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Notes on Book of Mormon Heads

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NOTES ON BOOK OF MORMON HEADS

Stephen O. Smoot

Abstract: *This paper looks at the two types of heads used in the Book of Mormon. It argues against a recent theory that these heads served as mnemonic cues that enabled Joseph Smith to extemporaneously compose and dictate the text. Instead, it argues that the function and form of heads in the Book of Mormon finds ancient precedent in Egyptian literary culture and scribal practice. A brief addendum on the ancient precedent for the chapter breaks in the original text of the Book of Mormon is also provided.*

There are two types of heads that are used in the Book of Mormon.¹ The first are what Brant A. Gardner calls “synoptic headers”² and what I call *subtitles* that occur at the beginning of eight out of the fifteen books in the Book of Mormon. These subtitles follow the main title of each book and provide a summary of that book’s content. They are reproduced in the table beginning on the next page, following Royal Skousen’s critical edition of the text.³

Of the eight subtitles, the lengthiest is found after the title of 1 Nephi (166 English words), followed by Helaman (106 words), then Alma (68 words), 3 Nephi (48 words), Jacob (31 words), 2 Nephi (28 words), and finally 4 Nephi (11 words). There is no discernible pattern in the length of the subtitles in Nephi’s small plates (1 Nephi–Omni), Mormon’s abridgement of the large plates of Nephi (Mosiah–Mormon), or Moroni’s additions to his father’s abridgement (Ether–Moroni). There does, however, appear to be a pattern in the consistency of these subtitles appearing on Mormon’s abridged books in the large plates. Mormon did not include a subtitle on his own book but did include one on each of his abridged books.⁴ One possible way to account for this is that since he was working with preexisting material, it was possible for Mormon to summarize the abridged content and give these books a subtitle.⁵ When he set out to write his own book, though, there were no preexisting

records from which to draw, so Mormon may not have planned his own book out far enough in advance to provide a subtitle.

Book Title	Subtitle
The Book of Nephi, His Reign and Ministry [1 Nephi]	An account of Lehi and his wife Sariah and his four sons, being called, beginning at the eldest, Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi. The Lord warns Lehi to depart out of the land of Jerusalem because he prophesieth unto the people concerning their iniquity and they seek to destroy his life. He taketh three days' journey into the wilderness with his family. Nephi taketh his brethren and returns to the land of Jerusalem after the record of the Jews. The account of their sufferings. They take the daughters of Ishmael to wife. They take their families and depart into the wilderness. Their sufferings and afflictions in the wilderness. The course of their travels. They come to the large waters. Nephi's brethren rebelleth against him. He confoundeth them and buildeth a ship. They call the name of the place Bountiful. They cross the large waters into the promised land etc. This is according to the account of Nephi, or in other words, I Nephi wrote this record.
The Book of Nephi [2 Nephi]	An account of the death of Lehi. Nephi's brethren rebelleth against him. The Lord warns Nephi to depart into the wilderness etc. His journeyings in the wilderness etc.
The Book of Jacob the brother of Nephi	The words of his preaching unto his brethren. He confoundeth a man who seeketh to overthrow the doctrine of Christ. A few words concerning the history of the people of Nephi.
The Book of Enos	N/A
The Book of Jarom	N/A
The Book of Omni	N/A
The Words of Mormon	N/A
The Book of Mosiah ⁶	N/A
The Book of Alma the son of Alma	The account of Alma, who was the son of Alma, the first and chief judge over the people of Nephi, and also the high priest over the church. An account of the reign of the judges and the wars and contentions among the people. And also an account of a war between the Nephites and the Lamanites according to the record of Alma, the first and chief judge.

Book Title	Subtitle
The Book of Helaman	An account of the Nephites, their wars and contentions and their dissensions, and also the prophecies of many holy prophets before the coming of Christ, according to the record of Helaman, which was the son of Helaman, and also according to the records of his sons, even down to the coming of Christ. And also many of the Lamanites are converted; an account of their conversion. An account of the righteousness of the Lamanites and the wickedness and abominations of the Nephites, according to the record of Helaman and his sons, even down to the coming of Christ, which is called the book of Helaman etc.
The Book of Nephi the son of Nephi, which was the son of Helaman [3 Nephi]	And Helaman was the son of Helaman, which was the son of Alma, which was the son of Alma, being a descendant of Nephi, which was the son of Lehi, which came out of Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah the king of Judah.
The Book of Nephi, which is the son of Nephi, one of the disciples of Jesus Christ	An account of the people of Nephi according to his record.
The Book of Mormon	N/A
The Book of Ether ⁷	N/A
The Book of Moroni	N/A

