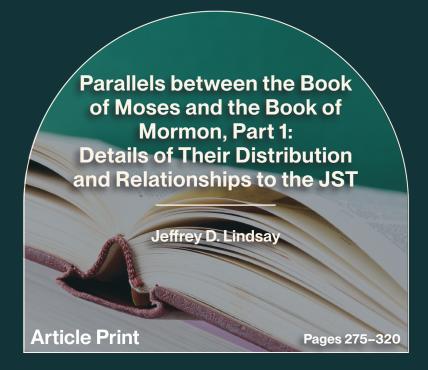


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Parallels between the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon, Part 1: Details of Their Distribution and Relationships to the JST

Jeffrey D. Lindsay

Abstract: In previous work, unexpected textual relationships between the Book of Mormon and the Book of Moses that seem consistent with a brass-plates version of Genesis with similarities to the modern Book of Moses were explored. However, there is a need for further research to examine the nature of the distribution of the parallels in the Book of Mormon to the Book of Moses to assess, for example, whether the connections are scattered randomly across the text or show any meaningful patterns. There is also a need to consider the relationship of the Book of Mormon to the rest of the Joseph Smith Translation to determine if the Book of Mormon's relationship with the Book of Moses (the first portion of the JST) is somehow unique or is consistent with the rest of Joseph's work with the translation of the Bible. Data related to both topics are treated here, showing that the Book of Mormon's relationship with the Book of Moses appears to be unique and consistent with an ancient brass-plates version of Genesis that influenced Book of Mormon personalities such as Lehi, Nephi, Jacob, and Alma. Later portions of the JST lack numerous parallels with the Book of Mormon, except for a few sections that appear to have been imported from the Book of Mormon into the JST. Further, the distribution of parallels at the book level and the chapter level is consistent with a meaningful application of material from a brass-plates version of Genesis by authors or speakers familiar with the brass plates.

ne of the most puzzling aspects of the Book of Mormon is the way it seems to draw upon specific language in the Book of Moses. A total of 146 such parallels have been found and are listed in a companion paper, Part 2 of this two-part series. The parallels often involve specific common language that cannot be readily explained by the language of the King James Bible. Noel Reynolds opened this field of investigation with a 1990 paper in which computer-aided searching found thirty-three parallels. Some reflected a one-way direction of influence, as if Book of Mormon writers were alluding to, quoting from, or building upon concepts and stories in the Book of Moses, or rather, a hypothetical version of Genesis on the brass plates that is similar to the Book of Moses, as Noel Reynolds has proposed.

Moreover, the translation of the Book of Abraham has a different character, largely free of such connections. This suggests that the deep intertextuality between the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon is not simply a natural result of Joseph's vocabulary and his familiarity with the Book of Mormon. Something unexpected is going on.

Reynolds and I further explored these unexpected connections in a 2021 joint paper.³ There we identified a total of ninety-seven proposed

^{1.} The total stands at 146. The complete list with a number of recently found parallels is provided in Jeff Lindsay, "Parallels Between the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon, Part 2: The Updated List of 146 Parallels and Their Implications on the Translation Process," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 67 (2026), forthcoming.

^{2.} NoelB.Reynolds, "The Brass Plates Version of Genesis," Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship 34 (2020):63–96, interpreter foundation .org/journal/the-brass-plates-version-of-genesis/. Previously published as "The Brass Plates Version of Genesis," in By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday, 27 March 1990, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies [FARMS]; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 2:136–73.

^{3.} Jeff Lindsay and Noel B. Reynolds, "'Strong Like unto Moses': The Case for Ancient Roots in the Book of Moses Based on Book of Mormon Usage of Related Content Apparently from the Brass Plates," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 44 (2021): 1–92, interpreterfoundation org/journal/strong-like-unto-moses-the-case-for-ancient-roots-in-the-book of-moses-based-on-book-of-mormon-usage-of-related-content-apparently from-the-brass-plates/. Also see the earlier work, Jeff Lindsay, "'Arise from the Dust': Insights from Dust-Related Themes in the Book of Mormon (Part 1: Tracks from the Book of Moses)," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 22 (2016): 179–232, interpreterfoundation.org/journal/arise-from-the-dust

parallels between the two texts. At that time, we thought we had exhausted all possible parallels. In a process marked by many surprises, several more parallels seemed to present themselves without being sought, stirring a need to publish further finds in a 2024 update that brought the number to 133,⁴ far higher than we ever expected. Such a density of parallels between the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon is remarkable, especially given that roughly half of the Book of Moses is simply quoting the King James Bible. This makes only a fraction eligible for consideration as non-KJV Bible parallels with the Book of Mormon.

During peer review of the 2021 and 2024 papers and in responses from readers, several excellent questions pointed to a need for further work in several areas that are addressed in this paper:

- What can be learned from the distribution of the parallels to the Book of Moses found in the Book of Mormon? Is it largely random? Is it uniform? Does it suggest some authors were more likely to allude to Book of Moses material than others? Or does it show a steady increase over time during the translation of the Book of Mormon as if Joseph were mentally preparing the language and themes of the future Book of Moses project?
- Given that the Book of Moses is simply the first part of Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible (the Joseph Smith Translation or JST) that ends at Genesis 6:13, are there similar connections with the rest of the JST? For example, did Joseph gradually increase the presence of Book of Mormon language in the JST over time, as if he were increasingly drawing upon the Book of Mormon, or was the incorporation of Book of Mormon language a relatively steady phenomenon? Is there something unique about the relationship between the Book of Mormon and the Book of Moses versus the rest of the JST?
- Since the recognition of parallels has been largely based

⁻insights-from-dust-related-themes-in-the-book-of-mormon-part-1-tracks -from-the-book-of-moses/.

^{4.} Jeff Lindsay, "Further Evidence from the Book of Mormon for a Book of Moses-Like Text on the Brass Plates," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith* and Scholarship 61 (2024): 415–94, interpreterfoundation.org/journal/further -evidence-from-the-book-of-mormon-for-a-book-of-moses-like-text-on-the -brass-plates/.

on precise common language in two translated texts, when there seems to be no *a priori* expectation that the translation process should yield the same language, what does this tell us about the translation process? Could some of the apparent parallels be artifacts of the translation process rather than remnants of ancient connections to the Book of Moses?

Isn't it risky to focus on parallels to another text? Aren't such parallels also used to attack the Book of Mormon?

The answers to such questions may be valuable in considering the significance and meaning, if any, of the proposed parallels.

In the following sections, I address the above questions, first considering data on the distribution of the parallels in the Book of Mormon. Then, I consider the question of other parallels in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible after the Book of Moses translation. Further, I discuss the relationship between the wording choices made in the translation to English for the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon and the significance of translator intent in making many of these parallels readily identifiable. Finally, I examine why the treatment of parallels in this study is quite different than the common use of parallels by Book of Mormon critics. In this analysis, I rely on the current set of 146 proposed parallels, which are listed and supplemented with discussion related to recent new finds and updates, in Part 2 of this series.⁵

What is Gained by Considering the Findings of This Project?

The following findings presented in prior publications are important for several reasons which are reinforced by the present paper:

- an apparent awareness that Book of Mormon writers seem to have had a text related to our modern Book of Moses, implies that they may have made deliberate allusions to Book of Moses stories, concepts, and specific phrases;
- intertextuality with the Book of Moses may be a useful tool for better understanding once-overlooked allusions in the Book of Mormon or backstories that enhance the text;
- and numerous allusions or echoes in the dictated 1829 Book

^{5.} Lindsay, "Parallels Between the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon, Part 2"

of Mormon text pointing to material in the later-produced Book of Moses may be meaningful evidence for the antiquity and authenticity of both sacred texts.

The present paper adds further reasons to consider the hypothesis of a brass-plates version of Genesis related to the Book of Moses, including:

- the distribution of parallels with the Book of Moses in the Book of Mormon suggests that Book of Mormon writers most familiar with the brass plates provided the most parallels to the Book of Moses, yielding further insights into the work of Book of Mormon authors:
- consideration of the rest of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible after the Book of Moses material shows unique features of the Book of Moses that are not typical of the later material in the JST but which may be consistent with the existence of a text provided through a unique revelatory process on the brass plates and closely related to the Book of Moses; and
- useful information that the data may provide on the translation process related to both texts. The many common phrases and words shared by the two translated texts (but typically not with the KJV Bible) suggest a consistency in the translation of the two texts that may point to an agenda of whoever provided the English translations for the Book of Mormon and for the Book of Moses, as discussed later.

In sum, these factors can enhance our understanding of the Book of Mormon, of Joseph's translation process, of the significance of intertextuality in Latter-day scriptures, and of the translation methods involved. They also can provide stand-alone evidence for the ancient origins and authenticity of both the Book of Mormon and the Book of Moses.

The Distribution of Parallels in the Book of Mormon

For the first thirty-three parallels that Reynolds uncovered, he observed that the writers of the small plates, whom we might expect would be particularly well schooled in the brass plates, are responsible for most of the Book of Moses's influence that he had identified:

It is also impressive that most of the influence from the Book

of Moses in the Book of Mormon shows up early in the small plates and the writings of the first generation of Book of Mormon prophets—significantly, those who had custody and long-term, firsthand access to the brass plates. Many of the later passages that use Book of Moses terminology and concepts tend to repeat earlier Nephite adaptations of the original materials.⁶

In our subsequent works, similar observations were made.⁷ The small plates authors and Alma₂, also expressly a student of the brass plates, seemed to be the sources for a disproportionate number of parallels, but details of the distribution were not examined. It's time to examine the distribution in more detail. Is the distribution among the chapters of the Book of Mormon roughly uniform, independent of authors or topics, as though the parallels might best be explained as coincidence arising from Joseph's language? Or does it show other characteristics? Let's look at the data.

Determining the Distribution of Parallels

A spreadsheet was prepared that considered the number of distinct parallels in each Book of Mormon chapter and the number of distinct verses in each chapter that were involved in parallels. Ratios could then be computed such as the number of parallels or distinct verses involved in parallels per chapter, per book, per 1000 words in each book, etc. For such ratios, chapters that were essentially a direct quotation from the KJV were excluded though in two cases, one or two introductory verses before the direct quotation were not excluded. Thus, 3 Nephi 12 was listed as having two verses and 3 Nephi 24 was listed as having one verse. In 2 Nephi 27, where Nephi₁ is working with Isaiah 29, but with extensive changes, no verses were excluded. Short quotations throughout the Book of Mormon were not excluded. The effect on overall statistics would have been minor had that been done but would have slightly increased the calculated density of parallels.

