a chiasm founded on words (verbal chiasmus) appears on the right.

Table 1. Two examples of chiasmus in the KJV, thematic left, verbal right.

| Leviticus 20 | Matthew 29:30 |
|--|----------------------------------|
| A the people deliver punishment (v. 2) | A But many that are first |
| B God delivers punishment (vv. 3–6) | B shall be last ; |
| C the people deliver punishment (vv. 9–16) | B' and the last |
| B' God delivers punishment (vv. 17–21) | A' shall be first |
| A' the people deliver punishment (v. 27) | |

Basic thematic proposal

Table 2 depicts a basic chiastic pattern of the ideas in the book of Jarom, reflected in a reversal in the sequence of the repetition of the book's themes. The depiction reflects an overall A B C D E F G H H' G' F' E' **B' D' B' C'** A' *skewed concentric* structure.⁹ The proposed basic structure is supported by reference to the corresponding words and phrases of the full text of the book itself.

9. Regarding "skews," see Stephen Kent Ehat, "Asymmetry in Chiasms, With a Note About Deuteronomy 8 and Alma 36," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 59 (2023): 191–280, journal.interpreterfoundation.org/asymmetry-in-chiasms-with-a-note-about-deuteronomy-8-and-alma-36/. Regarding "concentric" structuring, see Stephen Kent Ehat, "Centered on Christ: The Book of Enos Possibly Structured Chiastically," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 58 (2023): 243–306, journal.interpreterfoundation.org/centered-on-christ-the-book-of-enos-possibly-structured-chiastically/.

Table 2. Proposed basic structure depicting a thematic chiasmus in Jarom.

| | |
|-------|--|
| A | Jarom begins his writing on the plates (vv. 1–2) |
| B | The merciful lord spares the spiritually deaf, spiritually blind, stiffnecked Nephites (vv. 3–4) |
| C | The time of the Nephites waxing strong in the land (v. 5a) |
| D | The Nephites obey the law of Moses (v. 5b) |
| E | The Nephites are scattered upon the face of the land; the Lamanites are wicked (v. 6) |
| F | Taught by righteous leaders the Nephites withstand the Lamanites (v. 7a–d) |
| G | Five forms of societal prosperity (v. 7e–8a) |
| H | Six forms of material prosperity (v. 8b) |
| H' | Six forms of material prosperity (v. 8c) |
| G' | Five weapons of war for societal protection (v. 8d) |
| F' | Threatened by the prophets, the Nephites prevail over the Lamanites (v. 9–10b) |
| E' | If disobedient, the Nephites will be destroyed from off the face of the land (v. 10c) |
| B'(2) | The prophets, priests, and teachers exhort the Nephites to diligence (v. 11a) |
| D' | Prophets, priests, and teachers teach Nephites why they obey the law of Moses (v. 11b) |
| B'(1) | The teachings of the prophets spare the Nephites (v. 12) |
| C' | The time of wars, contentions, and dissensions (v. 13) |
| A' | Jarom completes his writing on the plates (vv. 14–15) |

Detailed full-text proposal

Table 3 shows both linguistic (word-based, phrase-based) correspondences and thematic (ideas-based, concepts-based) correspondences. The linguistic correspondences are labeled with lowercase alphabetic characters (a, b, c, etc.) and shown in bold. The thematic (topical) correspondences are labeled with uppercase alphabetic characters (A, B, C, etc.) followed by a statement of the theme conveyed by the verses involved. The division of the Jarom text into five major chiastic elements based on ideas or themes was first made evident in Welch’s 1972 unpublished analysis. Here I expand upon his thematic labeling and supply a division of the book into sixteen elements. His proposed five elements (reviewed later in this paper) and my proposed sixteen thematic elements complement one another; it is merely a matter of the degree of granularity in the analysis. We both

accommodate a full analysis of the entire text of the book, with slightly different analysis of some of the underlying details.

Table 3. Proposed detailed structure depicting thematic and linguistic chiasmus in the book of Jarom, quoting the full text of the book and depicting the topics.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>A Jarom begins his writing on the plates (vv. 1–2):</p> <p>a Now behold, I, Jarom (1a)</p> <p>b write a few words according to the commandment of my father, Enos, (1b)</p> <p>c that our genealogy may be kept. (1c)</p> <p>d And as these plates are small, (2a)</p> <p>e and as these things</p> <p>f are written (2b)</p> <p>g for the intent of the benefit of our brethren the Lamanites, (2c)</p> <p>h wherefore, it must needs be that I write a little; but I shall not write the things of my prophesying, nor of my revelations. (2d)</p> <p>i For what could I write more than my fathers have written? (2e)</p> <p>j For have not they revealed the plan of salvation? I say unto you, Yea; and this sufficeth me. (2f) [unanswered element]</p> | <p>B The merciful lord spares the spiritually deaf, spiritually blind, stiffnecked Nephites (vv. 3–4):</p> <p>k Behold, it is expedient that much should be done among this people, (3a)</p> <p>l because of the hardness of their hearts, and the deafness of their ears, and the blindness of their minds, and the stiffness of their necks; (3b)</p> <p>m nevertheless, God is exceedingly merciful unto them, and has not as yet swept them off from the face of the land. (3c)</p> <p>n And there are many among us who have many revelations, for they are not all stiffnecked. And as many as are not stiffnecked and have faith, have communion with the Holy Spirit, which maketh manifest unto the children of men, according to their faith. (4)</p> |
| <p>C The time of the Nephites waxing strong in the land (v. 5a):</p> <p>o And now, behold, two hundred years had passed away, and the people of Nephi had waxed strong in the land. (5a)</p> | <p>D The Nephites obey the law of Moses (v. 5b):</p> <p>p They observed to keep the law of Moses and the sabbath day holy unto the Lord. And they profaned not; neither did they blaspheme. And the laws of the land were exceedingly strict. (5b)</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>E The Nephites are scattered upon the face of the land; the Lamanites are wicked (v. 6):</p> | <p>q And they were scattered upon much of the face of the land, and the Lamanites also. And they were exceedingly more numerous than were they of the Nephites; and they loved murder and would drink the blood of beasts. (6)</p> |
| <p>F Taught by righteous leaders the Nephites withstand the Lamanites (v. 7a–d):</p> | <p>r And it came to pass that they came many times against us, the Nephites, to battle. (7a) s But our kings and our leaders were mighty men in the faith of the Lord; (7b) t and they taught the people the ways of the Lord; (7c) u wherefore we withstood the Lamanites and swept them away out of our lands, (7d)</p> |
| <p>G Five forms of societal prosperity (v. 7e–8a):</p> | <p>v and [1] began to fortify our cities, or [2] whatsoever place of our inheritance. (7e) And [3] we multiplied exceedingly, and [4] spread upon the face of the land, and [5] became exceedingly rich (8a)</p> |
| <p>H Six forms of material prosperity (v. 8b):</p> | <p>w [1] in gold, and [2] in silver, and [3] in precious things, and [4] in fine workmanship of wood, [5] in buildings, and [6] in machinery, (8b)</p> |
| <p>H' Six forms of material prosperity (v. 8c):</p> | <p>w' and also in [1] iron and [2] copper, and [3] brass and [4] steel, [5] making all manner of tools of every kind to till the ground, and [6] weapons of war (8c)</p> |
| <p>G' Five weapons of war for societal protection (v. 8d):</p> | <p>v'1 —yea, [1] the sharp pointed arrow, and [2] the quiver, and [3] the dart, and [4] the javelin, and [5] all preparations for war. (8d)</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>F' Threatened by the prophets, the Nephites prevail over the Lamanites (v. 9–10b):</p> | <p>r' And thus being prepared to meet the Lamanites, they did not prosper against us. (9a)</p> <p>t'1 But the word of the Lord was verified, which he spake unto our fathers, (9b) saying that: Inasmuch as ye will keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land. (9c)</p> <p>s' And it came to pass that the prophets of the Lord (10a)</p> <p>t'2 did threaten the people of Nephi, according to the word of God, (10b)</p> |
| <p>E' If disobedient, the Nephites will be destroyed from off the face of the land (v. 10c):</p> | <p>u'3 that if they did not keep the commandments, but should fall into transgression they should be destroyed from off the face of the land. (10c)</p> |
| <p>B'(2) The prophets, priests, and teachers exhort the Nephites to diligence (v. 11a):</p> | <p>n' Wherefore, the prophets, and the priests, and the teachers,</p> <p>k' did labor diligently, exhorting with all long-suffering the people to diligence; (11a)</p> |
| <p>D' Prophets, priests, and teachers teach Nephites why they obey the law of Moses (v. 11b):</p> | <p>p' teaching the law of Moses, and the intent for which it was given; persuading them to look forward unto the Messiah, and believe in him to come as though he already was. And after this manner did they teach them. (11b)</p> |
| <p>B' (1) The teachings of the prophets spare the Nephites (v. 12):</p> | <p>m' And it came to pass that by so doing they kept them from being destroyed upon the face of the land; (12a)</p> <p>l' for they did prick their hearts with the word, continually stirring them up unto repentance. (12b)</p> |
| <p>C' The time of wars, contentions, and dissensions (v. 13):</p> | <p>o' And it came to pass that two hundred and thirty and eight years had passed away — after the manner of wars, and contentions, and dissensions, for the space of much of the time. (13)</p> |

- A' Jarom completes his writing on the plates (vv. 14–15):
- a' And **I, Jarom**, (14a)
- i'1 **do not write more**, (14b)
- d' for **the plates are small**. (14c)
- g' But behold, my **brethren**, ye can go to the other plates of Nephi; (14d)
- h' for behold, upon them the **records of our wars** are **engraven**,
i'2 according to the **writings** of the **kings**,
- f' or those which they caused to be **written**. (14e)
- e' And I deliver **these plates** into the hands of my son Omni, (15a)
- c' that they **may be kept** (15b)
- b' **according to the commandments of my fathers**. (15c)

Discussion

Consider that the fifteen-verse book opens and ends with an *inclusio* in the first and last verses (vv. 1 and 14–15),¹⁰ consisting of a statement to the effect that he, Jarom, writes on “these plates” that “are small” (v. 2a), on “the plates” that “are small” (v. 14c), on which “the genealogy” is “written” (v. 2b), on which the “writings of the kings” are “written” (v. 14c), in order that the things so written “may be kept” (v. 1), that they “may be kept” (v. 15), all “according to the commandment of my father” (v. 1) and “according to the commandments of my fathers” (v. 15).