The second category of heads are what Gardner calls “a synoptic header for a chapter [within the books of the Book of Mormon]”⁸ and what I called *markers of embedded content* that delineate embedded material (sermons, prophecies, instructions, epistles, and narratives) within individual books of the Book of Mormon. These markers are brief, none of them any longer than sixty English words (the longest appearing at Helaman 7 at 53 words).⁹

Current Chapters	1830 Chapters	Embedded Content Markers
2 Nephi 6–10	2 Nephi V–VII	The words of Jacob the brother of Nephi which he spake unto the people of Nephi:
Jacob 2–3	Jacob II	The words which Jacob the brother of Nephi spake unto the people of Nephi after the death of Nephi:

Current Chapters	1830 Chapters	Embedded Content Markers
Mosiah 9:1–21:27	Mosiah VI–IX	The Record of Zeniff. An account of his people from the time they left the land of Zarahemla until the time that they were delivered out of the hands of the Lamanites.
Mosiah 23–24	Mosiah XI	An account of Alma and the people of the Lord, which was driven into the wilderness by the people of king Noah.
Alma 5–6	Alma III–XI	The words which Alma, the high priest according to the holy order of God, delivered to the people in their cities and villages throughout the land.
Alma 7	Alma V	The words of Alma which he delivered to the people in Gideon, according to his own record.
Alma 9–14	Alma VII–X	The words of Alma and also the words of Amulek which was declared unto the people which was in the land of Ammonihah. And also they are cast into prison and delivered by the miraculous power of God which was in them, according to the record of Alma.
Alma 17–27	Alma XII–XV	An account of the sons of Mosiah, which rejected their rights to the kingdom for the word of God and went up to the land of Nephi to preach to the Lamanites. Their sufferings and deliverance according to the record of Alma.
Alma 21:1–17	Alma XIII	An account of the preaching of Aaron and Muloki and their brethren to the Lamanites.
Alma 36–37	Alma XVII	The commandments of Alma to his son Helaman.
Alma 38	Alma XVIII	The commandments of Alma to his son Shiblon.
Alma 39–42	Alma XIX	The commandments of Alma to his son Corianton.

Current Chapters	1830 Chapters	Embedded Content Markers
Alma 45–62	Alma XXI–XXIX	The account of the people of Nephi and their wars and dissensions in the days of Helaman, according to the record of Helaman, which he kept in his days.
Helaman 7–16	Helaman III–V	The Prophecy of Nephi the son of Helaman. God threatens the people of Nephi that he will visit them in his anger to their utter destruction except they repent of their wickedness. God smiteth the people of Nephi with pestilence; they repent and turn unto him. Samuel, a Lamanite, prophesies unto the Nephites.
Helaman 13–15	Helaman V	The prophecy of Samuel the Lamanite to the Nephites.
3 Nephi 11–28	3 Nephi V–XIII	Jesus Christ sheweth himself unto the people of Nephi as the multitude were gathered together in the land Bountiful and did minister unto them. And on this wise did he shew himself unto them.
Moroni 8	Moroni VIII	An epistle of my father Mormon, written to me Moroni; and it was written unto me soon after my calling to the ministry. And on this wise did he write to me, saying:
Moroni 9	Moroni IX	The second epistle of Mormon to his son Moroni.

Of the content that falls under these markers, the material at Mosiah 9:1–21:27, Alma 5–16, Alma 7, Alma 9–14, Alma 17–27, Alma 45–62, and Moroni 8–9 is presented explicitly as embedded content (“according to his own record,” “according to the record of Alma,” “the second epistle of Mormon,” etc.). Here we do discern some kind of emerging pattern, albeit one that is not universally applied throughout Mormon’s abridgement (e.g. the failure to include comparable markers of embedded content at Alma 54:4–14 and 15–23; Alma 56–58; Alma 60; Alma 61).¹⁰