Some parallels relate to passages in the Book of Mormon with multiple verses. In those cases, the overall passage might be listed, followed by a note on the specific verses that have language directly linking them to a Book of Moses passage, such as: "Helaman 10:4–10

^{6.} Reynolds, "The Brass Plates Version of Genesis," 72.

^{7.} Lindsay and Reynolds, "Strong Like unto Moses," 87–88.

(specifically vv. 5, 9)" for Parallel 139. In such cases, only the more specific verses were used in the analysis.

The distinct number of parallels present in each chapter was calculated. Those parallels per chapter can then be summed up to give a total number per book (the sum of the number of parallels in each chapter of a book). That sum may include duplicate parallels among the chapters. The repeated use of parallels in different sections of a book may be meaningful, but the total number of distinct parallels per book may be more desirable for some comparisons (i.e., not counting duplicate occurrences of a parallel), and thus was also calculated. Table 1 lists the books, the number of qualified chapters per book (excluding chapters that are entirely a quotation from the KJV), the sum of parallels in each chapter per book (the distinct parallels per book free of duplicates), and the average number of distinct parallels per qualified chapter (column 4 divided by column 2).

Table 1. Basic results for parallels in each book of the Book of Mormon.

Book	Qualified chapters (Q)	Sum of parallels in each chapter per book (S)	Average parallels per qualified chapter (S/Q)	Distinct parallels per book
1 Nephi	20	58	2.90	33
2 Nephi	18	66	3.67	46
Jacob	7	18	2.57	16
Enos	1	1	1.00	1
Jarom	1	2	2.00	2
Omni	1	1	1.00	1
W. of M.	1	1	1.00	1
Mosiah	28	38	1.36	30
Alma	63	120	1.90	56
Helaman	16	48	3.00	29
3 Nephi	26	36	1.38	18
4 Nephi	1	3	3.00	3
Mormon	9	8	0.89	8
Ether	15	37	2.47	26
Moroni	10	12	1.20	12

The density of parallels across the books of the Book of Mormon

can also be considered in terms of the number of verses involved in the parallels. Table 2 shows the number of qualified verses for each book, after excluded chapters from the KJV have been removed. The cumulative verses involved (column 3) is the sum across all parallels of relevant verses in each book. Here a single verse might be involved in more than one parallel. The next column removes such duplicates and only lists the number of unique verses from each book that are involved in at least one parallel. The final column is the ratio R1, the number of unique verses involved in parallels divided by the number of qualified verses.

Table 2. The verse-level density of the parallels.

Book	Qualified verses	Cumulative verses involved	Unique verses involved	Unique/ qualified verses (R1)
1 Nephi	570	93	84	0.147
2 Nephi	468	113	77	0.165
Jacob	203	31	27	0.133
Enos	27	1	1	0.037
Jarom	15	2	2	0.133
Omni	30	2	2	0.067
W. of M.	18	1	1	0.056
Mosiah	773	58	54	0.070
Alma	1975	187	144	0.073
Helaman	497	72	59	0.119
3 Nephi	638	57	48	0.075
4 Nephi	49	4	3	0.061
Mormon	227	9	7	0.031
Ether	433	68	42	0.097
Moroni	163	15	9	0.055

In 1 Nephi, for example, out of 570 verses after excluding Isaiah chapters, eighty-four verses are part of at least one parallel (as seen in table 1, there are thirty-three distinct parallels involved with 1 Nephi). The R1 value of 0.147 indicates that nearly 15% of the qualified verses in 1 Nephi have allusions to Book of Moses material beyond what can be readily explained by an appeal to the KJV. That's a surprisingly high

level. 2 Nephi's R1 value is even higher, 0.164, or over 16%, over twice the levels seen in Mosiah, Alma, 3 Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni. As this study began, I never would have guessed that such a high proportion of the verses Nephi₁ penned would include links to the Book of Moses. The column chart of figure 1 compares R1 between the books of the Book of Mormon to make it easier to visualize this parameter:

Figure 2 compares two averaging approaches for the parallels per chapter. The first series shown is the average of the parallels per chapter (the sum divided by the number of qualified chapters), while the second series is the parallels per chapter per 1000 words (the sum of the parallels per chapter in each book divided by the number of words in the qualified chapters). The error bars (95% confidence intervals) shown for the two series are based on the variance for each book, excluding single-chapter books.

When duplicate parallels are eliminated by only counting distinct parallels for each book, the results are lower but follow similar trends, as shown in figure 3.

Again, single-chapter books are expected to have high variability because of the small sample size of text being considered, so conclusions based on them must be made cautiously.

Overlooking the high average in the single-chapter book of Jarom, both averages of both charts show 2 Nephi as the highest source of

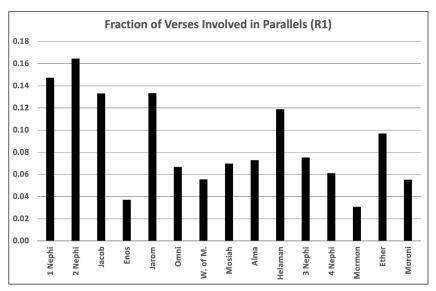


Figure 1. R1 values, or the fraction of unique verses in each book that are involved in the 146 parallels with the Book of Moses.

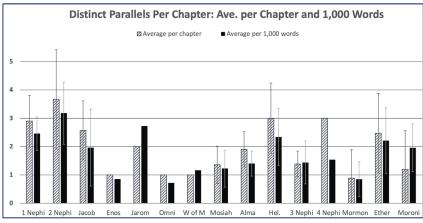


Figure 2. Average distinct parallels per chapter, averaged per qualified chapter and per 1,000 words. Error bars (95% confidence intervals) are shown using variance for each book with more than one chapter.

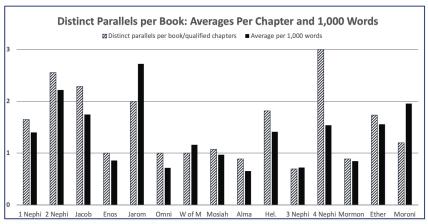


Figure 3. Average distinct parallels per book, averaged per qualified chapter and per 1,000 words.

parallels to the Book of Moses, with Jacob and 1 Nephi also having high levels of parallels. Other lengthy books such as Mosiah, Alma, and 3 Nephi have significantly lower averages. Helaman has a high average in part because of its extensive content on secret combinations; however, it has a wide range of topics having parallels to the Book of Moses.

The distribution may be judged considering what can be inferred about Book of Mormon authors and their apparent familiarity with the brass plates. Nephi₁ and Jacob, like their father Lehi₁, who is quoted

several times by Nephi₁, had obviously become familiar with the brass plates after Nephi₁ retrieved them from Jerusalem. This commenced a period of intense study by Lehi₁ who then taught his family from the brass plates. How well that instruction permeated the lives of his descendants may vary. Enos, for example, does not come across as a lifelong student of the scriptures as he begins his hunt. Most of the various authors in Omni also seem to have lapsed in their devotion to the word. While it is risky to rely on conclusions drawn from single-chapter books given the small sample size, Jarom's relatively high use of parallels may deserve to be taken seriously in light of Jarom also being one of the richest examples of extensive chiasmus, indicating that he took the Hebrew scriptures seriously and had studied them carefully.⁸ Enos, though, also has evidence of possible chiasmus.⁹

It is interesting that the books of Mormon, Mosiah, and 3 Nephi have such low numbers of parallels. When we look at the distribution of parallels per chapter, the low average for Mosiah will make sense. In 3 Nephi, it may be that the Messiah, the giver of the Law, was more focused on introducing a new dispensation and the themes of the New Testament to the Nephites than in alluding to scripture that the Nephites already possessed (but see the discussion of parallels per chapter in Mosiah hereafter, which offers further reasons for the low parallels in that book). As for Mormon, he may have been familiar with the brass-plates version of Genesis, though possibly a reformed Egyptian version from his day. However, the focus of his personal writings as military leader of a doomed nation might not have moved him to allude frequently to that text the way earlier scribes and prophets did.

In any case, there appear to be notable differences in the levels of parallels across the books without evidence of merely random distribution and no clear temporal trend with respect to the translation of the Book of Mormon that would, for example, show a steady increase from Mosiah until the final pages of the small plates of Nephi₁.

^{8.} Stephen Kent Ehat, "Chiasmus in the Book of Jarom," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship*, 64 (2025): 301–44, interpreter foundation.org/journal/chiasmus-in-the-book-of-jarom/.

^{9.} 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, interpreterfoundation.org/journal/centered-on-christ -the-book-of-enos-possibly-structured-chiastically/.

Familiarity with the brass plates by individual authors or speakers may be an important factor.

To somewhat reduce the influence of multiple parallels involving secret combinations, figures 4 and 5 are versions of figures 2 and 3, respectively, but with Parallels 38–42 and 103 removed.

Overall, the effort to slightly downplay secret combinations does not significantly change the basic features of the distribution of parallels per chapter or per book.

The distribution at the chapter level may be even more valuable to consider. Figure 6 shows the chapter-level distribution of parallels

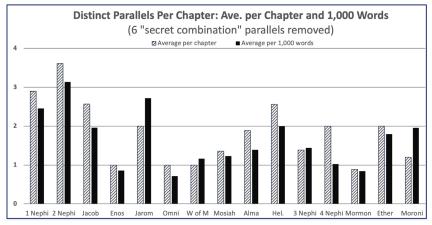


Figure 4. Average distinct parallels per chapter, after removal of six secret combination-related parallels.

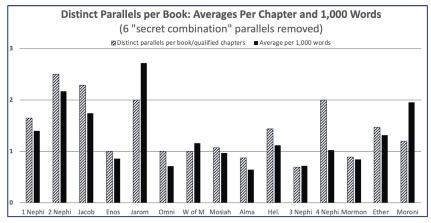


Figure 5. Average distinct parallels per book, after removal of six secret combination-related parallels.

