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Mi'kmaq, Meldrum, May, and Mark

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Mi'kmaq, Meldrum, May, and Mark

Jerry D. Grover Jr.

Abstract: *The Annotated Edition of the Book of Mormon, edited by David Hocking and Rod Meldrum, compares Caractors Document glyphs to purported Native American Mi'kmaq glyphs to support the theory that the Book of Mormon took place in the eastern United States. The glyphs used to support the theory are, in fact, taken from the Anthon Transcript document forgery produced by Mark Hofmann.*

One Saturday, I happened to be browsing Book of Mormon themed books in a used bookstore when I ran across the *Annotated Edition of the Book of Mormon*.¹ The book is edited by David Hocking (Managing Editor) and Rod Meldrum (Associate Editor). It also identifies Jonathan Neville, Boyd J. Tuttle, Rian Nelson, Wayne May, and Amberli Nelson as contributors.² As I was familiar with Mr. Meldrum's business promoting the "Heartland" (eastern United States) as the location for Book of Mormon events, I expected that this version of the Book of Mormon would be peppered with various notes promoting the Heartland model. After thumbing through the book my expectations proved correct.

In going through the book, I noted a figure consisting of the familiar Caractors Document (see figure 1), reported to consist of the reformed

1. David R. Hocking and Rod L. Meldrum, eds., *Annotated Edition of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Digital Legend Press, 2018).

2. The contributors to the *Annotated Edition* depend on the publication edition of the book. For instance, there is a free downloadable version of the first one hundred pages of the *Annotated Edition* that is pulled from the third edition. It lists contributors as Jonathan Neville, Boyd J. Tuttle, Rian Nelson, Wayne Maty, and John C. Lefgren.



Figure 1. The Caractors Document. (“Appendix 2, Document 1. Characters Copied by John Whitmer, circa 1829–1831,” p. 1, *Joseph Smith Papers*, josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/appendix-2-document-1-characters-copied-by-john-whitmer-circa-1829-1831/1.)

Egyptian text mentioned in the Book of Mormon.³ I also noted a chart comparing the document’s characters to Mi’kmaq glyphs.⁴ The commentary accompanying the chart asserts a correspondence between the two scripts, but I recognized that most of the fourteen comparative glyphs were *not* from the Caractors Document at all. I had previously published on the Caractors Document,⁵ so the mismatch was immediately obvious to me.

The Mi’kmaq is an indigenous Algonquin nation with approximately 30,000 members across Atlantic Canada and Northern Maine. The Mi’kmaq script (the script is also referred to as *Mi’kmaq hieroglyphic writing* or *suckerfish script*) is a hieroglyphic type of script used by the tribe from the 1600s into the twentieth century. Comparing characters from the Caractors Document with Mi’kmaq, as the *Annotated Edition* does, is problematic because of the genesis of the Mi’kmaq script.

Father Chrétien Le Clercq was a French Roman Catholic Jesuit missionary on the Gaspé Peninsula in New France amongst the Mi’kmaq between 1675 and 1687. In attempting to teach them to memorize Catholic prayers in French with limited success, Father Le Clercq noticed the Mi’kmaq children writing “marks” on birch bark and then counting them to help in the memorization of the prayers. Recognizing

3. Hocking and Meldrum, *Annotated Edition*, 91.

4. Hocking and Meldrum, *Annotated Edition*, 91.

5. Jerry D. Grover Jr., *Translation of the “Caractors” Document: Revised and Updated* (Provo, UT: Challex Scientific Publications, 2019).

that using unique glyphs might be easier as a memory aid, Le Clercq formed hieroglyphic-like symbols to write prayers and liturgy.

Some scholars have opined that Le Clercq might have derived his Mi'kmaq hieroglyphic script from the original birch-bark marks, but there is no evidence to support this hypothesis. On the contrary, Le Clercq specifically stated that he formed the script characters as a logographic system for pedagogical purposes to teach Catholic prayers, liturgy, and doctrine to the Mi'kmaq. That Mi'kmaq is not an indigenous-derived writing system is further evidenced by the fact that after Le Clercq's return to France in 1687, the script had to be taught to other groups of Mi'kmaq by other missionaries. Clearly it was not a script that the indigenous Mi'kmaq peoples already knew.⁶

Because of this documented history, attempting to support the Heartland model by comparing reformed Egyptian to a script created by Le Clercq in the seventeenth century is not a supportable approach based on linguistics, science, or just common sense. Without an ancient indigenous Mi'kmaq connection, the Heartland model lacks any evidence of an ancient written script, which is a requirement of any proposed Book of Mormon geographical model. Because I have demonstrated that an ancient indigenous connection to Mi'kmaq does not exist, further inquiry regarding the *Annotated Edition's* assertion should be unnecessary.