What is the best way to understand the heads in the Book of Mormon? Gardner, as noted above, has recently provided an excellent discussion of how the heads function in structuring the text. Others have recently sought to identify external influences on these heads and how they affect the structure of the text of the Book of Mormon. According to William L. Davis in his recent book, they should be understood as framing devices or outlines used by Joseph Smith in his oral performance of the Book of Mormon.¹¹ They are, he maintains, essentially the product of nineteenth century sermon culture to which Joseph Smith was exposed and in which he participated.¹² I do not intend at this time to critically evaluate the entirety of Davis' argument.¹³ I do wish to propose, however, that ancient parallels can be cited for the heads in the Book of Mormon which are consistent with the book's claims that its authors had training in the Egyptian language (1 Nephi 1:2; Mosiah 1:4; Mormon 9:32).¹⁴

The Egyptian Narrative Infinitive

Ancient Egyptian features a grammatical construction known commonly as the narrative infinitive. Basically, the narrative infinitive demarcates progress in a narrative by utilizing a verbal infinitive to express the action. As explained by James Allen, "Some Middle Egyptian stories use the infinitive instead of a normal finite verb form within the body of a narration This is a stylistic device adopted from travel diaries, where the infinitive is used as the heading of each day's events It is used to give the flavor of a travel diary to the narrative. Most often it occurs after major breaks in the narrative at places where a modern novel might begin a new section or chapter."¹⁵ Or, as Daniel Selden puts it, "In historical narratives Middle Egyptian scribes often used the infinitive ... to move the story ahead. The style seems to imitate or to insert actual journal entries made on military campaign [sic] into the narratives that the scribes composed afterward for commemorative purposes."¹⁶ Ariel Shisha-Halevy, writing in 2007, succinctly notes that "[t]he narrative infinitive, a construction as important in Egyptian as it is in Semitic," serves to anchor the "narrative structure and texture" by marking "an initial episode boundary in narrative."¹⁷

The textbook example of the narrative infinitive in action comes from the story of Sinuhe: "Sinuhe's flight from Egypt is presented in journal form ... with each major stage marked by an initial narrative infinitive."¹⁸ These narrative infinitives act as a head to the episodes that feature them (emphasis added):

My making off upstream. [*irt.i šmt m hnty*] I did not intend to arrive at that residence, having anticipated that unrest would develop, and I did not think to live after him. I traversed Two-Maats Canal in the area of Sycamore, landed at Snefru's Island, and spent the day on the edge of the cultivation.¹⁹

My giving a path to my feet downstream. [*rdit.i wzt n rdwy.i m hd*] I touched the Ruler's Walls, made to bar the Asiatics. I took up my crouch in a bush, in fear that the watchmen on duty on the enclosure might see.²⁰

My making off at the time of dusk. [*ir(t).i šmt tr n hzw(i)*] At dawn I reached Peten, and landed at an island of the Great Black. Thirst fell and surprised me, so that I was seared, my throat dusty. I said, "This is the taste of death."²¹

My lifting up my mind and collecting my limbs. [*tzt.i ib.i szk.i h'w.i*] I heard the sound of a herd's lowing, and spotted Asiatics. Their pathfinder recognized me, who had once been in Blackland, Then he gave me water and cooked milk for me. I went with him to his tribesmen. What they did was good.²²

Later in the story, after he has been rescued by the Asiatic king Ammunanši, Sinuhe faces off with an Asiatic strongman in a lengthy narrative episode that is reminiscent of the biblical story of David and Goliath (or, for that matter, the showdown between Shiz and Coriantumr in the book of Ether). The episode is, once again, demarcated with a narrative infinitive:

Coming of a strongman of Retjenu, challenging me in my tent. [*iwt nht n tnw mtz.f wi m imzm.i*] He was a champion without peer, for he had subdued it entirely. He said he would fight with me, he anticipated that he would rob me ...²³

Sinuhe is not the only Middle Egyptian narrative composition to feature the infinitive in a narrative head. The opening episode of the story of the shipwrecked sailor also uses the infinitive form of the verb *dd* ("to speak") to begin the account:

Recitation by an able follower. [*dd in šmsw ikr*] Be informed, high official: look, we have reached home. The mallet has been taken, the mooring-post has been hit, and the prow-rope is set on land. Praise has been given, and thanks, and every man is embracing the other. Our crew has returned safe, with no loss of our expedition. We have reached Wawat's wake, we have

gone by Bigga. So, look, we have returned in peace; our land, we have reached it.²⁴