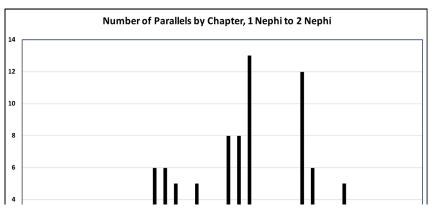


Figure 6. Chapter-level distribution of parallels in 1 Nephi to 2 Nephi.

in 1 and 2 Nephi. Note that the peak of thirteen parallels occurs in 2 Nephi 2, part of the farewell sermon of that great student and expositor of the brass plates, the prophet Lehi. The beginning of this sermon in 2 Nephi 1 also has a high score. Second Nephi 9 with eleven parallels also stands out. This is a sermon rich in temple themes from Jacob with many opportunities for allusions to the brass-plates version of Genesis, also rich in temple themes (treating it as related to the Book of Moses, of course). Also, relatively high rates persist during Nephi₁'s apocalyptic vision of the Gentiles and the last days in 1 Nephi 13–15. The local distribution within 1 and 2 Nephi tends to make sense considering the context of specific chapters, and it also does not appear to be consistent with a relatively uniform distribution based upon Joseph's word choices in dictation.

Figure 7 is like figure 6 but reports parallels per 1000 words per chapter.

Considering parallels per 1000 words is a useful measure, but generally, it offers few surprises compared to simply looking at the raw number of parallels per chapter. Therefore, the following distribution plots for other sections of the Book of Mormon will be based simply on parallels per chapter.

Figure 8 examines chapter-level parallels in Jacob through Mosiah. The distribution in Mosiah, a book produced following the loss of the 116 pages of the early Book of Mormon manuscript, is much different than seen in Jacob or 1 or 2 Nephi due to Mosiah's large gaps free of parallels to the Book of Moses. These gaps may be meaningful. The first gap or chapter free of parallels is Mosiah 7, a historical chapter describing the mission of Ammon₁, a descendant of Zarahemla

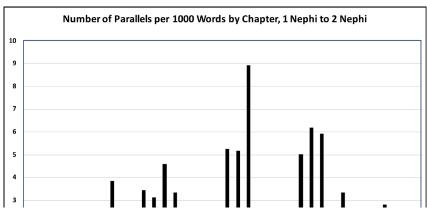


Figure 7. Chapter-level distribution of parallels per 1000 words in 1 Nephi to 2 Nephi.

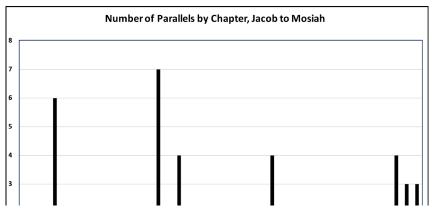


Figure 8. Parallels by chapter in Jacob to Mosiah.

(Mosiah 7:3), with his brothers, back to the land of Lehi-Nephi, where they meet King Limhi, son of the wicked King Noah. Neither Ammonnor King Limhi are likely to have been serious students of the brass plates, and despite some strongly religious passages, it's reasonable that no connections to the Book of Moses are apparent in Mosiah 7. The gap in Mosiah 7 follows King Benjamin's speech and covenant-making ceremony in Mosiah 1–6 that abounds in revelation and in preaching the doctrine of Christ—issues that naturally fit with the Book of Moses. The peak in figure 8 occurs with the seven parallels of Mosiah 3, which covers topics such as the salvation of children, eternal life, the ministry of Christ, and other topics linked to the Book of Moses.

The next gap begins with the record of Zeniff in Mosiah 9 and 10.

Zeniff describes the history of his people's arrival in the land of Lehi-Nephi, battles with the Lamanites, and naming one of his sons (wicked King Noah) to be the next king. Zeniff does not appear to be a student of the scriptures, though he slightly imitates 1 Nephi 1:1 in his opening words. Chapter 11 introduces King Noah and then Abinadi. The gap continues in Mosiah 12 as Abinadi condemns Noah for his wickedness and is questioned by the wicked priests of Noah. Parallels begin in Mosiah 13 as Abinadi is preserved from being attacked as his face "shone with exceeding luster" like Moses on Mount Sinai (v. 5) and can begin his message on salvation through Christ. The parallels from Abinadi peak in Mosiah 15 as he preaches the plan of salvation, including the salvation of little children (v. 25) and other themes related to the Book of Moses. Further parallels follow in Abinadi's impassioned words on salvation through Christ in Mosiah 16.

After the prophet Alma, gives a couple more parallels in his preaching in Mosiah 18 and flees from the community of King Noah, we encounter the longest gap in the Book of Mormon as we return to the prophet-less captive people of King Noah in Mosiah 19. There and in subsequent chapters we learn more of their wickedness and cowardice. We return full circle to the arrival of Ammon, and his brethren in Mosiah 20 and learn the history of the discovery of the plates of Ether. In chapter 22, there are successful plans made to escape from the Lamanites. The gap continues in Mosiah 23 and 24, which contains the history of Alma, and his people's settling the land of Helam, going into captivity, and being delivered and returning to Zarahemla. The gap continues with Mosiah 25 as it shares the history of King Mosiah₂'s pronouncement to his people about the convergence of great events including the arrival of Alma, and his people, the arrival of Limhi and his people, and the discovery of ancient Jaredite records. Throughout the historical material of Mosiah 19-25, there is not a single identified parallel to the Book of Moses. This changes in Mosiah 26 as a prophet of God seeks and receives revelation; we then gain more revelatory insights from the angelic visit to Alma, and the sons of Mosiah. Revelation and preaching on the plan of salvation in the last four chapters of Mosiah bring more parallels. Gaps and parallels thus seem to fall where they should.

Figure 9 shows the distribution of parallels in the book of Alma. Here, there is high variability, with some sections rich in parallels (such as the preaching of Alma and Amulek in Alma 12 and 13) with a total of twenty-two parallels between the two chapters. This is one of the

richest concentrations of parallels in the entire Book of Mormon, and yet there are many multi-chapter gaps having no parallels. The war chapters at the end of the book show significant gaps. Historical material, unlike revelation or spiritual discourse, often has little connection to the language of the Book of Moses even though it also describes wars and historical events.

Figure 10 shows the distribution of parallels among the chapters of Helaman through 4 Nephi. Third Nephi has a generally low level of parallels, despite a concentration on the Son of God which is given so much attention in the Book of Moses. Levels are higher in Helaman, with a peak in Helaman 6 that gives many details on the operations of secret combinations.

Figure 11 shows the distribution for Mormon through Moroni. Interestingly, the values for Mormon's chapters are quite low, with over

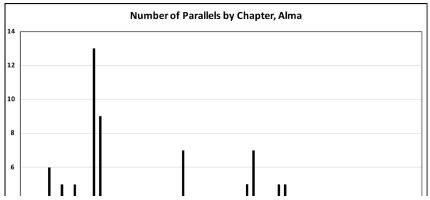


Figure 9. Parallels by chapter in Alma.

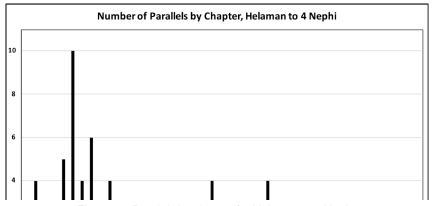


Figure 10. Parallels by chapter for Helaman to 4 Nephi.

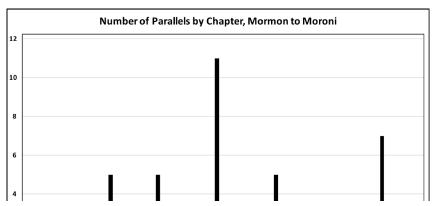


Figure 11. Parallels by chapter for Mormon to Moroni.

half of the parallels for his book being found in one chapter (Mormon 8) where he discusses several aspects of secret combinations and some other Book of Moses themes. Moroni also has a relatively low level of parallels though he seems to have made many allusions to the brass-plates version of Genesis in his work in the Book of Ether. Here he was particularly concerned about the theme of secret combinations, especially in Ether 8, with a peak at eleven parallels. In general, the parallels in the book of Ether may largely reflect Moroni's paraphrasing of the Jaredite record and his added commentary, though the Jaredites had their own ancient records that described the rise of what Moroni and Moses called a "secret combination," as the daughter of Jared noted:

Whereby hath my father so much sorrow? Hath he not read the record which our fathers brought across the great deep? Behold, is there not an account concerning them of old, that they by their secret plans did obtain kingdoms and great glory? (Ether 8:9)

That Jaredite record, though, would have predated the era of Moses and may have used different terminology such as "secret plans" instead of "secret combination." The term "secret plans" used in the quotation from the daughter of Jared is also used several times in the Book of Mormon after being introduced by Alma₂ in Alma 37:29, 32. Here, in his counsel to Helaman₁, he refers to the already translated record of Ether. One may infer that the term secret plans is based on a concept taken from the Jaredite record, while Moroni preferred to speak of secret combinations, a term also used by Nephi₁ and the Book of Moses.

Not all the parallels in the Book of Ether necessarily date to Moroni's work. For example, allusions related to the flood in the Book of Ether, used in some parallels, could have been original to the Jaredite record but could later have been crafted by Moroni or a translator to make an allusion to the Book of Moses.

In general, the distribution of parallels in the Book of Mormon neither reflect a random distribution nor a uniform distribution, but it is consistent with the nature of the content (e.g., historical information vs. sermons or revelation) and some specific topics. There are also apparent individual differences with speakers or authors like Lehi, Nephi, Jacob, and Alma, These show elevated tendencies to apply brass-plates material when appropriate—as in the preaching of Alma₂ and Amulek in Alma 12 and 13 or Alma₂'s discourse in Alma 37 on the brass plates. The details of the distribution of parallels at various levels, among verses, chapters, and books, point to a reasonable, logical distribution consistent with unique authors drawing upon ancient material on the brass plates in plausible ways, with the Book of Moses having a strong textual connection to the proposed brassplates material. In other words, the distribution data enhance the case for the basic proposals in the studies reported so far regarding the intertextuality of the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon, adding to the evidence that the data is not merely the result of coincidence nor of Joseph's using common language in random ways when creating both texts. The relationships are too sophisticated and nuanced for one modern translator or author to have crafted them while dictating text to his scribes.