Even so, it seems appropriate to turn some attention to evaluating the genesis of the *Annotated Edition's* Caractors Document chart. The *Annotated Edition* states that the chart "shows that some of the characters copied from the Book of Mormon plates closely resemble selected hieroglyphs of the Mi'kmaq."⁷

The problem with such a claim is that the characters were not copied from the Book of Mormon plates. The references given for the assertion that the glyphs are comparable to ancient American glyphs are from the book *This Land* by Wayne May⁸ and from unnamed

6. David L. Schmidt and Murdena Marshall, eds., *Mi'kmaq Hieroglyphic Prayers: Readings in North America's First Indigenous Script* (Halifax, NS: Nimbus Publishing, 1995), 4–11.




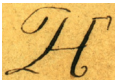


7. Hocking and Meldrum, *Annotated Edition*, 91.

8. Wayne N. May, *This Land*, vol. 3, *They Came from the East* (Colfax, WI: Ancient American Archaeology Foundation, 2005), 45. Early editions of the *Annotated Edition* cite 2004 as the publication year for May's book, however the first edition was published in 2005. This typographical error was corrected in later editions of the *Annotated Edition*.

works by Barry Fell and Stan Johnson.⁹ The only work on this topic from Johnson was *Translating the Anthon Transcript*, coauthored with his wife Polly Johnson.¹⁰ In evaluating the Johnson source, there were only six glyphs relating to “Micmac” glyphs (as the Johnsons prefer to refer to the script) from the Caractors Document, and only one in the fourteen-glyph list found in the *Annotated Edition*. This individual glyph identified by Johnson is the equivalent to the Caractors Document glyph similar to the May 1 glyph (see table 1). Therefore, the glyphs that have no correlation to the Caractors Document are exclusively those provided by Wayne May (hereafter referred to as the May glyphs). Wayne May does not identify or cite any source material for his glyph comparisons. Thus, we are to presume them to be his own original work.

A comparison of any Caractor Document glyphs that have a reasonable similarity to May glyphs (allowing for May reproduction errors) are shown in table 1.¹¹ I have assigned numbers to the Wayne May glyphs for ease of reference.






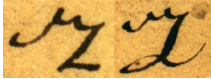







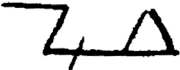


Table 1. Comparison of Wayne May glyphs with Caractors Document glyphs.

Numbers	May Glyphs	Caractors Document Glyphs
May 1		
May 2		
May 3		No Caractors Document Glyph
May 4		No Caractors Document Glyph

9. In early editions of the *Annotated Edition*, Barry Fell is not credited. He is credited in the third edition.

10. Stanley Johnson and Polly Johnson, *Translating the Anthon Transcript* (Parowan, UT: Ivory Books, 1999), 37–39, 41–42, 66.

11. The first fourteen rows of table 1 are from Hocking and Meldrum, *Annotated Edition*, 91, fig. 2, under the heading “Nephite,” with the explanation in the caption that they are “Nephite ‘Caractors’ taken from the plates.” The final three rows of table 1 (May 15–17) are glyphs identified in May, *This Land*, 45, that are not listed in the *Annotated Edition*.

Numbers	May Glyphs	Caractors Document Glyphs
May 5		No Caractors Document Glyph
May 6		
May 7		No Caractors Document Glyph
May 8		
May 9		
May 10		No Caractors Document Glyph
May 11		No Caractors Document Glyph
May 12		No Caractors Document Glyph
May 13		No Caractors Document Glyph
May 14		No Caractors Document Glyph
May 15		No Caractors Document Glyph
May 16		No Caractors Document Glyph
May 17		No Caractors Document Glyph













Given that there are some glyphs listed by Wayne May that have similar forms originating from the Caractors Document, why are there so many that are clearly not represented on the Caractors Document and, therefore, could not have been “copied from the Book of Mormon

plates?”¹² The simple answer is that the May glyphs originated from a different source.

As previously mentioned, I have done quite a bit of research on the Caractors Document and related items, so with a few minutes of inquiry it became obvious to me that Wayne May had extracted his characters—the ones reproduced in the *Annotated Edition*—not from the Caractors Document but from the Anthon Transcript document, a forgery created by Mark Hofmann.¹³ In 1980, Hofmann created and sold a forgery of the Anthon Transcript to leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (see figure 2), which was discovered to be fraudulent in 1985 when three Salt Lake City bombings (which Hofmann was convicted for) were investigated.

The supposed Caractors Document glyphs that May used are compared with characters from the Mark Hofmann Anthon Transcript forgery in table 2. The first two columns of table 2 are the same as the first two columns of table 1. The first fourteen May glyphs are, again, reproduced in the *Annotated Edition*.¹⁴

Table 2. Comparison of Wayne May glyphs to Hofmann forgery glyphs.

Numbers	May Glyphs	Hofmann Forgery Glyphs
May 1		
May 2		
May 3		
May 4		
May 5		
May 6		

12. Hocking and Meldrum, *Annotated Edition*, 91.

13. Wikipedia, s.v. “Mark Hofmann,” en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthon_Transcript#/media/File:Ref._Egyptian.jpg.