The correspondences continue: What he writes is intended to benefit the Lamanites, whom he refers to as “our brethren” (v. 2) and as “my brethren” (v. 14). Providing contrasting correspondences, Jarom states that instead of engraving on the small plates the things of his “prophesying” and “revelations” (v. 2), he directs his reader to something different—namely, the “records of our wars,” engraven on the large plates (v. 14). He speaks of what is “written” by the “fathers” (v. 2) and tells of “the writings of the kings” (v. 14). It is “I Jarom” who writes “a few words” (v. 1) and “I, Jarom” who does “not write more” (v. 14b).

Reviewing a prior draft of this present paper, John W. Welch observes that Jarom asks a rhetorical question concerning his contribution on the small plates of Nephi: “What could I write more . . . ?” (v. 2e), and at the end of his short text he states, “I . . . do not write more”

10. An *inclusio* consists of linguistic boundary markers for the beginning and ending units of a text in both prose and poetry; the markers “frame” the text. See Jack Lundbom, *Biblical Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013), 4, 6, 23, 25, 27–30; and *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry, and Writings*, ed. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 323–25.

(v. 14b).¹¹ Regarding this rhetorical question and the apparent chiasmic relationship between the repeated phrase "write more" appearing in vv. 2 and 14, Welch further observes:

By asking the question "what could I write more?," with the implied answer being "nothing more," Jarom alerts his readers that he does, in fact, not plan to write more on this topic, thus tightening the connection between that very question and the precise words he uses in concluding by saying, "I do not write more" (v. 14).¹²

Concerning the proposed chiasmic parallel between "taught" and "threaten" (in Jarom 1:7a and 10a), highlighted in elements s and s' in table 3, Robert F. Smith remarks:

I cannot find a Hebrew parallel. However, note Egyptian sb3 "teach, teaching; teacher, tutor"; sb3yt "written-teaching, instruction; book"; sb3yt "punishment, chastisement"; > Coptic sbō "doctrine, teaching"; tīsbō "teach; chastise."¹³ All from same root word. This suggests the Egyptian notion that "The ear of the boy is on his back and he hearkeneth when he is beaten."¹⁴

The remaining correspondences (detailed further below) surround a central message: the blessings of righteousness include an ability to face and defend against attacks made by the unrighteous; God-given prosperity may exist without war but also it may exist in preparations for righteous war.

As Lehi before him quoted the Lord in both positive and negative terms — "Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land; but inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from my presence" (2 Nephi 1:20) — and as Jarom's grandson, Amaron, would quote the Lord in negative terms only — "Inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall not

11. John W. Welch, email message to author, 18 June 2024.

12. John W. Welch, email to author, 18 June 2024.

13. Walter E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), 319b–320a.

14. Smith, email to author, 8 July 2024. Smith cites Adolf Erman, *The Ancient Egyptians: A Sourcebook of their Writings*, trans. Aylward M. Blackman, Torchbook ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 189, archive.org/details/ancient-egyptians0000unse_j7c9/page/189/mode/1up; also in William Kelly Simpson, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 344.

prosper in the land” (Omni 1:6) — Jarom reveals that the prosperity granted by the Lord in answer to righteous obedience embraces not solely material prosperity to aid in overcoming the physical and spiritual enemies of poverty and despair (vv. 4–8a) but also material prosperity to repel the spiritual and physical enemies of war and possible destruction (vv. 8b–13). The book neatly balances around v. 8, where Jarom notes the material blessings that God supplies (gold, silver, iron, copper, brass, steel, and precious things) and the things that can be made with those materials and uses to which those materials can be put (fine workmanship of wood, buildings, machinery, and the making of tools to till the ground and even weapons of war in preparation for war). Verse 8 hearkens back meaningfully to what his granduncle,¹⁵ Nephi, taught the people:

I did teach the people to build buildings, and to work in all manner of wood, and of iron, and of copper, and of brass, and of steel, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious ores, which were in great abundance. (2 Nephi 5:15)

That hearkening back involves what is called a “distant chiasm,” conforming with “Seidel’s law” (discussed further below). And yet in connection with that hearkening back, in Nephi’s day the buildings built included a temple (2 Nephi 5:16) but in the bleaker days of Jarom’s era no mention is made of the building of a temple.

The prophet Jarom omits from his record his own “prophesying” and his own “revelations” (Jarom 1:2), speaking in the third person of the other prophets among his people “as if he were not one of them.”¹⁶ Jarom uses the third person in referring to the prophets, priests, and teachers among his people, identifying them as “our kings and our leaders” (v. 7) and as “the prophets of the Lord” (v. 10), stating that “after this manner did *they* teach” (v. 11). Even when Jarom speaks of the

15. Whether Enos was Jacob’s son or a grandson or other relation and thus whether Jarom was Nephi’s nephew or grandnephew is an issue raised because of our limited present-day understanding of the received chronological record. Studies of the meaning of the phrase “my son Enos” in Jacob 7:27 and the meaning of “my father” in Enos 1:1 reveal a dearth of conclusive evidence of what the relationships might be between and among Jacob, Nephi, Enos, and Jarom. Robert F. Smith noted the following chronology: Enos 25, at October 421 BC; Jarom 5, at June 400 BC; Jarom 13, at December 363 BC; Omni 3, at May 325 BC. Robert F. Smith, email to author, 8 July 2024.

16. John S. Tanner, “Jacob and His Descendants as Authors,” in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, ed. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1991), 56.

righteous among the people of Nephi he somewhat distances himself from them, speaking of "many among us who have many revelations" (v. 4), "they" who "are not stiffnecked" (v. 4), even speaking sometimes of his own people in the third person — using such phrases as "they of the Nephites" (v. 6), "the people of Nephi" (v. 10), "the people" (v. 11), and "them" (vv. 11–12). Yet at the same time, in the central passages of the book, he identifies himself as a Nephite using first-person plural, with such words and phrases as "us, the Nephites" (v. 7), "we" (v. 8), and "us" (v. 9).

Jarom does experience his own "prophesying" and his own "revelations" (Jarom 1:2) but he does not share them with his reader. Nevertheless, he does record on the small plates of Nephi a significant spiritual insight, apparently structuring his text with a chiasmic or concentric pattern in mind to emphasize his spiritual lesson. In an attempt to satisfy both the burden of producing evidence and the burden of persuasion on the issue whether a chiasmic pattern does indeed derive from the text of the book,¹⁷ there will be presented below the following four items:

1. A simplified view of the general diagram of the proposed overall chiasmic structure of the book of Jarom, identified by reference to the paragraphing of the complete text of the book.
2. An analysis of the paired proposed sections of the suggested chiasmic pattern, evaluating both the repetitions between the paired sections and the repetitions within each of the paired sections.
3. A discussion and analysis of some factors that give unity of idea and progression of narrative to the paired sections.
4. An assessment of the text of the book in light of the criteria recognized by Welch and others for evaluating the presence and quality of proposed chiasmic patterns.

17. John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in Alma 36" (occasional paper, FARMS, 1989), 43 ("a burden of persuasion rests on any person describing a passage as chiasmic"). See also John W. Welch, "Criteria for Identifying and Evaluating the Presence of Chiasmus," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4, no. 2 (1995): 3 (same). "Anyone who claims that a passage is chiasmic should be able to prove it." John W. Welch, "A Masterpiece: Alma 36," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, 131.

Overview of the proposal

The outline of my proposal shown in tables 2 and 3 displays strengths as well as supposable but not evidenced weaknesses. As for strengths, the overall proposed chiasm can be viewed in an even more simplified form, as a *concentric* pattern having one central element rather than as a *chiasm proper* with two matching central elements, the one central element being element D in the following depiction:

- A Jarom keeps the record (vv. 1–2)
- B The merciful Lord spares the spiritually blind Nephites (vv. 3–4)
- C Spiritual condition of the Nephites (vv. 5–6)
- D The Nephites prosper and thus are prepared to meet the Lamanites (vv. 7–9)¹⁸
- B' The prophets of the Lord threaten the people of Nephi (vv.10–11)
- C' Spiritual condition of the Nephites (v. 12)
- A' Jarom keeps the record (vv. 13–15)

The division of the text into the above simplified seven elements (eight if the central element were to be divided into two elements) is founded on the paragraphing suggested by the first five printings of the Book of Mormon, each of which divides the book of Jarom into six paragraphs but could have divided it into seven. As originally understood by the typesetter, John Gilbert, in preparing the type for the 1830 original edition, he introduced six paragraphs. His paragraphing was based on his perception of the sense of the text. Those first five printings of the Book of Mormon were all produced during the lifetime of Joseph Smith and consist of the following printings: 1830 (printed in Palmyra, New York),¹⁹ 1837 (printed in Kirtland, Ohio),²⁰ 1840 (printed in Nauvoo, Illinois),²¹ 1841 (printed in Liverpool, England),²² and 1842 (printed in Nauvoo, Illinois).²³ Each printing divides the text of the

18. The central element D could easily be analyzed as two or even four elements (a *chiasm*) (such as “D: the Nephites prosper (vv.7–8a)” and “D’: the Nephites’ prosperity prepares them for war (vv. 8b–9).” I show this further below in the full-text analysis.

19. See “Book of Mormon, 1830,” p. 146, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/book-of-mormon-1830/152 and josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/book-of-mormon-1830/153.

20. See “Book of Mormon, 1837,” p. 155–57, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/book-of-mormon-1837/159.

21. See “Book of Mormon, 1840,” p. 143–45, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/book-of-mormon-1840/147.

22. See “Book of Mormon, 1841,” p. 153, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/book-of-mormon-1841/161.

23. The 1842 printing is identical to the 1840 edition. Four later impressions

book of Jarom into the very same six paragraphs. Using for reference here the versification of later editions of the Book of Mormon, the six paragraphs in the first five editions begin with text found at the start of each of the following later-designated verses:

- v. 1: "Now, behold, I, Jarom . . ."
- v. 3: "Behold, it is expedient . . ."
- v. 5: "And now, behold two . . .")
- v. 7 "And it came to pass that they . . .")
- v. 10: "And it came to pass that the prophets . . ."
- v. 13: "And it came to pass that two . . ."

Those phrases often serve as the opening phrases of paragraphs in the text of the Book of Mormon and at times the paragraphs that begin with those phrases also often form complete elements of a conceptual chiasm, such as the A B C D C' B' A' chiasm proposed for the book of Enos, where each of the seven paragraphs of that book constitutes an element of a seven-part concentric structure giving rhetorical form to that text.²⁴

In the book of Jarom, however, seven common introductory phrases appear, six identified by John Gilbert to begin paragraphs he introduced into the 1830 edition and one that he did not utilize. That phrase, omitted by Gilbert in his paragraphing of the text ("And it came to pass," v. 12), is listed here, in *italic*, among the seven I identify as the beginning words of seven paragraphs:

- v. 1: Now behold . . .
- v. 3: Behold . . .
- v. 5: And now, behold . . .