Finally, table 3 shows the top forty chapters with the highest number of parallels per 1,000 words, for chapters having at least 500 words. This excludes, passages such as 3 Nephi 24, where one qualified verse with fifty-nine words remained after removing the quotation of Micah 3, for which one parallel resulted in nearly seventeen parallels per 1,000 words. Lehi,'s familiarity with the brass plates is reflected in the inclusion of his farewell discourse in 2 Nephi 1 (ranked #14) and 2 Nephi 2 (ranked #2). Five chapters written or spoken by Jacob appear in the top forty: Jacob 4 as #7, 2 Nephi 10 as #9, 2 Nephi 9 as #16, Jacob 6 as #27, and Jacob 3 as #38 (his short 2 Nephi 11 would have been #10 were it not for imposing a 500-word minimum). Given the small number of chapters from Jacob, it is impressive that such a high fraction of his chapters are in table 3. Interestingly, only five of Nephi₁'s own chapters also are listed (excluding two chapters quoting

Lehi₁ and two chapters quoting Jacob), beginning with 1 Nephi 22 at #13, a chapter that begins with a reference to the plates of brass (v. 1). Then follow 1 Nephi 14 at #17, 1 Nephi 12 at #32, 2 Nephi 26 at #35, and 1 Nephi 15 at #36. Jacob's words seem to have a higher density on average of parallels to the Book of Moses than Nephi₁'s words. (To be fair, two highly ranked chapters of Nephi₁ were excluded for having less than 500 words: 1 Nephi 9 and 2 Nephi 11, while 2 Nephi 13 just missed the list, ranking at #41.) Alma₁'s writings and sermons from the book of Alma appear in twelve of the top forty chapters, showing a strong connection to brass plates.

Table 3. Top forty chapters with the most parallels/1000 words (and >500 words per chapter).

No.	Chapter	Verses cited	Unique verses	Distinct parallels	Words	P/1000 words
1	Ether 8	34	14	11	1232	8.93
2	2 Nephi 2	22	15	13	1457	8.92
3	Alma 41	5	3	5	705	7.09
4	Alma 12	27	18	13	1859	6.99
5	Alma 13	15	12	9	1353	6.65
6	Helaman 2	4	2	4	605	6.61
7	Jacob 4	9	5	6	928	6.47
8	Mosiah 3	11	10	7	1119	6.26
9	2 Nephi 10	6	2	6	968	6.20
10	Helaman 10	5	4	4	722	5.54
11	Helaman 6	14	10	10	1808	5.53
12	Mosiah 5	4	2	4	739	5.41
13	1 Nephi 22	9	7	8	1517	5.27
14	2 Nephi 1	10	7	8	1546	5.17
15	2 Nephi 9	23	12	12	2393	5.01
16	Helaman 8	8	6	6	1210	4.96
17	1 Nephi 14	7	6	6	1304	4.60
18	3 Nephi 5	7	5	4	936	4.27
19	Alma 29	3	3	3	713	4.21
20	Alma 26	10	6	7	1666	4.20
21	Ether 13	10	7	5	1229	4.07
22	Alma 42	15	13	5	1231	4.06
23	Alma 36	7	4	5	1242	4.03

No.	Chapter	Verses cited	Unique verses	Distinct parallels	Words	P/1000 words
24	Ether 3	7	4	5	1263	3.96
25	Ether 11	3	3	3	765	3.92
26	Jacob 6	2	2	2	516	3.88
27	Mosiah 15	6	6	4	1062	3.77
28	Alma 39	3	3	3	802	3.74
29	Mosiah 28	6	6	3	817	3.67
30	Moroni 7	8	3	7	1929	3.63
31	Mosiah 16	2	2	2	560	3.57
32	1 Nephi 12	4	4	3	866	3.46
33	Alma 37	22	11	7	2029	3.45
34	Alma 7	5	5	5	1464	3.42
35	2 Nephi 26	7	5	5	1492	3.35
36	1 Nephi 15	7	7	5	1495	3.34
37	Helaman 7	6	5	4	1199	3.34
38	Jacob 3	2	2	2	620	3.23
39	Alma 9	5	4	5	1563	3.20
40	Alma 45	3	3	3	941	3.19

With this background on the distribution of parallels in the Book of Mormon, we now consider the relationship of the rest of the JST to the Book of Mormon before turning to the question of the translation process and its impact on the proposed parallels.

Connections to the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible

The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible is one of the least understood aspects of Joseph Smith's work as a seer and translator. Many have been confused over its status and importance. I recommend Kent P. Jackson's *Understanding Joseph Smith*'s *Translation of the Bible* as a key source covering the history of the project, including its timelines, the scribes involved, the related manuscripts, and its significance for Latter-day Saints. For examining changes in the JST, I have

Kent P. Jackson, Understanding Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Desert Book. 2022).

relied on Kenneth and Lyndell Lutes's Joseph Smith Translation: Every Revision in the Old and New Testaments.¹¹

As Jackson shows in his detailed timeline for Joseph Smith's work on the JST, the "Visions of Moses," now Moses 1, began to be translated in June 1830, with the subsequent material in our Book of Moses being completed by February or March 1831, as show in table 4 (based on Jackson). After the translation of the Old Testament reached Genesis 24:41, Joseph Smith turned to the New Testament and only returned to the Old Testament between July 1832 to 2 July 1833, spanning Genesis 24:41—Malachi. There is no evidence of any further work on the translation after 2 July 1833, when Frederick G. Williams, the JST scribe at the time, wrote "Finished on the 2d day of July 1833" on the last line of the Old Testament manuscript. Many have heard that the JST was never finished, but Jackson makes it clear that Joseph did in fact complete the translation.

Section of the Book of Moses	Translation Dates	Corresponding Genesis Material
Moses 1	Begun June 1830	
Moses 2:1-5:43	Completed by 21 October 1830	Genesis 1:1–4:18
Moses 5:43-6:28	Completed by 30 November 1830	Genesis 4:18–5:11
Moses 6:19-52	Emma as scribe, 1 December 1830	Genesis 5:12–21
Moses 6:52-7:1	1–7 December 1830	Genesis 5:22
Moses 7:2-8:12	Completed by 10 December 1830	Genesis 5:23-32
Moses 8:13-30	4 February-7 March 1831	Genesis 6:1–13*

Table 4. Timeline for the Book of Moses translation.

Does the completion of the JST mean that the finished work was of one cloth, from beginning to end, in terms of its revelatory nature and origins? There is obviously a wide diversity in the nature of the edits

^{*} The material translated from 4 February-7 March 1831 also included the translation of Genesis 6:14-24:41, not part of the Book of Moses, so the translation of Moses 8:13-30 may have been completed in February 1831.

^{11.} Kenneth and Lyndell Lutes, ed., *Joseph Smith Translation: Every Revision in the Old and New Testaments*, revised 3rd ed. (Brigham City, UT: Brigham Distributing, 2019).

^{12.} Jackson, Understanding Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, 3-5.

^{13.} Jackson, Understanding Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, 26.

^{14.} Jackson, Understanding Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, 26–29.

that Joseph made. Numerous changes appear to be minor ones that clarify a confusing or troubling word choice or add a minor detail, and other passages such as the Visions of Moses (Moses 1) and the Enoch material read like grand, epic revelations restoring ancient visions and texts. What is one to make of the diverse material in the JST? Jackson notes the diversity in Joseph's approach and the sources that seem to have influenced his work:

As the Gospel writers had sources for their writing and revising, what were the sources Joseph Smith used to accomplish his task? From what we can see in the New Translation, it appears that his sources included, in varying degrees, revelation, other scriptural texts, his prophetic instincts, and his common sense.¹⁵

Jackson then shares a variety of examples that seem like Joseph was applying common sense, other sources, or his own understanding to make modifications. Then Jackson contrasts those with passage having significant insertions of text (e.g., the words of Enoch) that "show all the hallmarks of revelation that Latter-day saints are accustomed to seeing in other revealed sources such as the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants." Even then, he points out that "as with all our ancient scriptures, we do not know to what degree the JST summarizes, paraphrases, or generalizes." In short, the JST is a complicated text resulting from a mix of approaches and sources, including but not necessarily limited to divine revelation. The possibility of Joseph's using different methods to produce the JST may be important in explaining the relationships that can be identified with the Book of Mormon.

Likewise, Royal Skousen proposes a complex and nuanced JST, with a diverse mix of divine revelation coupled with Joseph's personal work of revision. This perspective was supported in detail in a 2005 paper. Further comparison of Bible quotations in the Book of Mormon with the JST are considered in his 2019 volume, *The History of the*

^{15.} Jackson, Understanding Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, 250.

^{16.} Jackson, Understanding Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, 250-52.

^{17.} Jackson, Understanding Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, 252.

^{18.} Royal Skousen, "The Earliest Textual Sources for Joseph Smith's 'New Translation' of the King James Bible," *FARMS Review* 17, no. 2 (2005): 451–70, scholarsarchive.byu.edu/msr/vol17/iss2/13/.

Text of the Book of Mormon, Part Five, The King James Quotations in the Book of Mormon.¹⁹

If the Book of Moses, the first portion of Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible (JST) and a canonized text within the Pearl of Great Price, shows such strong connections with the Book of Mormon, should we not expect something similar for the rest of the JST? If the entire JST was a similar revelatory product restoring ancient text that might have been present on the brass plates, then perhaps we should hope to find similar pervasive parallels. But considering the diverse nature of the JST, as shown in the analysis of scholars such as Jackson and Skousen, such expectations must be tempered.

This question was briefly addressed in the 2024 paper, "Further Evidence from the Book of Mormon for a Book of Moses-Like Text on the Brass Plates":

We have focused on the Book of Moses and its connections. to the Book of Mormon, but what about the rest of the added or modified text that Joseph gave us in his work of translating the Bible after producing the text that became our Book of Moses? In other words, after revealing the visions of Moses in Moses 1 and then translating Genesis up to Genesis 6:13. where the Book of Moses suddenly ends, what about the rest of the new material from the translation work that continued as Joseph worked with numerous portions of the rest of the KJV Bible? Does it also have the connections we have found to the Book of Mormon? Based on an examination of the remaining text of the Joseph Smith translation of the Bible, the answer in general appears to be no, though JST Genesis 50 does provide text closely aligned with 2 Nephi 3, as we might expect, and some changes in Isaiah align with those previously given in the Book of Mormon. A detailed report is in preparation, but it seems that the intricate textural relationships with the Book of Mormon seen in Moses 4 and other portions of the Book of Moses do not persist in the later parts of Joseph's translation of the Bible.²⁰

More detailed study of the JST has only strengthened the prior

^{19.} Royal Skousen, *The History of the Text of the Book of Mormon, Part Five, The King James Quotations in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: FARMS and BYU Studies, 2019), 132–40.

^{20.} Lindsay, "Further Evidence," 418-19.

impression that the Book of Moses is a unique part of the JST with respect to the Book of Mormon.