14. Hocking and Meldrum, *Annotated Edition*, 91, fig. 2.

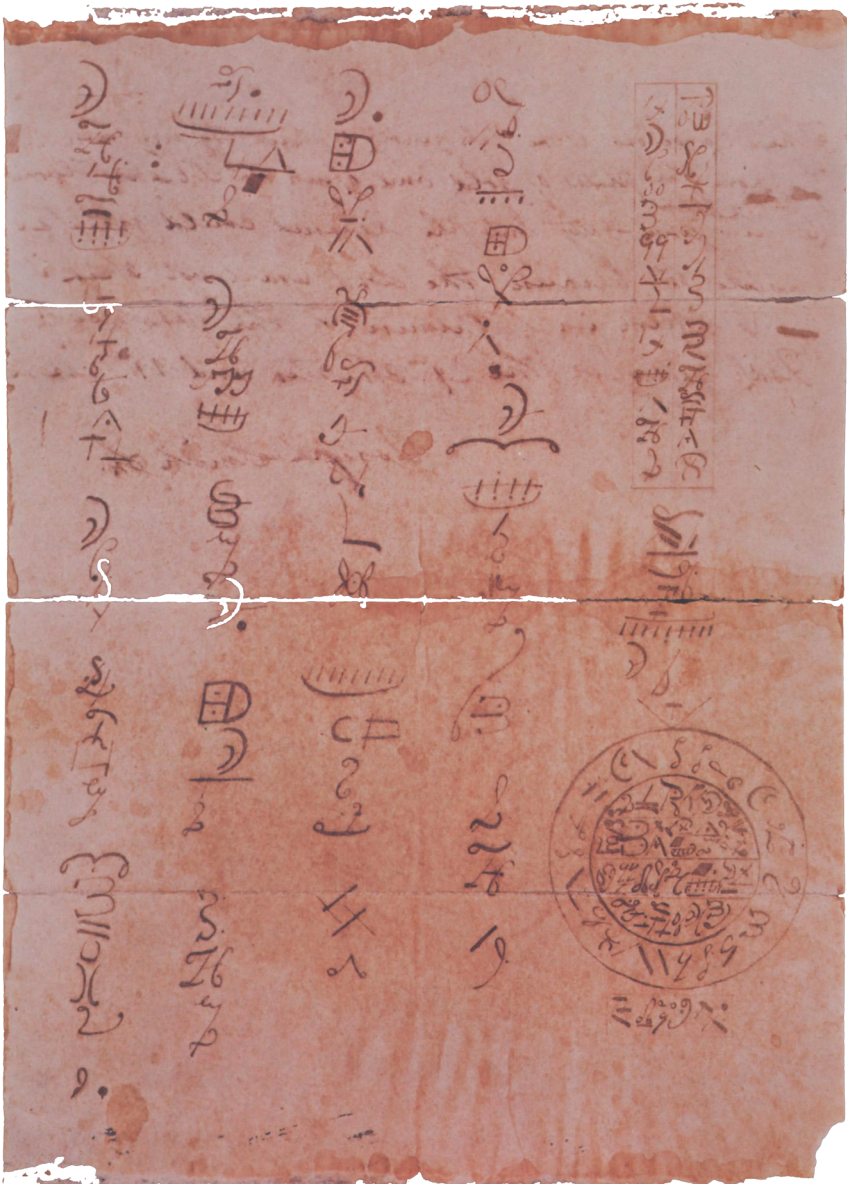







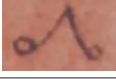



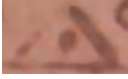












Figure 2. Hofmann forgery of the Anthon Transcript. (Danel W. Bachman, "A Look at the Newly Discovered Joseph Smith Manuscript," *Ensign* (July 1980), inside front cover.)

Numbers	May Glyphs	Hofmann Forgery Glyphs
May 7		
May 8		
May 9		
May 10		
May 11		
May 12		
May 13		
May 14		
May 15		
May 16		
May 17		

It becomes indisputably obvious where the source of the *Annotated Edition* glyphs ultimately came from: a Mark Hofmann forgery. Even for the May glyphs that are similar to both the Hofmann forgery and Caractors Document glyphs, a careful examination shows that the Hofmann forgery glyphs are closer in form to the May glyphs than any of the Caractors Document glyphs. This clearly indicates that Wayne May exclusively used the Hofmann forgery glyphs in his comparison of “Nephite Caractors” to Mi’kmaq glyphs.

It is generally accepted that part of Mark Hofmann’s motivation for

creating his Anthon Transcript forgery, besides money, was to perpetrate fraud onto The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and the Book of Mormon and thus damage the Church.¹⁵ Similarities between some of the Hofmann forgery glyphs and the Caractors Document glyphs were an attempt by Hofmann to add credibility to his forged Anthon Transcript.

It is with some dismay and bewilderment that the editors of the *Annotated Edition*, now in its third edition, continue to perpetrate and promote Mark Hofmann's fraudulent legacy of deceit to readers. Mi'kmaq glyphs and Hofmann forgeries provide no evidence for the Book of Mormon or a Heartland geography.



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15. Robert Lindsey, *A Gathering of Saints: A True Story of Money, Murder and Deceit* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988), 379–80.

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