(printings) were made of the 1840 edition: October 1840, Spring 1841, early 1842, and August 1842. See Larry W. Draper, "Book of Mormon Editions," in *Uncovering the Original Text of the Book of Mormon: History and Findings of the Critical Text Project*, ed. M. Gerald Bradford and Alison V. P. Coutts (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002), 43. Apparently the 1842 edition was simply a reprint made from the Cincinnati stereotype plates of the 1840 edition. See David J. Whittaker, stating that the "1842 edition of the Book of Mormon . . . (or more correctly impression or printing) is the fourth and last impression made from the Cincinnati stereotype plates (1840)." David J. Whittaker, "'That Most Important of All Books': A Printing History of the Book of Mormon," in *FARMS Occasional Papers*, ed. M. Gerald Bradford (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2007), 112.

24. See, for example, my video detailing the chiastic nature of that book. Stephen Kent Ehat, *The Book of Enos*, video, 6 May 2024, 3:11 to 3:50, gen-docs.org/ENOS.mp4.

- v. 7: And it came to pass . . .
- v. 10: And it came to pass . . .
- v. 12: *And it came to pass* . . .
- v. 13: And it came to pass . . .

As for potential weaknesses, some of the features of the proposal suggest weakness if not analyzed properly. For example, though the proposal set forth in tables 2 and 3 relies on key words and key phrases set forth in the very sequence in which they appear in the text, some of those key words and some of the words within those key phrases do appear elsewhere in the text, and thus some of them may be construed to constitute what are called “mavericks.”²⁵ This risks a potential accusation of selectivity and confirmation bias on the part of the analyst. For example, the following key words and key phrases appear only twice in the text, each of these ten pairs remarkably being found only within their respective proposed corresponding chiasmic elements:

1. “Jarom” (vv. 1, 14)
2. “according to the commandment(s) of my father(s)” (vv. 1, 15)
3. “may be kept” (vv. 1, 15)
4. “plates are small” (vv. 2, 14)
5. “our/my brethren” (vv. 2, 14)
6. “I write more” (vv. 2, 14)
7. “their hearts” (vv. 3, 12)
8. “have faith” and “believe” (vv. 4, 11)²⁶
9. “two hundred years had passed away”/“two hundred and thirty and eight years had passed away” (vv. 5, 13)
10. “law of Moses” (vv. 1, 11)

Yet, some of the words *within* some of those key phrases may appear elsewhere in the text and thus may be misinterpreted to be “mavericks.” For example, the word *commandments* (one of the words in the suggested key phrase “commandment(s) of my father(s)” of

25. Welch, “Presence of Chiasmus.” A “maverick” is a word or phrase that is repeated in two corresponding elements of a chiasm but also happens to appear in the text in one or more other places outside of the proposed chiasmic pattern.

26. The “have faith” of verse 4 may possibly be the companion of the “believe” of verse 11 or, as suggested in the proposal depicted above, it may possibly be the companion of “repentance” of verse 12. This is discussed further below.

vv. 1 and 15) does appear elsewhere, in vv. 9 and 10. But it is not the word *commandment* alone that is relied upon to serve as an element of the overall chiasm proposed; rather, it is the *phrase* "according to the commandment[s]," repeated only twice, in vv. 1 and 15, that constitutes the language of the matching elements of the chiasm. It is the entire phrase "according to the commandment[s]" that is considered a key phrase for the chiasitic analysis. The phrase "according to the commandment[s]" appears nowhere else in the Book of Mormon, only in these two proposed elements of the overall chiasm of the book of Jarom.

Similarly, the word *kept* in the phrase *may be kept* (vv. 1, 15) is a word that also appears elsewhere, in v. 12, though there again it is not part of the full phrase *may be kept*. The rare phrase *may be kept* appears only in vv. 1 and 15. It appears only two other times in the Book of Mormon—in Alma 24:15, regarding swords that "may be kept" bright, and in 1 Nephi 19:5, regarding "the more sacred things" (the writings on the small plates of Nephi) that they "may be kept" (meaning recorded or preserved) for the knowledge of the Nephite people). The word *kept*, alone, is not considered a key word in this analysis; rather, it is the key phrase *may be kept*. Though in vv. 1 and 15 the phrase *may be kept* refers to "keeping and preserving the plates and what is engraven on the plates," the word *kept* in v. 12 refers to the avoidance of destruction of the Nephites, keeping them from destruction.

However, a maverick appearance of the entire key phrase *the face of the land* does apparently occur in v. 8a. Analysis of the proposed corresponding elements of the overall chiasm suggests that the text of vv. 3, 6, 10c, and 12a, which all employ the phrase *the face of the land*, do so as part of the overall thematic chiasm. The phrase *face of the land* in v. 8 is a maverick appearance of the phrase. (More on this apparent maverick is discussed below.)

The paired elements analyzed

The correspondences in the proposal set forth in tables 2 and 3 are evident in the rewritten format shown in those tables: A to A', B to B', etc., for the main elements, and a to a', b to b', etc. for the linguistic correspondences. The following discussion attempts further to elucidate the comparisons that can be seen in the major elements of the basic proposal set forth in table 2, which depicts the proposed basic chiasitic pattern of the book of Jarom with capital letters (A, B, C, etc.).

A and A' reflect Jarom's only two uses of his own name, once in A

(v. 1) and once in A' (v. 14). Whereas in A, he asks, "what could I *write more*?" (v. 2), in A' he remarks "I . . . do not *write more*" (v. 14). In both places he gives his reason for this: "these *plates are small*" (v. 2), "the *plates are small*" (v. 14). In A (v. 1), he states that he writes "according to the commandment of my father" that his genealogy "may be kept" and, in A' (v. 14), he states that he delivers the plates that they "may be kept" "according to the commandments of my fathers." His reference to *these plates* in v. 1 balances with his reference to *these plates* in v. 15. He addresses his remarks to the Lamanites, whom he refers to in v. 2 as *our brethren* and in v. 14 as *my brethren*. Instead of engraving on the small plates the things of his "prophesying" and "revelations" (v. 2), he directs his reader to something different—namely, the "records of our wars" engraven on the large plates (v. 14). In v. 2 he mentions what is "written" by the "fathers" and in v. 14 he mentions what is "written" by the "kings." Elements A and A' are indeed complementary:

A Now behold, **I, Jarom, write** a few **words according to the commandment of my father**, Enos, that our genealogy **may be kept**. (1) And as **these plates are small**, and as **these things are written** for the intent of the benefit of our **brethren** the Lamanites, wherefore, it must needs be that I **write** a little; but I shall not **write** the **things** of my prophesying, nor of my revelations. For what could I **write more** than my **fathers** have **written**? For have not they revealed the plan of salvation? I say unto you, Yea; and this sufficeth me. (2)

A' And **I, Jarom**, do not **write more**, for the **plates are small**. But behold, my **brethren**, ye can go to the other **plates** of Nephi; for behold, upon **them** the **records** of our wars are **engraven**, according to the **writings** of the kings, or those which they caused to be **written**. (14) And I deliver **these plates** into the hands of my son Omni, that they **may be kept according to the commandments of my fathers**. (15)

B and B' feature a bifurcated B' element with correspondences between elements B, B'(1), and B'(2). The B elements set forth Jarom's sole references to the phrase *their hearts* (see vv. 3 and 12), referring in both places to the hearts of the people of Nephi. In B, speaking of the Nephites, Jarom states that God in his mercy "has not as yet swept them off from the face of the land" (v. 3) and in B' Jarom notes that the prophets, priests, and teachers, by diligent exhortation, teaching, and persuasion, kept the people of Nephi "from being destroyed upon the face of the land" (v. 12). The reference in B (v. 4) to those many among the Nephites who have faith and have "communion with the Holy Spirit" is answered in B' (v. 12) by the reference to the prophets who continually have stirred the people up to repentance. The two sections seem, indeed, to be complementary to one another:

- B Behold, it is expedient that much should be done among this people, because of the hardness of **their hearts**, and the deafness of their ears, and the blindness of their minds, and the stiffness of their necks; nevertheless, God is exceedingly merciful unto them, and has not as yet **swept them off from the face of the land**. (3) And there are many among us **who have many revelations**, for they are not all stiffnecked. And as many as are not stiffnecked and **have faith**, have **communion with the Holy Spirit**, which maketh manifest unto the children of men, according to their **faith**. (4)
- B'(2) Wherefore, **the prophets, and the priests, and the teachers**, did **labor diligently**, exhorting with all long-suffering the **people** to diligence; (11a)
- B'(1) And it came to pass that by so doing they kept them from being **destroyed upon the face of the land**; for they did prick **their hearts** with the word, **continually stirring them up unto repentance**. (12)

C and C' share the only two time-related references in the text: "two hundred years had passed away" (v. 5a) and "two hundred and thirty and eight years had passed away" (v. 13).²⁷ Those elements contrast the conditions under which the Nephites were living in those two times: earlier "the people of Nephi had waxed strong in the land" (v. 5a) and later the people experienced "wars, and contentions, and dissensions, for the space of much of the time" (v. 13):

- C And now, behold, **two hundred years had passed away**, and the people of Nephi had **waxed strong in the land**. (5a)
- C' And it came to pass that **two hundred and thirty and eight years had passed away** — after the manner of **wars, and contentions, and dissensions**, for the space of much of the time. (13)

D and D' share the book's only two references to the law of Moses, in element D (v. 5b) and in element D' (v. 11). Whereas in the earlier time (element D, v. 5b) observance of the law of Moses is characterized by keeping the sabbath day holy, not profaning, and not blaspheming, in the later time (element D', v. 11) the deeper more profound observance of the law is found in learning the intent for which the law was given, to point the people unto the Messiah:

- D They observed to keep **the law of Moses** and the sabbath day holy unto the Lord. And they profaned not; neither did they blaspheme. And the laws of the land were exceedingly strict. (5b)
- D' teaching **the law of Moses**, and the intent for which it was given; persuading them to look forward unto the Messiah, and believe in him to

27. A strikingly similar chiastic correspondence of time references appears also in the chiasm of the book of Enos. See reference to that correspondence and detailing that feature of the proposed chiasm of that book in Ehat, *Book of Enos*, 3:11 to 3:50.

come as though he already was. And after this manner did they teach them. (11)

E and E' reflect the fate of the murderous Lamanites and the fate of the Nephites if they do not keep the commandments: scattering and destruction. In element E Jarom states that the Nephites “were scattered upon much of the face of the land” (v. 6) and in element E' he states that the threats of the prophets served as a warning that transgression would result in the people of Nephi being “destroyed from off the face of the land” (v. 10):