In my examination of potential Book of Mormon connections to the JST, the relationship to the initial canonized portion of the JST, the Book of Moses, seems extensive and pervasive, while later passages in the JST seem generally unrelated except for several large passages that have the feel of being adapted largely verbatim from the existing Book of Mormon text. These passages include:

- JST Genesis 50, which seems to draw upon 2 Nephi 3 and the vision of Joseph of Egypt of a future Joseph;
- JST Isaiah 29:6, 8–34, which follows 2 Nephi 27:2–34 almost verbatim, but skips v. 7.

Before examining these passages, the relationship between JST Isaiah 50 and 2 Nephi 7 should be considered. There are several minor differences, but an important story emerges from the textual data. These relationships were considered by Skousen in his 2005 paper where he raised JST Isaiah 50 as an example of Joseph copying from the Book of Mormon in creating related passages in the JST. He did this in the first of several concerns he raises about the assumption of the entire JST being a revealed text:

In my mind, there are some serious difficulties in accepting the totality of the JST as a revealed text from the Lord. In many instances, the JST appears to represent Joseph Smith's commentary and explication of difficult readings in the Bible. Instead of simply declaring that the entire JST is inspired, it would be better, I believe, to have a more open discussion of some of the difficulties that the JST presents to the researcher, especially when comparing the JST with other LDS canonized works.

Besides the difficulties in determining the actual text of the JST, there are more substantial problems that must be resolved before fully accepting the JST in its entirety as a revealed text from the Lord. Here I list some of these problems:

1. The first part of the JST looks like a word-for-word revealed text, in particular the vision of Moses and that first part of Genesis that has been canonized as the Book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price. The manuscript OT1 [Old Testament 1, the initial scribal document recording

Joseph's translation of the OT], in many respects, looks much like the manuscripts for the Book of Mormon. But in switching to the New Testament and then in returning eventually to the Old Testament, Joseph Smith seems to have switched from providing a word-for-word revelation (much like the Book of Mormon) to making minor changes and relatively small additions to difficult readings in the Bible. It is not surprising that the more significant doctrinal items in the JST have, for the most part, already been canonized in the Pearl of Great Price (or indirectly accepted through various revelations found in the Doctrine and Covenants). Near the end of his work on the JST, Joseph resorted to marking up his Bible and having the scribes write only the changes in the associated manuscript. Even more secondary was his decision for the JST version of Isaiah 50 to have the text directly copied from the 1830 edition of the Book of **Mormon**, thus leaving the corresponding page of his Bible totally unmarked for this chapter of Isaiah (pp. 820–23). And for that part of the JST, the text from the 1830 edition is slavishly copied, including all of the errors that had entered the Book of Mormon text during its earlier transmission:

when I come instead of when I came their river instead of the river they die instead of they dieth waketh instead of wakeneth (two times) appointed mine ear instead of opened mine ear

The original manuscript of the Book of Mormon is extant for each of these cases and reads according to the King James Bible. It is obvious that, as the work on the JST progressed, the revealed nature of the text was not sustained at the same level.²¹

The availability of the Original Manuscript for 2 Nephi 7 allowed Skousen to confirm that JST Isaiah 50 was simply copied from the 1830 Book of Mormon. It is possible that Nephi₁ had access to a version of Isaiah 50 closer to the version in 2 Nephi 7 and JST Isaiah 50 than the KJV, but in terms of textual influence, the Book of Mormon was the source for JST Isaiah 50.

^{21.} Skousen, "Earliest Textual Sources," 460–62. Emphasis original for the Book of Mormon phrases, otherwise emphasis added.

Turning now to JST Genesis 50 and its relationship to 2 Nephi 3, this relationship is complex. It is easy to conclude that the added material in JST Genesis 50 has been copied from the Book of Mormon, but what may have been copied also shows signs of periodically being thoughtfully edited or slightly reworked along the way. Not all of Lehi,'s words are found in JST Genesis 50, and not all the added material in JST Genesis 50 is present in 2 Nephi 3. In general, though, JST Genesis 50:24–35 largely corresponds with 2 Nephi 3: 5–18. The extensive level of verbatim overlap is unlike the intertextuality seen across the Book of Mormon with respect to the Book of Moses, where short phrases and terms are employed in many paraphrases and allusions rather than extensive verbatim quotes. While I lean toward proposing that a reworking of 2 Nephi 3 may account for JST Genesis 50, Kent Jackson's proposal is also reasonable:

Perhaps the best conclusion for understanding the relationship between JST Genesis and 2 Nephi 3 is that both the plates of brass and a proto-Genesis text (or some other ancient document) contained records of the prophecy of ancient Joseph. The version Lehi quoted was apparently longer, because it continues after the JST version comes to an end. When revising the Old Testament, Joseph Smith may have drawn from the words in the Book of Mormon when the two accounts were close enough to the same, but even that is speculation.²²

We now consider JST Isaiah 29:6, 8–34, which closely follows 2 Nephi 27:2–34. Nephi appears to be reworking Isaiah as he adds his own prophecies regarding the latter days and the Book of Mormon. Again, this looks like extensive overlap consistent with largely importing the Book of Mormon into the JST. Jackson notes that the Book of Mormon text here was copied onto the JST manuscript, where the 1830 version of 2 Nephi 27:3–35 is reproduced "including all the 1830 paragraph breaks but one." ²³

Apart from these examples, there is little evidence of other meaningful connections between the Book of Mormon and the JST with any of the characteristics seen in parallels with the Book of Moses. One possibility that can be considered is that JST Genesis 14:25–40, a passage that deals with Melchizedek, shows a slight resonance with

^{22.} Jackson, Understanding Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, 152.

^{23.} Jackson, Understanding Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, 154n11.

Alma 13:14-19. Melchizedek is said to have been ordained a high priest "after the order of the covenant" that God made with Enoch (JST Genesis 14:27). Likewise. Alma 13:14 indicates that Melchizedek was a high priest, a detail not explicitly stated in the KJV Bible, though the term "high priest" is associated with his name several times: "an high priest after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 5:10), and "an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 6:20, 7:21; cf. Psalm 110:4). Related language pertaining to priesthood is found in Parallel 2, "order-days-years-eternity" based on Moses 6:67 and Alma 13:7, and in Parallel 52, "ordained ... after the order" of the Son of God or of God, based on Moses 8:19 (cf. 6:67-68), 2 Nephi 6:2, and Alma 13:1, 2 (cf. Alma 13: 6-10, 14, and several other verses). The concept of men being ordained as high priests is also found in the KJV (Hebrews 5:1, 8:3). In short, JST Genesis 14 does not seem to offer a compelling source for the language already considered in Alma 13, but it is interestina.

A few other minor elements were also interesting but not that notable. For example, JST Isaiah 65:2 adds "their works are evil" which is like part of Alma 41:4: "And if **their works are evil** they shall be restored unto them for evil." While that phrase does not occur in the KJV, closely related language includes "the works thereof are evil" (John 7:7), "his own works were evil" (1 John 3:12), "every evil work" (2 Timothy 4:18), etc. Thus, JST Isaiah 65:2 does not appear to provide a meaningful parallel to the Book of Mormon.

The Sermon at the Temple, as John Welch has appropriately called the version of the Sermon on the Mount that Christ taught to the Nephites at the Temple in Bountiful,²⁴ has several differences relative to the King James Bible. Many, but not all, of these differences were imported into the JST versions of the Sermon on the Mount, especially in Matthew 5–7, corresponding to 3 Nephi 12–14. For example, added material in JST Matthew 5:3–4 speaks of the blessing to come to others who will hear the apostles preach and believe in their words, especially those who are baptized. They will be visited with fire and the Holy Ghost, roughly following a similar message to the New World disciples in 3 Nephi 12:1. The words that follow in 3 Nephi 12:2 are almost identical to those in JST Matthew 5:4:

^{24.} John W. Welch, *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple & the Sermon on the Mount* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999), scripturecentral.org/archive/books/book/illuminating-sermon-temple-sermon-mount.

Yea, blessed are they who shall believe on your words, and come down into the depth of humility and be baptized in my name, for they shall be visited with fire and the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins.

Also, the Book of Mormon's well-known addition of "who come unto me" in the Beatitudes is also imported into the JST: "Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit, who come unto me, for there is the kingdom of heaven" (JST Matthew 5:5; cf. 3 Nephi 12:3). As Skousen notes, while much of the Sermon on the Mount is adapted to follow the Book of Mormon's Sermon at the Temple, there are also instances where the KJV instead of the Book of Mormon is followed and instances where the JST has unique material.²⁵ There is a heavy but not a slavish reliance on the Book of Mormon. Jackson, for example, in discussing the Sermon on the Mount chapters, notes that "the Prophet made many revisions in [Matthew 6 and 7] but did so without consulting the Book of Mormon," apart from a revision in Matthew 6:30 that may have been influenced by 3 Nephi 13:30.²⁶

As interesting as the differences are, they are moot for our purposes here since the Book of Mormon material derives directly from the ministry of Christ and the recorded wording is not likely to have drawn upon New Testament manuscripts that presumably were never available to the Nephites apart from the words of Christ. Thus, the Book of Mormon is likely to have been the source for some changes in the JST versions of the Sermon of Mount but almost certainly not the other way around.

Apart from some passages in the JST that may have been imported from the Book of Mormon, the JST after the Book of Moses simply does not show the kind of relationships to the Book of Mormon that have been the focus of this study. An outpouring of newly revealed ancient material appears to have occurred during the translation of the Book of Moses, yielding material that improbably seems to have influenced the earlier Book of Mormon, possibly through a link to the brass plates. This makes the Book of Moses unique with respect to the Book of Mormon, with a large body of parallels that are difficult to explain as the work of naturalistic forces during Joseph Smith's translation of the two texts.

^{25.} Skousen, The History of the Text of the Book of Mormon, Part Five, The King James Quotations in the Book of Mormon, 136–38.

^{26.} Jackson, Understanding Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, 149.

While the Book of Moses that was canonized in 1880 might seem like it was rather arbitrarily selected from the JST of the Bible up to Genesis 6:13, it seems to have captured revealed material with a surprisingly large number of textural parallels to the Book of Mormon, including textual parallels suggestive of a one-way direction of influence from the Book of Moses to the Book of Mormon.

Surely, for these textual parallels to exist, there must have been some common factor in the translation process that allowed connections between the Book of Mormon and the later Book of Moses to remain visible and meaningful. Here we must make some observations on the obvious importance of the translation method.

Did the Translation Method Preserve or Create the Parallels?