That this use of the infinitive constitutes what could properly be called a head, heading, or caption cannot be doubted. Gardiner, in his authoritative grammar, straightforwardly notes that this form of the infinitive occurs “absolutely in *headings* to scenes, *titles* to parts of books and the like.” As he explains, “the infinitive is used in *narrative* to announce incidents of outstanding importance.”²⁵

The two main differences between Egyptian narrative heads and Book of Mormon heads are (1) the length and (2) the sentence structures. Egyptian narrative captions are typically very brief, usually only a few words. Book of Mormon heads, on the other hand, can run as long as 168 words (in English) as in the case of 1 Nephi. The markers of embedded content in the Book of Mormon, on the other hand, are overall rather brief (in some cases less than ten English words).

In terms of sentence structure, Book of Mormon subtitles and markers of embedded content do not, strictly speaking, employ infinitive verbs (English gerunds). Rather, they tend to start as a nonverbal nominal sentence (“an account of ...,” “the words of ...,” “the prophecy of ...,” etc.) before transitioning into more complex sentences involving various verbal types and clauses. This, however, is less problematic for the markers of embedded content, as we’ll explore below.

Titles for Utterances of the Book of the Dead

As Burkhard Backes explained in his 2009 study, “It is commonly known that besides the titles of the particular utterances, a longer collective title can introduce a Book of the Dead manuscript.”²⁶ This *Gesamttitle* to the Book of the Dead, as Backes calls it, can vary in length and does not appear uniformly in Book of the Dead manuscripts.²⁷ The “standard” version of the title — although so far only attested in two New Kingdom manuscripts (the Books of the Dead belonging to Hunefer and Ani)²⁸ — is rather lengthy, coming in at about 24–27 Egyptian words depending on how you count compound nouns and prepositions and 40–50 English words depending on the translation:

*ḥꜣt-ꜥ m rw nw prꜣt m hrw sꜣsw sꜣḥw prꜣ(t) ḥꜣyt m ḥr-nꜥr ꜣḥt
m imnt nfrt ḏdt hrw n ꜣrs ꜣꜣ m-ḥt prꜣt*

Beginning of the utterances of coming forth in daytime;
the praises and recitations; going and coming forth in the

necropolis; that which is useful in the beautiful West. What is to be spoken on the day of burial; entering after going forth.²⁹

Here begin the spells of going out into the day, to praises and recitations for going to and fro in the realm of the dead, which are beneficial in the beautiful West, and which are to be spoken on the day of burial and of going in after coming out.³⁰

Additional lengthy titles for individual utterances of the Book of the Dead can likewise be cited (e.g. BD 17, 130, 141, 148, 180).³¹ BD 180, for example, begins:

*r n prît m hrw dwz R^c r imnt rdît ḥknw n imi^w dwz^t wn wz^t
n zḥ iḳr imi ḥr-nṯr rdît n.f šmiwt.f swšḥ nmwt.f ʿḳ prît m
ḥr-nṯr irît ḥprw m b^z ʿnh*

Utterance of coming forth in daytime; to commend Re to the West; to give praises to the inhabitants of the Duat; to open a path for the noble spirit who dwells in the necropolis, giving him his movements and extending wide his steps; for going in and out of the necropolis; for transforming shape as a living Ba.³²

As with the narrative infinitive in historical-literary prose, these titles from the Book of the Dead employ the infinitive (*prît*, *hzyt*, *rdît*, *irît*, etc.) to express the purpose of the text.

Although the text post-dates the departure of Lehi by several centuries, a look at the full title of the Book of Breathings reveals that the idea of providing a lengthy title to the text survived into the Ptolemaic period:

*ḥzt-ʿ m šʿyt m snsⁿ ir.n ʾlst n sn.s Wsir iw sʿnh b^z.f r sʿnh
ḥzt.f r srnp ḥʿwt.f nbt m whmy r hmny.f zḥt ḥnʿ it.f R^c r
shʿ b^z.f m pt m itn n iʿḥ r psd ḥzt.f m szḥ m ḥt n Nwt r rdît
ḥpr mitt NN n Wsir*

Beginning of the Document of Breathing which Isis made for her brother Osiris so that his soul may be caused to live; to cause his body to live; to rejuvenate all his limbs again so that he might join the horizon with his father Re; to cause his soul to appear in heaven as the disk of the moon; to make his body shine as Orion in the body of Nut; to cause the same thing to happen to the Osiris NN.³³