E And they were **scattered upon much of the face of the land**, and the Lamanites also. And they were exceedingly more numerous than were they of the Nephites; and they **loved murder and would drink the blood of beasts**. (6)

E' that if they did not **keep the commandments**, but should fall into transgression they should be **destroyed from off the face of the land**. (10c)

F and F' correspond. Whereas in F, Jarom says the Lamanites “came many times against us” (v. 7), in F' he states that “they did not prosper against us” (v. 9), the only two uses of the phrase *against us*. In F, Jarom mentions that the “ways of the Lord” were taught (v. 7) and in F' he states that the “word of the Lord” was verified (v. 9). In F Jarom indicates that the Nephites “withstood the Lamanites” who “did not prosper” against them (v. 7) and in F' he states the Nephites were “prepared to meet the Lamanites” (v. 9). The mention later in F' that the Nephites should *prosper in the land* (v. 9) correlates well with the earlier mention in F that the Nephites swept the Lamanites *out of our lands* (v. 7d). In F' the leaders “taught the people” (v. 7c) and in F the prophets did “threaten the people” (v. 10b):

F And it came to pass that they came many times **against us**, the Nephites, to battle. (7a) But our **kings** and our **leaders** were **mighty men in the faith of the Lord**; (7b) and they **taught the people** the **ways of the Lord** (7c); wherefore we **withstood the Lamanites** and swept them away **out of our lands**. (7d)

F' And thus being **prepared to meet the Lamanites**, they **did not prosper against us**. (9a) But the **word of the Lord was verified**, which he spake unto our fathers, saying that: (9b) Inasmuch as ye will keep my commandments ye shall **prosper in the land**. (9c) And it came to pass that the prophets of the Lord (10a) did **threaten the people** of Nephi, according to the word of God, (10b)

G and G' each enumerate forms of societal prosperity. In G the focus is on five forms of prosperity experienced by the people, in their cities and places of inheritance, in the favorable size of their population

and its dissemination in the land, and in the fact they are "exceedingly rich." In G' the focus is on five forms of weapons of war for societal protection — arrows, quivers, darts, javelins, and "all preparations for war":

G and [1] began to fortify our cities, or [2] whatsoever place of our inheritance. (7e) And [3] we multiplied exceedingly, and [4] spread upon the face of the land, and [5] became exceedingly rich (8a)

G' —yea, [1] the sharp pointed arrow, and [2] the quiver, and [3] the dart, and [4] the javelin, and [5] all preparations for war. (8d)

H and H' likewise each set forth significant enumerations. In H (v. 8b) Jarom identifies six forms of riches. First among them are gold, silver, precious things, and wood. Then he mentions two things made with those materials: buildings and machinery. Then, in H' he again mentions six forms of prosperity. First among them are iron, copper, brass, and steel, and then he mentions two things made with those materials: tools to till the ground and weapons of war. All eight of these forms of riches (natural and man-made) are mentioned also by Nephi (2 Nephi 5:15). This will be further discussed below under the topic of "distant chiasmus." John A. Tvedtnes discusses this enumeration as one of many examples he gives of "word groups" in the Book of Mormon.²⁸ Proposed elements H and H' are complementary to one another:

28. See John A. Tvedtnes, "Word Groups in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6, no. 2 (1997): 262–68, scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1179&context=jbms. At pp. 266–67 Tvedtnes states, "From its earliest pages, the Book of Mormon speaks of gold, silver, and precious things (see 1 Nephi 2:4, 11; 3:22, 24; Mosiah 19:15; 22:12; Alma 15:16; 17:14)—a list that is paralleled in several Bible passages (see 2 Kings 20:13; 2 Chronicles 21:3; Ezra 1:6; Isaiah 39:2; Daniel 11:38, 43). [Tvedtnes, at p. 267n11, states: "A variant—gold, silver, riches—is found in Mosiah 4:19."] Some passages expand the list to include such elements as wood, buildings, machinery, iron, copper, brass, steel, and ziff (see 2 Nephi 5:15–16; Jarom 1:8; Mosiah 11:8–10)."

In a letter to Tvedtnes, dated 24 March 1998, I referred to the enumeration of "iron and copper, and brass and steel" as a "metals word group" and the enumeration of the "sharp pointed arrow, and the quiver, and the dart, and the javelin" as a "weapons-of-war word group." The second purported group that I suggested to Tvedtnes might well be reflected in KJV Job 39:23 ("the quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield"); ASV Job 41:26 ("the sword . . . the spear, the dart, . . . the pointed shaft"); KJV Job 41:26 ("the sword . . . the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon [breastplate]"); 1 Samuel 17:45 ("with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin"); and Mormon 6:9 ("with the sword, and with the bow, and with the arrow, and with the axe").

H [1] in **gold**, and [2] in **silver**, and [3] in **precious things**, and [4] in **fine workmanship** of wood, [5] in buildings, and [6] in machinery . . . (8a)

H' and also in [1] **iron** and [2] **copper**, and [3] **brass** and [4] **steel**, making all manner of [5] tools of every kind to till the ground, and [6] weapons of war—yea, the sharp pointed **arrow**, and the **quiver**, and the **dart**, and the **javelin**, and all preparations for war. (8c)

Factors unifying the narrative

The book of Jarom is, in the end, a positive book, notwithstanding its concern both with the then-existing conditions of war and of ongoing preparations for war. In Jarom's earliest comments, he immediately shies away from telling of his prophesying and his revelations (v. 1). He speaks instead of the spiritual deafness and blindness and stiffneckedness of his people. Though he writes portentously of the fact that his people have "not as yet" been swept off the face of the land, nevertheless, by the end of his writing he continues to account for a people who have indeed at least been kept from destruction. He directs his readers to the other (large) plates of Nephi for an account of the wars of his people. Notwithstanding his is described as a time of conflict caused by the Lamanites coming against his people, it is also a time of a good measure of obedience among the Nephites, accompanied by prophetic warnings of potential destruction, warnings that apparently are welcomed and effective among the people. In v. 4 (preceding the central section), Jarom refers to those who "have many revelations," and in v. 11 (following the central section), he refers to "the prophets, and the priests, and the teachers" among the people. Righteousness largely exists among the Nephites in Jarom's day.

In v. 5 (preceding the central section), Jarom specifies that the people observed to keep the law of Moses, and in v. 11 he observes that not only was the law of Moses the object of the teaching by the prophets, priests, and teachers, but also that what was taught was "the intent for which it [the law] was given," namely, to point the people to the Messiah. This appears to be an entirely positive progression of mood, from the mere mention in the former verses that the law of Moses was observed and that the laws of the land were "exceedingly strict" (v. 5) to mention in the latter verses that instructions were given and accepted bearing on the spiritual reasons underlying such observance (v. 11).

Jarom clearly shows that obedience to the law of Moses prompted two results among the Nephites—the first outward or preparatory in nature (described in the first half of the book) and the second inward

and full (described in the second half of the book): (1) the law of Moses led the people to sabbath-day observance and an absence of profanity and blasphemy (v. 5), and yet even better than that, (2) it led them to a looking forward unto the Messiah and "a belief on him to come" "as though he already was" (v. 11). There appears a positive direction in the flow of the narrative, progressing from the first half to the second half.

The first half of the book introduces a need that is apparently fulfilled in the second half. In v. 3, Jarom indicates that it is expedient "that much should be done among this people"; in v. 12, Jarom reflects what needed to be (and was) done, namely, the preaching of the word to prick the hearts of the Nephites and to stir them up unto repentance. What is stated as a need in the first half of the book is reflected as accomplished actions in the latter half of the book. In the first half, the people of Nephi are reported to have not been destroyed from the face of the land and to have been scattered, even though they had waxed strong in the land (vv. 3, 5). In the latter half of the book, the fate of destruction from off the face of the land resulting from disobedience (v. 10) is averted by the preaching of the prophets (v. 12). This clearly is central to the flow of the narrative. Whereas, in the first half of the book, Jarom states that the "ways of the Lord" were *taught* (v. 7), in the corresponding element in the latter half of the book, he confirms that the "word of the Lord" was *verified* (v. 9) — what was promised earlier was fulfilled later.

Assessment in Light of Criteria for Evaluating the Presence and Quality of Chiasmus

Between 1942 and 2017 various scholars — namely, Nils W. Lund,²⁹ Paul Gaechter,³⁰ Joanna Dewey,³¹ David J. Clark,³² R. Alan Culpepper,³³

29. Nils Wilhelm Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in Formgeschichte* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942), 40–41.

30. Paul Gaechter, *Die Literarische Kunst im Mattheus-Evangelium [Literary Art in the Gospel of Matthew]* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1965), 1–82.

31. Joanna Dewey, "The Literary Structure of the Controversy Stories in Mark 2:1–3:6," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 92 (1973) 394–401; Joanna Dewey, *Markan Public Debate: Literary Technique, Concentric Structure, and Theology in Mark 2:1–3:6*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 48 (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1980), 131–36, 168–80.

32. David J. Clark, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm," *Linguistica Biblica* 5 (1975) 63–71.

33. R. Alan Culpepper, "The Pivot of John's Prologue," *New Testament Studies*

David Noel Freedman,³⁴ Wilfred G. E. Watson,³⁵ John W. Welch,³⁶ Craig Blomberg,³⁷ George Michael Butterworth,³⁸ John Breck,³⁹ Ian H. Thomsen,⁴⁰ Mark J. Boda,⁴¹ Bernard M. Levinson,⁴² Wayne Brouwer,⁴³ David P. Wright,⁴⁴ Steven R. Scott,⁴⁵ James E. Patrick,⁴⁶ and Jonathan Burnside⁴⁷—have identified or proposed various features,

27 (1981), 1–31.