Do the observations about related language in the Book of Moses and Book of Mormon tell us something about the origins of the two texts? Or do such findings more likely tell us about the work and intentions of the translator(s)? Could translation artifacts or other factors account for the parallels without the need for common material on the brass plates? A related and noteworthy question has been raised by David Calabro:

The evidence brought forward by Lindsay and Reynolds is of great significance. It certainly demonstrates that there are intertextual connections between some of the contents of the plates of brass and the restored portions of the Book of Moses. However, the precise relationship between these texts cannot be adequately described without a systematic comparison of the language of the Book of Mormon, the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis, and the New Testament. Such a comparison is beyond the scope of this paper, but some preliminary observations may be offered here.

One observation is that the use of New Testament-like language in the Book of Mormon involves a number of unique factors. The foundational revelation given to Nephi in 1 Nephi 11–14, which is explicitly linked to the Revelation of John (see 1 Nephi 14:18–27), may have proleptically introduced similar language into Nephite discourse. Further, most of the historical parrative in the Book of Mormon is an

abridgment by Mormon and Moroni, who lived long after the ministry of Christ among the Nephites. During his ministry, Christ "did expound all things, even from the beginning until the time that he should come in his glory" (3 Nephi 26:3). The greater part of this discourse, which may have included material similar to the Book of Moses, was recorded on the large plates of Nephi (3 Nephi 26:7). It is therefore possible that the abridged account is influenced by the language of Christ's teachings. Even quotations from the plates of brass found on the large plates may have been rendered into Christian language in the process of creating the edited text-after all, it is reasonable to imagine Mormon needing to translate the language of the nearly one-thousandyear-old plates of brass into his own written idiom. Finally, the possibility of influence from native American languages and sources is a large unknown factor. It is not out of the question that native American expressions with no direct relationship to the New Testament were nevertheless close enough in meaning that they were translated into English using New Testament language. Thus, the parallel New Testament-like language in the Book of Mormon and the Book of Moses may be explained in various ways; it is not always necessary to conclude that one is derived from the other 27

Calabro's question suggests that we might better understand the significance of related language in the Book of Moses if we also examine the Joseph Smith Translation more thoroughly. That examination points to something unique about the Book of Moses not found systematically in other parts of the JST. More generally, Calabro raises the complex issue that multiple factors having the potential to influence the final translation without necessarily requiring that the brass plates were a vehicle for textual influence into the Book of Mormon.

Here the issue of the distribution of parallels provides useful data. If the various factors that led to the incorporation of New Testament language into the Book of Mormon, such as Mormon's and Moroni's Christian vocabulary and their language preferences in translating old

^{27.} David Calabro, "An Early Christian Context for the Book of Moses," *Interpreter: AJournalofLatter-daySaintFaithandScholarship* 47 (2021):195–96, interpreter foundation.org/journal/an-early-christian-context-for-the-book-of-moses/.

records into their vernacular, are key causes for apparent links to the Book of Moses, then we might find that the Book of Moses parallels occur rather uniformly throughout the Book of Mormon. If anything, we might expect the words of post-New Testament era prophets, such as Mormon and Moroni, to represent the zenith of the distribution while the small plates writers would have relatively less Book of Moses material (especially since Mormon and Moroni apparently did not rework or translate that material.²⁸ This, however, is the opposite of what we see. There is not a uniform distribution, and indeed, Mormon's writings have some of the lowest concentrations observed, with the book of Moroni only slightly higher. It is the ancient small plates, apparently untranslated by Mormon but simply added to the gold plates, that contains the richest concentration of parallels in the words of Lehi, Nephi, and Jacob. Those most familiar with the brass plates tend to give us the most allusions to the Book of Moses, including subtle oneway allusions that add explanatory power to the text in ways that could not be reasonably achieved by Joseph's mind. The distribution data suggests that something else besides random incorporation of New Testament language is the mechanism for the parallels.

There is still certainly the possibility that some of the parallels were not intended by the original Book of Mormon authors or speakers and could have been introduced in the modern translation either by accident or by design to call attention to a meaningful connection that readers might well consider.

Indeed, the translation mechanism demands more attention, for the nature of the parallels observed in our studies suggests that translator intent or at least translator cooperation may have been required in many cases to make the parallels clear. Such intent seems to have been at play for both the Book of Mormon and the Book of Moses. A looser more functional translation for either volume could have obscured many of the results. This raises the controversial issue of just how the translation was done. A few thoughts will be offered, while first observing that the findings reported here do not require

^{28.} John S. Thompson argues that the Charles Anthon incident and associated reports support the notion that the Book of Mormon contained two differing scripts, an Egyptian script from the small plates and the much later Reformed Egyptian script used by Mormon and Moroni. See John S. Thompson, "Looking Again at the Anthon Transcript(s)," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 63 (2025): 353–66, journal.interpreterfoundation.org/looking-again-at-the-anthon-transcripts/.

any one model of translation apart from translation through the power of God. But some models seem more consistent with our data than others.

The details of exactly how Joseph translated the Book of Mormon remain relatively unclear apart from using revelatory tools such as the Nephite interpreters or a single seer stone, though even that is the source of much controversy and misunderstanding. ²⁹ By the time the Book of Moses was translated, there is no evidence that such tools continued to be used. Jackson notes that none of the many scribes Joseph used during the JST work ever mentioned the use of revelatory aids, and no other information from contemporary sources points to their use. ³⁰ Indeed, a statement from Orson Pratt may explain why they were not used:

Elder Pratt said he was present when this revelation was given. No great noise or physical manifestation was made; Joseph was as calm as the morning sun. But he noticed a change in his countenance that he had never noticed before, when a revelation was given to him. Joseph's face was exceedingly white, and seemed to shine. The speaker had been present many times when he was translating the New Testament, and wondered why he did not use the Urim and Thummim, as in translating the Book of Mormon. While this thought passed through the speaker's mind, Joseph, as if he read his thoughts, looked up and explained that the Lord gave him the Urim and Thummim when he was inexperienced in the Spirit of inspiration. But now he had advanced so far that he understood the operations of that Spirit, and did not need the assistance of that instrument.³¹

^{29.} See "Book of Mormon Translation," *Gospel Topics Essays*, churchofjesus christ.org/study/manual/gospel-topics-essays/book-of-mormon-translation. For an example of controversies related to the Church's acknowledgement of the use of a seer stone in part of the translation of the Book of Mormon in that Gospel Topics essay, see the book review, Jeff Lindsay, "Through a Glass Darkly: Restoring Translation to the Restoration?," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 63 (2025): 169–202, interpreterfoundation.org/journal/through-a-glass-darkly-restoring-translation-to-the-restoration/.

^{30.} Jackson, Understanding Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, 15.

^{31.} Orson Pratt, "Two Days' Meeting at Brigham City, June 27 and 28, 1874," *Millennial Star* 36 (11 August 1874): 498–99, contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/collection/MStar/id/13925.

Joseph never explained what process occurred either in his mind or before his eyes as he translated. It is commonly proposed that Joseph translated the Book of Mormon by looking at a portion of the text to be translated, perhaps through the transparent seer stones of the Nephite interpreters, sometimes called a Urim and Thummim, and "studied out" in his mind a proposed translation, perhaps responding to spiritual impressions. This "first draft" of Joseph's composed translation was then taken to the Lord in prayer to see if it could be confirmed with a burning in the bosom. Otherwise, there would be a stupor of thought requiring revision until a proposed translation of the unknown language in an unknown script would finally be accepted, at which point it could be dictated, and then the process would continue for the next few characters. Such a model for the translation is based on what I consider a popular misreading of Doctrine and Covenants 9:7–9, which many believe is a revelation about how Book of Mormon translation was done. On closer inspection, this may be incorrect. In a paper on this famous passage of the Doctrine and Covenants, Stan Spencer provided detailed analysis giving an important conclusion:

Doctrine and Covenants 9:7–9 is conventionally interpreted as the Lord's description of the method by which the Book of Mormon was translated. A close reading of the entire revelation, however, suggests that the Lord was not telling Oliver Cowdery how to translate but rather how to know whether it was right for him to translate and how to obtain the faith necessary to do so.³²

The analysis includes consideration of what the "it" must be in "study it out." Spencer determines that the most reasonable interpretation is that the issue is not *how* to translate, but whether it was the Lord's will for Oliver to translate. Spencer concludes that "Doctrine and Covenants 9:7–9 teaches us how to obtain a spiritual confirmation of a righteous desire." Or as my wife, Kendra Lindsay, put it, we might summarize the "it" of Doctrine and Covenants 9:8 as the

^{32.} Stan Spencer, "The Faith to See: Burning in the Bosom and Translating the Book of Mormon in Doctrine and Covenants 9," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 18 (2016): 219, interpreterfoundation.org/journal/the-faith -to-see-burning-in-the-bosom-and-translating-the-book-of-mormon-in -doctrine-and-covenants-9/.

^{33.} Spencer, "The Faith to See," 232.

question, "Am I right before God and ready to translate?" or, "Is the time right and the translator ready?" 34

In any case, the laborious iterative composition process implied by a popular reading of Doctrine and Covenants 9:7–9 for the task of translating an unknown language and script cannot reasonably fit the data on the extreme speed of the translation process,³⁵ or on the remarkable consistency and intertextuality of the resulting English.

Extensive data from various witnesses to the translation and also from analysis of the dictated text points to the translation work as associated with the role of a seer who somehow saw the translated text and was able to then provide it to the scribes, though later adjustments to the text for clarity were certainly possible for Joseph.³⁶ It seems that his work as a seer in translating an unknown script was not one of gradually getting impressions for Reformed Egyptian characters to pray about but one of seeing the translated text and reading it aloud to scribes. This is also consistent with Nephi₁'s prophecies of the forthcoming of the Book of Mormon in 2 Nephi 27: 20, 22, 24, which three times says that Joseph Smith would "read the words" of the Book of Mormon, something that "the learned" was not able to do.

One of several excellent papers applying linguistic data to support the notion that Joseph saw translation that he read to his scribes is a work of Stanford Carmack with the fitting title, "Joseph Smith Read the Words." ³⁷ Indeed, there is a sizable body of work from both Skousen³⁸

^{34.} Kendra Lindsay, personal communication with author, 17 January 2025, discussed in Jeff Lindsay, "Honorable Intentions with an Unreliable Methodology: Lucas's Response Underscores the Problems," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 64 (2025):115–16, interpreterfoundation org/journal/honorable-intentions-with-an-unreliable-methodology-lucass-response-underscores-the-problems/.

^{35.} See discussion in Lindsay, "Honorable Intentions with an Unreliable Methodology," 114–18.

^{36.} See discussion in Lindsay, "Through a Glass Darkly: Restoring Translation to the Restoration?"

Stanford Carmack, "Joseph Smith Read the Words," Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture 18 (2016): 41–64, interpreterfoundation.org/journal/joseph-smith-read-the-words/.

^{38.} Royal Skousen, "The Language of the Original Text of the Book of Mormon," BYU Studies Quarterly 57, no. 3 (2018): 81–110, byustudies.byu.edu/article /the-language-of-the-original-text-of-the-book-of-mormon. Also see Royal Skousen, "How Joseph Smith Translated the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript," Journal of Book of Mormon Studies 7, no. 1 (1998), 22–31, scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1186&context=jbms.

and Carmack³⁹ indicating that the language Joseph employed in his dictation of the Book of Mormon was generally tightly controlled, suggesting that it was not being composed by Joseph Smith in his own words on the fly but that the English translation was given to him. The English given to him was not his own dialect but contained many archaic elements from Early Modern English, including many that reflect influence from before the time when the KJV Bible was translated. We don't yet understand why there should be a strong influence of non-KJV Early Modern English in the dictated translation, but the data is there and remains compelling.⁴⁰ While counterarguments can be made, the phenomenon of extensive intertextuality with the Book of Moses seems consistent with the work and conclusions of Skousen and Carmack and may add an additional dimension to their proposals.

In our studies to date on connections between the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon, the outcomes that have been reported are largely based on the use of common words or expressions that make the connection apparent. Had the translation of either the Book of Mormon or the Book of Moses been simply expressed in Joseph's own language with the semantic variability that can easily occur when one is doing the "heavy lifting" of expressing meaning in one's own choice of words, many and perhaps most of the parallels might not have been detected. Further, as Rebecca Lambert observed, a more

^{39.} Stanford Carmack, "A Look at Some 'Nonstandard' Book of Mormon Grammar," Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship 11 (2014): 209–62, interpreterfoundation.org/journal/a-look-at-some-nonstandard-book-of-mormon-grammar/; Stanford Carmack, "The Book of Mormon's Complex Finite Cause Syntax," Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship 49 (2021): 113–36, interpreterfoundation.org/journal/the-book-of-mormons-complex-finite-cause-syntax/; Stanford Carmack, "The More Part of the Book of Mormon Is Early Modern English," Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship 18 (2016): 33–40, interpreterfoundation.org/journal/the-more-part-of-the-book-of-mormon-is-early-modern-english/; and Stanford Carmack, "What Command Syntax Tells Us About Book of Mormon Authorship," Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship 13 (2015): 175–217, interpreterfoundation.org/journal/what-command-syntax-tells-us-about-book-of-mormon-authorship/.

^{40.} For an overview, see Stanford Carmack, "A Plain Exposition of Book of Mormon English by Means of Short Questions and Informed Answers," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 63 (2025): 107–20, interpreterfoundation.org/journal/a-plain-exposition-of-book-of-mormon-english-by-means-of-short-questions-and-informed-answers/.

uniform distribution across chapters edited by Mormon might be expected if Mormon were responsible for most of these parallels.⁴¹

Reynolds's initial paper was based on computer matches of specific words, and many other parallels were found by searching for specific words and phrases as well. In many ways, it seems that tight control was applied for at least some of the language in both the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon. Or in other words, at least the translator(s) may have wanted the parallel to be noticed.

Such reasoning does not necessarily mean that Nephi₁ deliberately chose words that alluded to a brass-plates version of Genesis, but intent on his part still seems likely. Intent looks especially likely in the high levels of allusions found in his work and in the subtly meaningful applications of those allusions. One example is Laman's implicit characterization of Nephi₁ as Satanic in 1 Nephi 16:38 by his subtle reference to Moses 4:4 on the characteristics of Satan (Parallel 11). This parallel with its explanatory power only makes sense when understood as having a one-way direction of influence on 1 Nephi, and it makes the most sense if Nephi₁ was fully aware of the implications and the extreme irony of the charges.

Interestingly, Laman's charges against Nephi₁ involved with Parallel 11 echo across the centuries of Lamanite culture. We know of lasting Lamanite hatred of the Nephites from Mosiah 10:11–17, based on the anger of Laman and Lemuel, who said that Nephi₁ robbed them. This hatred is expressed much later during the ministry of the sons of Mosiah to the Lamanites, when Ammon₂ is journeying with his regal convert, King Lamoni, and meets King Lamoni's father on the road. King Lamoni speaks up for Ammon₂ as a servant of God and friend to the Lamanites, but the father shocks the son with his outrage:

And now when Lamoni had rehearsed unto him all these things, behold, to his astonishment, his father was angry with him, and said: Lamoni, thou art going to deliver these Nephites, who **are sons of a liar**. Behold, he robbed our fathers; and now his children are also come amongst us that they may, by **their cunning and their lyings**, **deceive us**, that they again may rob us of our property. (Alma 20:13)

With these words, King Lamoni's father is not just reciting general charges of Nephite oppression, but he is also regurgitating a specific ancient charge of his forefathers. His words call our attention to

^{41.} Rebecca Lambert, personal correspondence with author, 27 May 2025.

Laman's condemnation of their brother, which in turn alludes to the Book of Moses. Consider these verses related to Parallel 11:

And he became Satan, yea, even the devil, **the father of all lies**, to **deceive** and to **blind** men, and to **lead them captive** at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice. (Moses 4:4)

Now, he says that the Lord has talked with him, and also that angels have ministered unto him. But behold, we know that he lies unto us; and he tells us these things, and he worketh many things by his cunning arts, that he may deceive our eyes, thinking, perhaps, that he may lead us away into some strange wilderness; and after he has led us away, he has thought to make himself a king and a ruler over us, that he may do with us according to his will and pleasure. And after this manner did my brother Laman stir up their hearts to anger. (1 Nephi 16:38)

Just as Laman alludes to Moses 4:4 to suggest that Nephi, was following the father of all lies, lying to his brethren to deceive them and blind them, to lead them away as captives with his cunning (subtle) arts, so King Lamoni's father describes Ammon, the Nephite, as the son of a liar, whose alleged miracles are due to his satanic cunning arts, again trying to deceive the Lamanites in order to exploit them. The ancient words of Father Laman still reverberate strongly in the mind of the great Lamanite king, words that must be understood as a meaningful and ironic allusion to Moses 4:4, though King Lamoni's father may have had no knowledge of that verse, just the ancient accusation. Words like lyings, liar, deceive, and cunning help establish the echo of Laman's charge in 1 Nephi 16:38 and thus its connection to Moses 4:4. This scene in one verse of Alma 20 still has unexpected resonance with a much older allusion to the brass-plates version of Genesis apparently made by Laman centuries earlier. Such finds. minor as they may be, point to the richness of the intertextuality of the Book of Mormon and the blessing to us provided by the careful wording of the English translations of both the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon that help us learn from these features.

Whether one believes that Joseph Smith had to do the heavy lifting of studying out the translation of the gold plates in his own mind or not, the translation process ultimately was revelatory and has given us an English text with meaningful ancient echoes often pointing to an influence on Book of Mormon figures by a proposed brass-plates version of Genesis akin to our Book of Moses. Some of the parallels could be due to chance and others might not have been intended by an early Book of Mormon writer but may have been provided or amplified either by later editorial work by Mormon or in translation work by whoever crafted the English translation, whether that was a heavenly being or a young Joseph Smith acting under inspiration. In any case, the diverse results seem to require divine aid rather than the human work of a clever composer named Joseph Smith.

The mysterious details of the divine translation work of Joseph Smith play an important role here. The strong similarity in language that characterizes most of the parallels between the Book of Mormon and the Book of Moses would seem to require a relatively tightly controlled translation process, apparently tailored to make the relationships clear or detectable. For the Book of Mormon, the translated parallels may have involved speakers of Hebrew, Aramaic, or later descendant languages who read a presumably Egyptian version of Genesis, translated it to their spoken language at least for the sermons and dialogs of the Book of Mormon, and then transcribed that onto the gold plates in "reformed Egyptian," which in turn was finally translated to English.

Meanwhile, the Book of Moses could have been translated from an unknown Egyptian document by or attributed to Moses, or from a document in Hebrew or some other language related to a document originally from Moses, or perhaps it was translated directly into English from a brass-plates version of Genesis. In any case, the linguistic family tree of the English Book of Mormon is different than that of the Book of Moses, so obtaining such extensive intertextuality in the final products would seem to require deliberate choices made in the final translation. Given that this intertextuality involves the later translated Book of Moses's serving as a rich mother lode for allusions and references in the Book of Mormon, it is unlikely that Joseph was the source of the wording. Translator intent or translator cooperation seems to be required for at least portions of both the Book of Mormon and the Book of Moses.

The proposal of translator intent or cooperation playing a significant role in preserving parallels or making them noticeable to English readers raises the issue of how the English syntax of the Book of Moses compares to the Book of Mormon. Does it also show a strong influence of Early Modern English and a disconnection with Joseph's own dialect? If the English verbiage of the Book of Moses

had been adjusted to maintain linguistic connections with the Book of Mormon, then it would seem reasonable that the style and syntax of the Book of Moses overall might be like that of the Book of Mormon. This is indeed what the data appear to show. 42 Stanford Carmack's 2021 paper, "The Original English of the Book of Moses and What It Indicates About the Book's Authorship," examined thirty different linguistic categories and compared their traits across the Book of Moses, the Book of Mormon, the KJV Bible, Joseph's early writings, and a pseudo-archaic corpus of texts that tried to imitate archaic biblical syntax. Carmack's findings are significant:

Joseph Smith's native usage can explain 30 percent of Book of Moses usage, pseudo-archaism 44 percent, and King James usage 37 percent. The Book of Mormon, however, is able to account for most of the patterns and forms investigated: 86 percent of them, by this count. (It is possible, of course, to include other features, which would change the percentages somewhat.) But the Book of Mormon falls short of being able to explain a few of the linguistic features mentioned in table 2, most notably the past-tense usage. The few usage issues it cannot explain occur in the early modern period. Indeed, broader early modern usage (most of the time not Joseph Smith's modern usage) accounts for all the linguistic features. Thus the simplest explanation of the Book of Moses's English usage would be to adopt an early modern perspective - in other words, that a text showing true early modern sensibility in language use was revealed to Joseph Smith in 1830.43

The English language of the Book of Moses as dictated by Joseph Smith is by far closest to the Book of Mormon, but it has some notable differences that can be accounted for as a slightly different form of Early Modern English influence on the translation than is present in the Book of Mormon.