34. David Noel Freedman, "Preface," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis*, ed. John W. Welch (Hildesheim, DE: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1981), 7–8.
35. Wilfred G. E. Watson, "Chiastic Patterns in Biblical Hebrew Poetry, in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 118–68.
36. John W. Welch, "Introduction," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 9–16; Welch, "Criteria for Identifying and Evaluating the Presence of Chiasmus," 1–14.
37. Craig Blomberg, "Structure of 2 Corinthians 1-7," *Criswell Theological Review* 4.1 (1989) 3–20, biblicalelearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Blomberg-2Cor1-7-CTR.pdf.
38. George Michael Butterworth, *Structure and the Book of Zechariah*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement 130 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992): 24–29.
39. John Breck, *The Shape of Biblical Language: Chiasmus in the Scriptures and Beyond* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1994), 335–41, archive.org/details/shapeofbiblical0000brec/page/334/mode/2up.
40. Ian H. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 26–27.
41. Mark J. Boda, "Chiasmus in Ubiquity: Symmetrical Mirages in Nehemiah 9," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 71 (September 1996): 55–69.
42. Bernard M. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1–205.
43. Wayne Brouwer, "The Literary Development of John 13-17: A Chiastic Reading" (PhD diss., McMaster University, 1999), macsphere.mcmaster.ca/bitstream/11375/6598/1/fulltext.pdf; Wayne Brouwer, *The Literary Development of John 13–17: A Chiastic Reading*, Society of Biblical Literature, Dissertation Series 182 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 78–108.
44. David P. Wright, "The Fallacies of Chiasmus: A Critique of Structural Proposed for the Covenant Collection (Exodus 20:23–23:19)," *Zeitschrift fur Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 10 (2004): 165–68.
45. Steven R. Scott, "Raising the Dead: Finding History in the Gospel Accounts of Jesus's Resurrection Miracles" (PhD thesis, University of Ottawa, 2010), 59–62.
46. James E. Patrick, "The Prophetic Structure of 1–2 Samuel" (PhD thesis, Mansfield College, University of Oxford, 2016): 89, 237, ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:309e6831-242b-40c9-9271-360dd4bec2d0/files/mfacdd8ae2618d9d7e73689d30d355e12.
47. Jonathan Burnside, "Exegesis or Eisegesis: Does Chiastic Analysis Help Us to Understand Leviticus 20?," *BYU Studies* 59, supplement (2020): 67–84, website-files-bucket.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/articles/article_pdfs/Exegesis_or_Eisegesis.pdf.

characteristics, or rules that would have guided authors in ancient days in composing chiastic or concentric texts, and supplied guidance for us in our day in evaluating, analyzing, and proving the existence or quality of chiastic or concentric structures in scriptural and other texts.⁴⁸

I here will assess the book of Jarom and the proposed overall, chapter-length chiasm in light of the criteria advanced by Welch.⁴⁹ They are defined and discussed in the sections that follow, namely, the criteria of objectivity, purpose, boundaries, competition with other forms, length, density, dominance, mavericks, reduplication, centrality, balance, climax, return, stylistic compatibility, aesthetics, and intentionality.

A. Objectivity

The book of Jarom seems to be shaped by conceptual elements forming the first and second halves of the text (A B C D E F G H H' G' F' E' **B' D' B' C'** A'). When the full text is analyzed in some detail, the first half seems to reveal fourteen matching elements based on words and phrases (a to w) and the second half on fourteen more (w' to a'). In these sections appear a number of key words and key phrases that complement one another in the correlative sections of the proposed chiasm of the book, mostly by way of synonymy or perfect identity and sometimes by way of contrast or antithesis. The number of parallel correspondences found in the text itself would militate against a conclusion that the parallels are contrived by the modern analyst-reader.

B. Purpose

Jarom clearly desires to tell of the struggles between his people and the Lamanites, and he clearly desires to do so *without* telling of his own prophecies and revelations. He clearly portrays a portentous mood, notwithstanding his people survive the thirty-eight or more years about which he writes. Though the people are saved both by obedience to the prophecies of the prophets and by enjoyment of the

48. For a full discussion of the views of those who have written about chiasmus criteria, see Stephen Kent Ehat, "Chiasmus Criteria and Characteristics as Proposed by Various Scholars" (unpublished manuscript, 2023), archive.bookofmormoncentral.org/sites/default/files/archive-files/pdf/ehat/2023-10-19/chiasmus_criteria_and_characteristics_as_proposed_by_various_scholars.pdf.

49. Welch, "Introduction," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 9–16; Welch, "Criteria for Identifying and Evaluating the Presence of Chiasmus," 1–14.

rich blessings of the Lord, they seem to be flirting with disaster, with destruction somehow just over the horizon. Christ — and the law of Moses that directs their attention to Christ — seem, as it were, only as central to their experience as the wars, contentions, and dissensions that surround them. Jarom states that he is satisfied with what *others* (his fathers) have written concerning the plan of salvation; hence, one should expect his central focus to be elsewhere. Absent from the posited chiasmic pattern is a central reference to Christ, which otherwise is typical in, though not necessarily essential to, confirmation of the existence of a chiasmic pattern.⁵⁰ Perhaps that absence aids in conveying the sense of foreboding implicit in the text. And Jarom seems to put his focus where it suits his purpose, which appears to be dictated by a desire to elucidate that societal preservation was enhanced for the Nephites not only through constructive uses of the blessings of the Lord but also preparations for the defense of their society with weapons of war. The people would prosper, spiritually and physically, only through obedience to the commandments of God. The blessings of obedience included material blessings through what they could build, manufacture, or make, though unlike in Nephi's day, their efforts at building did not include the building of any new temple.

C. Boundaries

Jarom's book is one complete unit in itself. It is set apart as a separate book in the Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon and in all printed editions. The references to Jarom's father (1:1) and to his son (1:15; Omni 1:1), together with disposition of the plates from respective fathers to sons, clearly establish the boundaries of the book.

D. Competition with other forms

No competing rhetorical structure appears to manifest itself in the text of the book of Jarom. Chiasmus alone seems to be the only device by which the book shows structure.

E. Length

As stated earlier, the first half of the book apparently reveals numerous key-word/key-phrase elements preceding and numerous matching

50. See the discussion of Christ-centered, God-centered, Jehovah-centered chiasmus at pages 271–273 in Ehat, “Centered on Christ.” Here the references to Christ the Lord (in elements F and F') surround the central chiasmic elements (elements G, H, H', and G', as will be noted below under “centrality”).

elements following its middle. In these sections appear a number of key words and key phrases repeated in the two halves of the book in roughly reverse order from the order in which they are stated in the first half. With a detailed chiasmic pattern made up of about twenty-three such elements (a to w and w' to a'), the length of the system seems wholly satisfactory to qualify it as significant.

F. Density

According to my count of the printed words,⁵¹ the book of Jarom comprises 733 words.⁵² Although this is merely an estimate, looking solely at the key words and key phrases placed in **bold font** in the above "Paired Elements Analyzed" discussion, the first half of the book (before the word *machinery*), comprises 101 key words and words in key phrases, and the second half of the book, about 100 such words. These 201 key words and words within key phrases appears to be an entirely acceptable density factor, with about 28% of the words ($201 \div 706 = 0.2847$), thus serving the role of key words or words within key phrases.

G. Dominance

The words serving as key words or as words in key phrases are dominant ones. They are listed in the chart set forth in the following section.

H. Mavericks

Table 4 shows the dominant words and phrases that it is proposed give structure to the book of Jarom, the respective proposed elements in which they appear, and the instances in which they appear elsewhere outside those respective elements.

Table 4 confirms the relative rarity of maverick appearances of the key words and phrases that otherwise are proposed to give structure to the book. The occurrences of some of the mavericks are amenable to reasonable explanation. For example, the maverick appearance of *commandments* in D and C'(2) (vv. 9 and 10) refers to the *keeping*

51. Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022) 183–85.

52. The Printer's Manuscript sets forth 739 words (counting "long suffering" as two words, which Skousen hyphenates and I count as one word); the 1830 edition sets forth 735 words, the 1837 and subsequent editions each set forth 734 words in the text of the book of Jarom. The 1981 edition sets forth 731 words. For simplicity's sake, I use Skousen's text for the word count discussed here.

of the commandments of God, in contradistinction to the two corresponding, parallel, non-maverick appearances of *commandment* in the phrase “according to the commandment[s]” of my “father[s],” referring to Jarom acting “according to the commandment” of his father (v. 1) and acting “according to the commandments” of Jarom’s fathers (v. 15), elements A and A’.

Table 4. Key elements of the book of Jarom.

| Key Words and Phrases | Related Sections where They Appear | Maverick Appearances |
|---|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Jarom | A, A’ | |
| according to the commandment(s) of my father(s) | A, A’ | |
| commandments [of God] | | F, E’ |
| may be kept | A, A’ | |
| kept | | H’ (not a maverick) |
| plates are small | A, A’ | |
| our brethren/my brethren | A, A’ | |
| write/engraven | A, A’ | |
| write more | A, A’ | |
| their hearts | B, B’(1) | |
| the face of the land | B, B’; C(2), C’(2) | G (a maverick) |
| destroyed/scattered/swept | B, B’; C(2), C’(2) | E |
| hundred . . . years had passed away | C(1), C’(1) | |
| Law of Moses | C(1), C’(1) | |
| people of Nephi/Nephites | C(1), C’(1) | D |
| came to pass | – | D, C’(2), B’, C’(1) |
| Lord | C(2), C’(2); D, D’ | |
| ways of the Lord/word of the Lord | D, D’ | |
| Lamanites | D, D’ | A, C(2) |
| meet/withstood | D, D’ | |

Similarly, though on the one hand, uses of the word *Nephites* in C(2) and D (vv. 6 and 7) and the phrase *people of Nephi* in C’(2) (v. 10) both denote the *people of Nephi*, the apparent maverick appearance of the word *Nephi* in A’ (v. 14) forms part of a reference to the *plates of Nephi*, which is the meaning of the phrase *these plates* in element A

(v. 1), even without use of the word *Nephi* to describe them. Thus, only the appearance of *Nephites* in D is a maverick.

Though in elements A and A' (vv. 1 and 15) use of the word *kept* in the phrase *may be kept* denotes *retained* or *preserved*—the genealogy is to be *kept* and the plates are to be *kept*—in element H' (v. 12), the word *kept* there makes a maverick appearance but only in the sense of the word *kept* having the meaning of *protected* or *guarded*—the prophets, priests, and teachers protected (kept or guarded) the Nephites from destruction.

Though the phrase *it came to pass* seems to be employed irregularly (more commonly in the second half of the text), its functionally equal companions are used quite regularly otherwise and, importantly, each and all as opening phrases for each of the elements of the proposed multi-part thematic chiasm. As noted above, those companion phrases are "Now behold . . ." (v. 1); "Behold" (v. 3); "And now behold" (v. 5); "And it came to pass" (v. 7); "And it came to pass" (v. 10); "And it came to pass" (v. 12); and "And it came to pass" (v. 13).

I. Reduplication

Random repetition of words is not prevalent in the book of Jarom. Except for the non-significant words *and*, *are*, *as*, *be*, *did*, *for*, *I*, *in*, *it*, *my*, *not*, *of*, *our*, *that*, *the*, *their*, *them* (not referring to the large plates of Nephi), *they*, *to*, and *unto*, and except only for the significant word *land*, no word appears more than five times in the entire book. The repetition of words in the book of Jarom is summarized in table 5.

Table 5. Word repetition in the book of Jarom.

| Description | Number |
|--|-------------------|
| Words appearing once in the book | 163 ⁵³ |
| Words appearing twice in the book | 41 |
| Words appearing three times in the book | 23 |
| Words appearing four times in the book | 7 |
| Words appearing five times in the book | 11 |
| Words appearing more than five times in the book | 19 |

53. The number increases to 164 when "long suffering" (two words, as it appeared in the Printer's Manuscript and the 1830 Edition) is counted as two words (instead of the hyphenated "long-suffering" of v. 11 of the 1981 Edition). Skousen hyphenates it as "long-suffering."

This data corroborates the assertion that random repetition does not account for the chiasmic structure of the text.

J. Centrality

The central message of the book seems to stand out because of a stark contrast appearing at its center. As Lehi had said before him in both positive and negative terms—“Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land; but inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from my presence” (2 Nephi 1:20)—and as his grandson, Amaron, would later say in negative terms—“Inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall not prosper in the land” (Omni 1:6)—Jarom reveals that the prosperity granted by the Lord due to righteous obedience embraces not solely material prosperity to aid in overcoming the physical and spiritual enemies of poverty and despair (Jarom 4–8a), but also material prosperity to repel the spiritual and physical enemies of war and destruction (vv. 8b–13). The book neatly balances around v. 8. Although the book does not employ a feature of many extended chiasmic structures, that of placing a reference to Christ at the crossover point, the center of the book nonetheless manifests a repetition that draws attention to a focus of the text. In E (v. 8b) the precious metals (gold and silver) and the precious things and wood subject to the Nephites’ workmanship are paired with the more common metals of “iron and copper, and brass and steel” (v. 8b) and they, in turn, are accompanied by the four weapons of war also subject of the Nephites’ workmanship—“the sharp pointed arrow, and the quiver, and the dart, and the javelin” (v. 8c). At the center is the reminder that obedience brings blessings that enrich physically and also provide physical means for defense.

It should be noted importantly that the elements of the chiasm as here proposed draw attention to chiasmically arranged references to Christ that *envelop* the chiasmic center, forming a **p-s-t || t'-s'-t'-p'** chiasm *surrounding* the central verses (vv. 7e–8d):

- p keep the law of Moses and the sabbath day holy **unto the Lord** (5b)
- s But our kings and our leaders were mighty men in the faith of **the Lord** (7b)
- t and they taught the people the **ways of the Lord** (7c)
- Chiastic center (vv. 7e–8d)
- t'1 But the **word of the Lord** was verified (9c)
- s' the prophets of **the Lord** (10a)
- t'2 according to the **word of God** (10b)
- p' persuading them to look forward **unto the Messiah** (11b)

K. Balance

The book of Jarom manifests balance when one counts the number of words from the conceptual center of the text back to the beginning and from that conceptual center to the end. All texts, of course, have a physical middle point. But when the conceptual center closely coincides with the physical center, a certain measure of balance can be said to exist. In the above full-text proposed chiasm for the book of Jarom the *conceptual* middle of the text is identified as the point between the word *machinery* and the word *and* in v. 8. The following calculation is useful in noting the measure of balance between the two flanks of the proposed chapter-long chiasm. Using Skousen as a guide,⁵⁴ the count of the total number of words in the chapter is 733 words and the count from the beginning of the chapter through the mid-point shift in the book (the conceptual center) — between the word *machinery* and the next word *and* (v. 8) — is 394 words (53.75% of the chapter's text). The number of words from that mid-point shift through the word *fathers*, the last word of the book, is 339 (46.25% of the text). Though word count balance is not determinative of the presence of a chiasmic pattern, it is a characteristic that often presents itself in balanced chiasms.⁵⁵

L. Climax

The phrase *not as yet* (v. 3) sets up an anticipatory mood: Jarom gives his reader grounds to immediately suppose that the Nephites are headed for destruction, for he reports that God "has not as yet swept them off from the face of the land" (v. 3). Although his description of the Nephite people as a whole bluntly speaks of their hard hearts, deaf

54. Skousen, *Earliest Text*, 183–85.

55. For example, renowned biblical scholar David Noel Freedman notes that the Primary History in the Hebrew Bible accounts for 49% of its words, and the remainder for 51% of its words. David Noel Freedman, "The Undiscovered Symmetry of the Bible," *Bible Review*, 10, no. 1 (February 1994): 34–41. David Noel Freedman also notes the 150,000 words of the Torah/Pentateuch (80,000 words) plus the "former prophets" (70,000 words) and the 150,000 words of the "latter prophets" (72,000 words) and the "writings" (78,000 words), stating "the correspondences among the major segments are so close, and the symmetry so exact, that it is difficult to imagine that these are the result of happenstance." Freedman, *The Unity of the Hebrew Bible* (Distinguished Senior Faculty Lecture Series, March 1988, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor), 79–80. See also Yehuda T. Radday, "Chiasmus in Hebrew Biblical Narrative," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 86–87 (mentioning the word-counts in various groups of chapters in the book of Deuteronomy).

ears, blind minds, and stiff necks (v. 3), at least he also says that “many” among them “have many revelations” and some number of them are not stiffnecked, are faithful, and enjoy communion with the Holy Spirit (v. 4). Not having been swept off from the face of the land (v.3), they, like the more numerous, warring Lamanites, are nonetheless “scattered upon much of the face of the land” (v. 6). Jarom does not at first tell — when the Lamanites come against them to battle (v. 7) — how the Nephites are to survive, if at all. He mentions that in the hardness of their hearts and in their scattered condition, they have some number of faithful among them (v. 4), that they as a people “observed to keep the law of Moses and the sabbath day holy unto the Lord,” neither profaning nor blaspheming (v. 5), and that their leaders “were mighty men in the faith of the Lord” who “taught the people the ways of the Lord” (v. 7). But just before the climax, Jarom expressly connects righteousness with societal preservation, stating, “Wherefore, we withstood the Lamanites and swept them away out of our lands” (v. 7). The *wherefore* establishes the causal relationship between righteous living and societal preservation. Then, in a climactic juxtaposition, Jarom enumerates, on the one hand, the ingredients of their God-given material wealth, both natural and manufactured, enjoyed in an exceedingly rich lifestyle (v. 8a), and, on the other hand, the articles they manufacture from those God-given materials, used for societal defense (v. 8b). In their righteousness, not only would the blessings of the Lord enrich them and enable them to make “all manner of tools to till the ground” but also to make “weapons of war . . . and all preparations for war” (v. 8).

M. Return

The second half of the book returns to the first half in numerous ways. The mention of those who “have many revelations” (v. 4) presages the listing of the “prophets, and the priests, and the teachers” (v. 11). The mention that the people observed to keep the law of Moses (v. 5) finds answer where Jarom observes that the prophets, priests and teachers even taught “the intent for which it [the law of Moses] was given” (v. 11). The hardness of hearts, deafness of ears, and blindness of minds (v. 3) in the first half of the book is resolved by mention in the second half of the book of the successful efforts of the prophets in stirring the people up to repentance (v. 11). Jarom’s report of his receipt of the plates from his father Enos (v. 1) naturally anticipates mention of his delivery of the plates to his own son, Omni (v. 15). And of course, the latter half of the book answers what is anticipated in the former

half concerning potential destruction: the early remark that God "has *not as yet* swept them off from the face of the land" (v. 3) is happily balanced against mention that the prophets had indeed "kept them from being destroyed upon the face of the land" (v. 12). Although in the first half of his book Jarom describes the Nephite people, as a whole, as hard hearted, spiritually deaf, mentally blind, and stiffnecked (v. 3), in the latter half of the book he mentions their pricked hearts and repentant souls (v. 12). They as a people, though subject to the attacks made on their society, were able to survive, and Jarom leaves no doubt what it is that accounts for their survival: the prophets taught and threatened, the people listened, the Lord blessed, and the people used their blessings not only to enrich their surroundings but also to be prepared to defend themselves in war. In the *dénouement* (vv. 12–13) Jarom returns the reader to the place whence taken by the story's complication (v. 3).

N. Stylistic compatibility

Jarom appears to have written only what we presently have as the book of Jarom; his writing does not appear to be *quoted* by any later prophet⁵⁶ nor do his teachings appear to be *mimicked* by later writings. There seems to be no opportunity to evaluate whether the chiasmic formulation for the book of Jarom is consistent or inconsistent with any other writings he himself may have produced. His writing does correlate with Nephi's earlier writing in one respect (discussed below under the heading "Distant Chiasmus"). And his writings were influential. Says Welch, "The book of Jarom, we now can see, was more influential on king Benjamin than we have previously noticed, and, moreover, the writing style of Benjamin was, in turn, very influential on Alma the Younger."⁵⁷ From this insight, one can glean that king Benjamin's teachings and Jarom's writings are comparable. Jarom notes that the Nephites "observed to keep the law of Moses" (Jarom 1:5) and Mormon notes that in preparation for hearing the speech by king Benjamin, Mosiah's proclamation brought the people "to the temple to hear the

56. Later, Mormon does mention that in the first year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi, the people enjoyed "an abundance of flocks and herds, and fatlings of every kind, and also abundance of grain, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious things, and abundance of silk and fine-twined linen, and all manner of good homely cloth," all "because of the steadiness of the church," which made them "exceedingly rich" (Alma 1:29).

57. Welch, email to Steven Harper, 29 September 2024, copy shared with Ehat on 30 September 2024.

words which king Benjamin should speak” and they offered “sacrifice and burnt offerings according to the law of Moses” (Mosiah 2:3; see also Alma 30:3). Most impressive is Jarom’s point about believing in the Messiah “to come as though he already was” (Jarom 1:11), for, importantly, king Benjamin says that “whosoever should believe that Christ should come, the same might receive remission of their sins, and rejoice with exceedingly great joy, even as though he had already come among them” (Mosiah 3:13). And of course Alma, too, heard Abinadi’s teaching on this very point—that “the time shall come when all shall see the salvation of the Lord” (Mosiah 16:1) and that “if Christ had not come into the world, speaking of things to come as though they had already come, there could have been no redemption” (Mosiah 16:6)—and Alma believed (Mosiah 17, etc.). In all of this, any chiasmic style later modeled on Jarom’s book may have been modeled by others but not by Jarom himself. He apparently authored, on these plates, only this one book of Jarom.