^{42.} Stanford Carmack, "The Original English of the Book of Moses and What It Indicates About the Book's Authorship" in *Tracing Ancient Threads in the Book of Moses*, vol. 2, *Inspired Origins, Temple Contexts, and Literary Qualities*, ed. Jeffrey Bradshaw et al. (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation; Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2021), 631–702, interpreterfoundation.org/conference-talks -the-original-english-of-the-book-of-moses-and-what-it-indicates-about -the-books-authorship/.

^{43.} Carmack, "The Original English of the Book of Moses," 634-35.

Of course, naturalistic explanations for Joseph's work of translation would also suggest that the two texts should be similar since they ought to reflect his own language. But the data from linguistic analysis of the Book of Moses shows that it is not simply the same as the Book of Mormon, and importantly, does not closely follow Joseph's syntax, just as the language of the Book of Mormon cannot be explained as Joseph's syntax or as his effort to imitate the King James Bible. Carmack's analysis is consistent with an English translation intended to preserve linguistic connections with the Book of Mormon.

These Parallels are Different in Nature to Those Employed by Critics

A recently posed question involves the potential downside of emphasizing parallels to another text. After all, aren't such parallels also used to attack the Book of Mormon?

The parallels in this study are of a different nature than those often employed by critics of the Book of Mormon. Various pre-1829 texts have been proposed as sources that Joseph plagiarized or drew upon, based on words, similar names, phrases, or sometimes themes. Upon further investigation, many such parallels reflect common phrases in the English language, KJV language, or perhaps random chance, especially when the matches are based on common words whose shared usage seems trivial and random. Some attacks are based on similar sounding names occurring in unrelated contexts. Such parallels generally lack substance or explanatory power. For examples of treatments of the flaws and lack of significance in some popular "smoking guns" for Book of Mormon origins, see Benjamin L. McGuire, "The Late War Against the Book of Mormon" 44; the FAIR Latter-day Saints answer to "Was the beginning of the Book of Mormon derived from The First Book of Napoleon? 45"; and Benjamin

^{44.} Benjamin L. McGuire, "The Late War Against the Book of Mormon," *Interpreter:* A Journal of Mormon Scripture 7 (2013): 323–55, interpreterfoundation.org /journal/the-late-war-against-the-book-of-mormon/; responding to a presentation by Chris and Duane Johnson, "How the Book of Mormon Destroyed Mormonism," 19 October 2013, in Salt Lake City, which claimed that the statistical analysis identified a key Book of Mormon source in John Lewis Thomson, *HistoricalsketchesofthelatewarbetweentheUnitedStatesandGreatBritain* (G. J. Hunt: New York, 1816), archive.org/details/historicalsketch00inthom/page /n11/mode/2up.

^{45. &}quot;Was the beginning of the Book of Mormon derived from The First Book of Napoleon?" FAIR Latter-day Saints, fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Question:

McGuire's "Finding Parallels: Some Cautions and Criticisms, Part One" 46 and "Part Two." 47 Also see my response to suggestions that the place name Nahom in the Book of Mormon is easily explained based on its alleged ubiquity around the world. 48

On the other hand, the parallels in the Book of Mormon discussed here are parallels to an English volume that had not been produced and frequently add meaning or depth to the Book of Mormon text, as we expect when one text makes an intentional allusion to another document. Some of them may be due to chance, as we have repeatedly noted, but many fit the context or add meaning in ways indicative of intent and even point to a Book of Moses-related text that provides a backstory or context for the allusion. As a body, they have explanatory power that helps us recognize meaningful relationships. As such, they weaken rather than strengthen claims of modern plagiarism by Joseph.

This project began with a quest for answers, not a search for parallels to support a preconceived argument. It began with my puzzling over 1 Nephi 4:2, where Nephi 1 tries to motivate his brethren by saying, "Let us be strong like unto Moses, for he truly spake unto the waters of the Red Sea and they divided hither and thither." I wanted to know what Nephi 1 was alluding to, for I could find nothing in the Old Testament calling Moses strong. That's when I learned of Noel Reynolds's paper pointing to thirty-three connections between the Book of Mormon and Book of Moses. Intrigued, I began examining the Book of Moses and quickly found a clear connection that helped to explain what Nephi 1 might have been referring to: "blessed art thou,

_Was_the_beginning_of_the_Book_of_Mormon_derived_from_%27%27 The_First_Book_of_Napoleon%27%27%3F. This deals with popular allegations based on Michael Linning, *The First Book of Napoleon, The Tyrant of the Earth* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, & Orme, 1809), scripturecentral.org /archive/books/book/first-book-napoleon-tyrant-earth.

^{46.} Benjamin L. McGuire, "Finding Parallels: Some Cautions and Criticisms, Part One," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 5 (2013): 1–59, interpreter foundation.org/journal/finding-parallels-some-cautions-and-criticisms-part-one/.

^{47.} Benjamin L. McGuire, "Finding Parallels: Some Cautions and Criticisms, Part Two," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 5 (2013): 61–104, interpreter foundation.org/journal/finding-parallels-some-cautions-and-criticisms-part-two/.

^{48.} Jeff Lindsay, "Noham, That's Not History (Nor Geography, Cartography, or Logic): More on the Recent Attacks on NHM," *Arise from the Dust* (blog), 22 December 2013, arisefromthedust.com/noham-thats-not-history-nor-geography/.

Moses, for I, the Almighty, have chosen thee, and thou shalt be made stronger than many waters; for they shall obey thy command as if thou wert God" (Moses 1:25). It was the perfect candidate for a source describing Moses as strong in the context of crossing the Red Sea as the waters obeyed his command, as in 1 Nephi 4:2. This was not a random parallel with a couple of similar words being used but one that offered a specific common context and had explanatory power. That find offered a satisfying answer to a legitimate question and added relevant background to a Book of Mormon passage. Many of the subsequently discovered parallels likewise answer questions and add richness to the Book of Mormon text. This goes beyond parallelomania.

Conclusion

In the process of addressing reasonable questions about the connections between the Book of Mormon and the Book of Moses, several further discoveries have been made which seem to strengthen the case for meaningful ancient relationships. The patterns in the distribution of the parallels show non-random results in which those writers most familiar with the brass plates are most likely to allude to material related to the Book of Moses. Intriguing insights can be obtained by looking at the level of individual books, chapters within books, and verses themselves. The density of parallels in some sections, such as the words of Lehi₁, is noteworthy, but we can also learn much from the "gaps" where one or more chapters are free of parallels.

Exploring the Joseph Smith Translation also shows that something unique occurred for the initial portion of the JST that became our canonized Book of Moses. Perhaps a revelatory outpouring rooted in ancient texts occurred in that initial work, followed by continuing revelation but in ways less directly related to the Book of Mormon. The pervasive and often meaningful connections between the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon are not found in the remaining JST, just as they are not found with the Book of Abraham. This contributes to the wonder and uniqueness of the Book of Moses connections and undermines theories that the connections can be explained by Joseph Smith simply reusing familiar Book of Mormon language in his subsequent translation work. The Book of Abraham and the latter portions of the JST are evidence against such naturalistic hypotheses, as are the details of the distribution of the parallels.

The hypothesis Reynolds originally proposed was that a text that could have influenced Book of Mormon writers was something like

our Book of Moses that might have existed on the brass plates. For the first thirty-three parallels that Reynolds uncovered, he observed that the writers of the small plates, whom we might expect would be particularly well schooled in the brass plates, are responsible for most of the Book of Moses's influence that he had identified:

It is also impressive that most of the influence from the Book of Moses in the Book of Mormon shows up early in the small plates and the writings of the first generation of Book of Mormon prophets—significantly, those who had custody and long-term, firsthand access to the brass plates. Many of the later passages that use Book of Moses terminology and concepts tend to repeat earlier Nephite adaptations of the original materials.⁴⁹

Over time, his hypothesis, based on only thirty-three parallels, has held up well, and now over 140 parallels have been identified. It is still the case that several small plates authors or speakers have particularly high levels of parallels, though we can also appreciate many more important parallels across many books.

The surprisingly high level of intertextuality between the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon presents a series of challenges to those who claim Joseph Smith was the author of both. I propose that a study of these parallels, their characteristics, and the insights they provide can help us better appreciate the ancient origins of both texts.

Such investigation can also help us appreciate the marvel of the divine translation processes that gave us the English, especially when we consider the chronology of the translation work. For example, consider Parallel 11, "lies-lead-will-deceive-eyes" from Moses 4:4 with relationships to 1 Nephi 16:38, with a newly added cross-reference to Alma 20:13, as discussed above (also included in the updates listed in Part 2 of this series⁵⁰).

The words of King Lamoni's father in Alma 20:13 were dictated shortly after the Book of Mosiah, but long before the dictation turned to the small plates. Having the recrimination against "the son of a liar" worded to allude to Laman's ancient accusation—before that story was even translated and written in English—is a remarkable thing for a text dictated on the fly without notes at a high rate of speed and without major revisions. If the Book of Mormon were a modern

^{49.} Reynolds, "The Brass Plates Version of Genesis," 72.

^{50.} Lindsay, "Parallels, Part 2."

composition, how does the author of Alma 20 subtly allude to a backstory in 1 Nephi that hasn't been written yet, with the precisely worded backstory to be filled in weeks later near the end of the translation process when 1 Nephi 16:38 is reached? And then how does one craft that verse to allude to yet another backstory, the characterization of Satan that came later in Moses 4:4—not dictated until well over another year would pass? Joseph as the author of such subtle, forward-looking allusion seems unlikely.

Many such questions abound in the utterly unexpected connections between the Book of Mormon and the later-translated text of the Book of Moses, which improbably seems to provide the backstory to and key terminology for many aspects of the earlier Book of Mormon. This all makes little sense, especially considering Joseph's education and the translation process observed by many witnesses, unless one can entertain the possibility of real ancient texts with real ancient authors, where one ancient text could influence the other. and where both were produced "in the wrong order" in modern times by a prophet translating with the power of God. It's a surprising story backed by surprising and unexpected data. Alternate hypotheses and new questions are welcome as we explore the implications of the data, but for now, the connections between the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon strike me as important evidence for the divinity, authenticity, and antiquity of both texts, and for their miraculous translation into English.



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