O. Aesthetics

The rising action and falling action of the book, the climax in the middle, the disposition of the plates at the beginning and at the end, all combine to provide a neat, well-crafted unit. The turning point of the text provides a pleasing emphasis on the nature of the blessings given by a God who watches after obedient children. The book performs well the function of teaching that societal preservation requires not only obedience to God with the resulting rich blessings of the Lord attendant thereto, but also the creative efforts of those who are so blessed to take charge of their defense and efforts in self-protection. The use of the chiasmic form appears to have aided the presentation of this message, doing so in a fitting way.

P. Intentionality

The criteria for confirming the chiasmic nature of the text and evaluating the quality of the chiasmic pattern seem to militate in favor of the conclusion that Jarom did not write a haphazard account. The repetitions seem to be balanced between the respective halves of the book. The building blocks for understanding his message are available in the first half of the book; but what is anticipated in the first half is not brought to fruition except by the text found in the second half. It seems that Jarom modeled his entire text in a way to make the two halves purposefully repeat one another in reversed sequence and to draw attention to the

role that righteousness and God-given blessings play in the security of a society, the theme at the center, of societal preservation prompted by good use of the blessings of the Lord in response to righteousness.

Distant Chiasmus

One other feature of chiasmus that may reinforce the importance of Jarom's central message is that of *distant chiasmus*. At the center of the book of Jarom is one of what appears to be two flanks of a distant chiasm. A distant chiasm exists where the two halves of the chiasmus are far removed from each other in separate texts. Such distant inversions appearing in a second text are sometimes said to conform to what has come to be called *Seidel's law* when they involve "inverted quotations" and "inverted citations."⁵⁸ The existence of distant chiasmus in two texts, one of them being a text by Nephi and the other a text by Jarom may suggest a further measure of intentionality in Jarom's use of chiasmus as well as an increased level of meaningfulness of the central message he apparently seeks to convey. Distant chiasmus is discussed by a number of scholars of chiasmus, including Yehuda T. Radday,⁵⁹ Kieran J. O'Mahony,⁶⁰ Nachman Levine,⁶¹ and Shemaryahu Talmon.⁶² It is manifested by Bernard M.

58. See, for example, Donald W. Parry, "Preserved in Translation," in *Hebrew and Other Ancient Literary Forms in the Book of Mormon*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2020), 89–92, rsc.byu.edu/preserved-translation/inverted-quotations#:~:text=A%20little-known%20Hebrew%20literary%20technique%20was%20first%20identified,This%20observation%20came%20to%20be%20called%20Seidel%E2%80%99s%20law. See also David Bokovoy and John A. Tvedtnes, "Seidel's Law," in *Testaments: Links between the Book of Mormon and the Hebrew Bible* (Tooele, UT: Heritage Press, 2003), archive.bookofmormoncentral.org/sites/default/files/archive-files/pdf/bokovoy/2016-08-29/10_seidels_law.pdf.

59. Radday, "Chiasmus," 103B104.

60. Kieran J. O'Mahony, *Pauline Persuasion: A Sounding in 2 Corinthians 8–9* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 94.

61. Nachman Levine, "The Curse and the Blessing: Narrative Discourse Syntax and Literary Form," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 27, no. 2 (2002): 189–99 (see his pages 196–99 and 196n11 where he refers to "a very distant chiasm" between Genesis 3 and Deuteronomy 33).

62. Shemaryahu Talmon, "Yqtol-Qtl Pattern: The Presentation of Synchronicity and Simultaneity in Biblical Narrative," *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 27 (1978): 9–26. See page 12 where he refers to "distant parallels" and "chiastic parallelism" and page 20, for example, where he identifies "distant parallels" in 1 Samuel 18:20 and 28.

Levinson, Professor of Classical and Near Eastern Studies and of Law at the University of Minnesota, where he holds the Berman Family Chair in Jewish Studies and Hebrew Bible. He shows,⁶³ for example, that a distant chiasm exists between a legal passage in the book of Deuteronomy and its “reuse” or its quotation in the book of Ezekiel:

- A Fathers shall not be put to death on account of sons
 B nor sons be put to death on account of fathers;
 C each shall (only) be put to death for his own offence.
 (Deuteronomy 24:16)

* * * *

- C' The person who sins, (only) he shall die;
 B' a son shall not bear the iniquity of the father,
 A' nor shall the father bear the iniquity of the son.
 (Ezekiel 18:20)

O'Mahony identifies a distant chiasm formed within the inclusio of 2 Corinthians 8:1–2 and 9:11–14 (transliteration here given in the footnote⁶⁴):

- | | | |
|-------------|--|----|
| 2 Cor. 8:1 | τῇ χάριν τοῦ Θεοῦ | A |
| 2 Cor. 8:2 | εἰς τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἀπλότητος αὐτῶ | B |
| 2 Cor. 9:11 | ἐν παντί πλουτιζόμενοι εἰς πᾶσαι ἀπλότητα, | B' |
| 2 Cor. 9:14 | διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαι χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐφ' ὑμῖν. | A' |

Radday notes “an interesting detail concerning Jacob which we may call ‘distant chiasm.’”⁶⁵ His explanation is this:

The account first states that when Joseph was sold he was seventeen years of age (37:2). In view of the undisputedly concise style of Genesis this is a surprising piece of specific information. Moreover, it is superfluous, because we are also told in the same verse that he was “a lad.” As we are not informed of Isaac’s age when he was to be sacrificed, why then need we know how old Joseph was when he was sold? Now we read that Jacob’s age was one hundred and thirty years when he came to Egypt (47:9) and that “he lived

63. Bernard M. Levinson, “‘You Must Not Add Anything to What I Command You’: Paradoxes of Canon and Authorship in Ancient Israel,” *Numen: International Review for the History of Religions* 50 (2003): 1–51 (see his depiction at page 34).

64. A the **grace of God**

B into the riches the generosity of them

B' in every [way] enriching you to all generosity

A' on account of the surpassing **grace of God** upon you

65. Radday, “Chiasmus,” 103–4.

in the land of Egypt seventeen years" (47:28). The expression "lived" (*wayehi*) may sound natural enough in English, but is most unusual in Hebrew where one would expect "dwelt" (*wayešeb*, see e.g. 37:1). The word should therefore be understood in the light of 45:27 which says that when he heard that Joseph was still alive, "the spirit of . . . Jacob lived" (*watehi*), [RSV; revived]). "To live" means here (as in 12:13 and also in II Kings 13:21, Job 42:16 and a number of other cases) to lead not an ordinary life but a full and joyous one. We now begin to see the significance of the twice repeated seventeen years (37:2, 47:28): Jacob "lived" only with Joseph at his side, which happened during the first seventeen years of Joseph's and during the last seventeen years of his own lifetime. The two passages refer to each other and enclose Jacob's old age within two periods of equal length—concentrically, symmetrically and, in a simple sense, chiasmically.⁶⁶

Robert F. Smith notes⁶⁷ that a distant chiasm is formed by the text of 1 Nephi 2:9–10 ("river . . . righteousness . . . commandments") and the distant text of 1 Nephi 20:18 ("commandments . . . river . . . righteousness"). If valid as a parallel, this perhaps would be a skewed instance of what Yehuda T. Radday and others refer to as a distant chiasm, in this case a-b-c-c-a-b (instead of a-b-c-c-b-a).

Rabbi David Fohrman proposes a distant chiasmus between Genesis 28:13–22 (the first half of the rewriting below) and Deuteronomy 14:22–29 (the second half of the rewriting below).⁶⁸

- A "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, **to thee will I give it**, and to thy seed" (Genesis 28:13)
- B "And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be **blessed**. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and **will bring thee again into this land**; for **I will not leave thee**, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." (Genesis 28:14–15)

66. Radday, "Chiasmus," 103–4.

67. Robert F. Smith, email to author, 19 September 2022.

68. Rabbi David Fohrman, *What Did Jacob's Dream Mean? Part 1, Jacob's Ladder and the Laws of Ma'aser*, (AlephBeta, no date), archived live webinar, available behind paywall at alephbeta.org/video/jacobs-dream/jacobs-ladder-and-the-laws-of-maaser-webinar.

- C "this is the **gate** of heaven" (Genesis 28: 17b)
- D "And he called the **name** of that **place** Beth-el: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first." (Genesis 28:19)
- E "give me bread to **eat**" (Genesis 28:20)
 - F "And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give **the tenth** unto thee" (Genesis 28:22)
 - F' "Thou shalt truly **tithe** all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year." (Deuteronomy 14:22)
 - E' "And thou shalt **eat** before the Lord thy God" (Deuteronomy 14:23a)
 - D' "in the **place** which he shall choose to place his **name** there" (Deuteronomy 14:23b)
- B' "And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the Lord thy God hath **blessed** thee: Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, **and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose**. And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household, And the Levite that is within thy **gates; thou shalt not forsake him**; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee" (Deuteronomy 14:24–27)
- C' "At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy **gates**" (Deuteronomy 14:28)
- A' "the Levite, (because **he hath no part nor inheritance with thee**), and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied" (Deuteronomy 14:29)

Numerous distant chiasms in the New Testament gospel of Mark are analyzed by M. Phillip Scott.⁶⁹

The above examples of Seidel's law exemplify the inverted quotation of *words* and *phrases* in texts distant from one another. A related manifestation of Seidel's law is what is called "extended inverted allusion" or simply what could be termed "distant conceptual chiasmus." To introduce a differentiation between Seidel's law as applied to *words* and *phrases* and the law as applied to *concepts* and *ideas*, Pancratius Beentjes coined the term "inverted quotation" to refer to Seidel's law. In coining that phrase, Beentjes limited the use of the

69. M. Phillip Scott, "Chiastic Structure: A Key to the Interpretation of Mark's Gospel," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 15 (January 1985): 17–26, contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/collection/p15999coll24/id/37461.

term to the inversion of word-pairs, cola, and phrases.⁷⁰ Building on that notion, Jason Robert Combs states that "some authors extended their employment of inverted quotation to include lengthier excerpts and even entire plot lines." Combs calls this phenomenon "extended inverted allusion."⁷¹

Combs cites Holly J. Carey⁷² and both Combs and Carey note the extended inverted allusions found in Mark 15, alluding to text found in LXX Psalm 21 (Psalm 22). Carey identifies as a "faint allusion" the use of Psalm 22:27 in Mark 15:39 "because," as Combs states, "the parallel is only conceptual—there are *no direct verbal parallels* between Mark 15.39 and Ps 22.27 as there are between the other passages of Mark 15 and Ps 22."⁷³

The A-B-C-C'-B'-A' distant or extended chiasm that I propose for texts of Nephi and Jarom is based on the texts of 2 Nephi 5:14–15 and Jarom 1:8b–8c, as set forth below. The elements of those two texts constitute what I view as an instance of Seidel's law as applied to concepts, ideas, or themes (left column in table 6) and also in distant reversal in the sequence of repeated phrases and word groups (right column in table 6). Because the metals and other materials in Jarom 1:8b (third row in table 6) indeed are *verbally* parallel with 2 Nephi 5:15 (second row in table 6) but are *not inverted in their repetition*, "extended allusion" or "extended citation" may be the appropriate label for that correspondence. Carey's adjective *faint* likely does not apply, and "extended inverted allusion," as Combs uses the term, clearly does not apply. But Carey's term "faint allusion" likely *would indeed be* properly used to describe the correspondence between the "many swords" of 2 Nephi 5:14 (first row in table 6) and the specifically identified weapons of Jarom 1:8c (fifth row in table 6). The relationship between 2 Nephi 5:14 and Jarom 1:8c is only conceptual, while the

70. P. C. Beentjes, "Inverted Quotations in the Bible: A Neglected Stylistic Pattern," *Biblica*, 63, no. 4 (1982): 506–523.

71. Jason Robert Combs, "An Extended Inverted Allusion to Psalm 22 in Mark 15: Reading Reversal in the Markan Passion," *New Testament Studies* 70, no. 1 (2024): 23–37, doi.org/10.1017/S0028688523000346. At page 28 Combs states, "For Beentjes, 'inverted quotation' was limited to the inversion of word-pairs, cola, or phrases."

72. Combs, "Extended Inverted Allusion," footnotes 2, 6–10, 55, and 59. Citing Holly J. Carey, *Jesus' Cry from the Cross: Towards a First-Century understanding of the Intertextual Relationship Between Psalm 22 and the Narrative of Mark's Gospel* (Library of New Testament Studies 398; London: T&T Clark, 2009).

73. Combs, "Extended Inverted Allusion," 24–25, emphasis added.

relationship between 2 Nephi 5:15 and Jarom 1:8b is verbal. Thus, the chiasmic correspondence may be viewed as a hybrid of both extended allusion (the A-B-C-C'-B'-A' chiasm of the left column in table 6) and extended citation (the metals mentioned in the verbiage of elements B and B', in the right column in table 6).

Table 6. The “distant chiasm” for the central elements of the chiasm of the book of Jarom derives from an A-B-C-C'-B'-A' relationship between the text of 2 Nephi 5:14–15 and the text of Jarom 1:8b–c.

| | |
|--|---|
| A Make Weapons of War | And I, Nephi, did take the sword of Laban, and after the manner of it did make many swords , lest by any means the people who were now called Lamanites should come upon us and destroy us ; for I knew their hatred towards me and my children and those who were called my people. (2 Nephi 5:14) |
| B Workings in Base Materials | And I did teach the people to build buildings , and to work in all manner of wood , and of iron , and of copper , and of brass , and of steel (2 Nephi 5:15a) |
| C' Workings in Precious Materials | And we . . . became exceedingly rich in gold , and in silver , and in precious things (Jarom 1:8a) |
| B' Workings in Base Materials | and in fine workmanship of wood , in buildings , and in machinery, and also in iron and copper , and brass and steel , making all manner of tools of every kind to till the ground (Jarom 1:8b) |
| A' Make Weapons of War | and weapons of war — yea, the sharp pointed arrow, and the quiver, and the dart, and the javelin, and all preparations for war . (Jarom 1:8c) |

Chiasmus relating to weapons of war is not unheard of. At the Chiasmus Jubilee held in September 2017 at Brigham Young University, Kerry Hull, PhD in Linguistic Anthropology and Professor in the department of Ancient Scripture at BYU, drew upon his studies in Maya linguistics and anthropology, Polynesian linguistics, historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, and Maya epigraphic studies to comment on a chiasmus in the *Annals of the Kaqchikels*, composed in Kaqchikel Mayan between 1571 and 1604.⁷⁴

74. In support of this comment (and in a visual he depicted during the conference), Hull cites Judith M. Maxwell and Robert M. Hill II, trans., *Kaqchikel Chronicles* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006) 21.

Ja ruma ri' xtiwīqaj re':
 settesik che',
 q'i'om aj;
 ch'a',
 pokob'
 k'uk'um,
 sajkab'

Therefore, you will bear these:
 rounded wood,
 straight cane;
 arrows,
 shields;
 bright feathers,
 white clay.

The A-B-B-A chiasm is apparent: element A ("rounded wood") corresponds with element A' ("shields"), and element B ("straight cane") corresponds with element B' ("arrows").

Subordinate Level Rhetorical Structures

As mentioned above, a number of shorter rhetorical structures have been identified by Welch; they all seem convincing to me though I suggest that the possible Christ-centered chiasm in the text of v. 5b might better be rendered as follows:

- 1 They observed to keep the law of Moses
- 2 and the sabbath day holy [fourth commandment]
- 3 unto the Lord.
- 2' And they profaned not; neither did they blaspheme. [third commandment]
- 1' And the laws of the land were exceedingly strict. (5c)

A Christ-centered chiasm in verse 11b might be rendered as follows:

- 1 teaching the law of Moses,
- 2 and the intent for which it was given;
- 3 persuading them to look forward unto the Messiah,
- 2' and believe in him to come as though he already was.
- 1' And after this manner did they teach them

Conclusions

Jarom seemingly uses the device of chiasmus to draw attention to two significant types of prosperity that result from righteousness: prosperity in things and prosperity in what is done with those things. The message of the book of Jarom, of course, repeats that great, oft-repeated theme of prosperity — that inasmuch as God's children keep His commandments they will prosper in the land. The apparent chiasmic pattern of the book seems to emphasize a sometimes-difficult principle. True, the God-given prosperity that follows righteousness includes riches in material blessings supplied by God. In Jarom's day those material blessings included gold, silver, iron, copper, brass, steel,

and precious things. But God-given prosperity also includes the uses to which those materials can be put and the things that can be made with those materials. Jarom identifies riches in fine workmanship of wood, in buildings, and in machinery, and also the making of tools to till the ground and the making of weapons of war in preparation for war. (See Jarom 1:8.) The book reflects many characteristics of chiasmus, including the rare feature of distant chiasmus, and the effect of the chiasmic structure seems to focus the reader's attention on a truth relevant to Jarom's time and other times: that a righteous society may survive the murderous attacks of an unrighteous society, even when that survival is secured by a form of prosperity that is manifested in successfully making preparations for righteous, defensive war. (See Jarom 1:7–9.)

An analysis of the precious materials worked by the people as set forth in the middle of the text (B and B') elements of the proposed distant chiasm of 1 Nephi 5:15 and Jarom 1:8b might be presented as follows:

- 1 And I did teach the people to build buildings,
- 2 and to work in all manner of wood,
- 3 and of iron,⁷⁵ [an element, transition metal, base metal that corrodes rapidly in moist air; a Metal of Antiquity]
- 4 and of copper, [an element, transition metal, base metal that resists oxidation and does not corrode easily; a Metal of Antiquity]
- 5 and of brass, [a man-made alloy usually made from the base metal copper and zinc]
- 6 and of steel, [a man-made alloy of iron and carbon or other metals, usually with other elements, such as nickel and cobalt]
- 7 and of gold, [an element, transition metal, precious noble metal that resists oxidation and corrosion in moist air; a Metal of Antiquity]
- 8 and of silver, [an element, transition metal, precious noble metal that resists oxidation and corrosion in moist air; a Metal of Antiquity]
- 9 and of precious ores, which were in great abundance." (2 Nephi 5:15)
- 7 "And we . . . became exceedingly rich in gold, [an element, transition metal, precious noble metal that

75. Meteoritic Iron: Though meteorites may consist of any number of materials, some are natural alloys of iron and nickel, with extraterrestrial origins. These alloys were used by ancient cultures to make weapons and tools. See Anne Marie Helmenstine, "Alloy Definition and Examples in Chemistry," Chemistry, ThoughtCo, [thoughtco.com/alloy-definition-examples-and-uses-606371](https://www.thoughtco.com/alloy-definition-examples-and-uses-606371).

- resists oxidation and corrosion in moist air; a Metal of Antiquity]
- 8 and in silver, [an element, transition metal, precious noble metal that resists oxidation and corrosion in moist air; a Metal of Antiquity]
- 9 and in precious things,
- 2a and in fine workmanship of wood,
- 1 in buildings, and in machinery,
- 3 and also in iron [an element, transition metal, base metal that corrodes rapidly in moist air; a Metal of Antiquity]
- 4 and copper, [a base metal that resists oxidation and does not corrode easily; a Metal of Antiquity]
- 5 and brass, [a man-made alloy usually made from the base metal copper and zinc]
- 6 and steel, [a man-made alloy of iron and carbon or other metals, usually with other elements, such as nickel and cobalt]
- 2b making all manner of tools of every kind to till the ground, . . ." (Jarom 1:8b)

Thus, a skewed chiasmus for the metals mentioned in that distant chiasm would be:

a - b - c || c - a - b
base metal – alloy – precious metal || precious metal – base metal – alloy

In Nephi's day, apart from the building of a temple (which is not mentioned in the account of Jarom's day), the progression of quality of the metals mentioned in his text proceeds from base to man-made to precious. But in Jarom's day, the quality of metals mentioned in his text retrogresses from precious to base, only to be somewhat ameliorated with the mention of the man-made alloys between the extremes.

In a sense, the two flanks of the apparent chiasmic pattern in the book of Jarom seem to reflect a difference between the nature of the accounts on the small plates of Nephi and that on the large plates as abridged by Mormon. Whereas, on the one hand, in the records that predate Jarom — namely, in the books of 1 Nephi, 2 Nephi, Jacob, and Enos — the wars and battles are portrayed as ones within, between, and among *individuals* (Nephi versus Laban, Nephi and Sam versus Laman and Lemuel, Enos versus his sins, etc.), and those wars and battles involving societies and peoples and nations are seen only in visions and prophetic descriptions (Zenos, Isaiah, Lehi, Nephi). On the other hand, in the records that postdate Jarom — namely, in the books of Mosiah, Alma, Helaman, Mormon, Ether, and Moroni — the battles are portrayed in all their physical reality, accomplished on an overtly

societal scale, involving in ever-increasing scope whole armies, peoples, and nations.

Even though Jarom may have written his book without knowledge it would become part of a transition from the small plates of Nephi to an abridged account from the large plates of Nephi, nevertheless, within the framework in which it presently is found, the book of Jarom seems to perform an efficient and meaningful transitional function. Certainly, it can be said of Jarom that as an author he obeyed Nephi's command—that he not occupy the small plates of Nephi with things that are not of worth unto the children of men (1 Nephi 6:6). In doing so, he seems to have imparted his message with a measure of meaningful artistry as well.



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