Like its forerunner (the Book of the Dead), the title in the Book of Breathings uses the infinitive to describe the text's purpose.³⁴ As seen from these examples, "Sometimes a particular text will have, as part of its

title, the specific purpose for which the text was written. These purposes also provide something of the *Sitz im Leben* of the work. The purposes can be quite elaborate, sometimes reminding one of Victorian English titles.”³⁵ This is not to suggest that Nephi or other ancient Israelites with scribal training were instructed in the composition and transmission of Egyptian funerary texts, only that broadly speaking the idea of using elaborate heads as titles for literary works is attested in Egyptian literary culture both before and after Nephi’s day.³⁶

Embedded Documents in Egyptian Historical and Narrative Texts

Like the Book of Mormon, ancient Egyptian narrative and historical texts sometimes embed documents such as epistles. When so doing, they sometimes, like the Book of Mormon, demarcate this content with clear heads. The examples from Sinuhe, once again, are illustrative. In the account, a royal decree from pharaoh Senwosret I is quoted *in extenso* with the following head (emphasis added):

*Copy of the decree brought to your servant, about fetching him to Egypt. Horus Living One of Birth, Two Ladies Living One of Birth, Dual King Kheperkare, Sun’s Son Amenemhat, alive forever continually: king’s decree to follower Sinuhe.*³⁷

After quoting the embedded decree, Sinuhe’s response is also embedded in full with a comparable head:

*Copy of the response to this decree. Palace-servant Sinuhe, who says: In very good peace!*³⁸

Historical inscriptions, such as the Second Kamose Stela, also quote embedded documents. The Second Kamose Stela quotes an epistle but (as with the epistle of Moroni to Ammoron [Alma 54:4–14] or Helaman to Moroni [Alma 56–58]) does not provide a head comparable to what is offered in Sinuhe. Rather, it merely introduces the embedded text thus:

For it was on the upland way of the oasis that I captured his [i.e. the Hyksos king Apophis’] messenger going south to Kush with a written letter. I found on it saying in writing [*gm.n.i hr.s m ḏd m sš*]: [commencement of embedded letter]³⁹

Titles of Wisdom Texts

Worth noting here too are the intriguing parallels between the heads in ancient Egyptian wisdom or instructional texts and the heads marking

Alma's wisdom instructions ("commandments") to his sons Helaman (Alma 36–37), Shiblon (Alma 38), and Corianton (Alma 39–42):

- "The commandments of Alma to his son Helaman."
- "The commandments of Alma to his son Shiblon."
- "The commandments of Alma to his son Corianton."

These short, terse heads in the Book of Mormon follow, essentially, the typical formula employed in Egyptian wisdom texts, as can be seen in the following examples:

The beginning of the instruction which the hereditary prince and count, the king's son Hardedef made for his son whom he raised up, named Auibre. He says: [commencement of instructions]⁴⁰

Beginning of the phrases of good speech said by member of the elite, high official, god's father, god's beloved, king's son, eldest of his body, city-overseer and vizier Ptahhotep, in teaching the ignorant to learn according to the standard of good speech, as what is useful for him who will listen, as what is distressful for him who will overstep it. So, he said to his son: [commencement of instructions]⁴¹

Beginning of the teaching made by His Majesty the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Sehetep-ib-Re, the Son of Re, Amenemhat, true of voice. He speaks to reveal truth to his son, the Lord of All [Senwosret I]. He says: [commencement of instructions]⁴²

Beginning of the teaching made by a man from Sile (Dua-Khety is his name) for his son (Pepi is his name) And it came to pass that he said to him: [commencement of instructions]⁴³

Beginning of the teaching that he [Sehetep-ib-Re] made to his children: [commencement of instructions]⁴⁴

The beginning of the instruction which a man made for his son, as he says: [commencement of instructions]⁴⁵

The beginning of the teaching instruction, the utterances for the way of life, which the scribe Amunnakhthe made (for) his apprentice Hor-Min. He says: [commencement of instructions]⁴⁶

The typical formula for the heads of Egyptian wisdom texts is: (1) to denominate the sayings as "instructions, teachings" (*sbꜣyt*) or in the case of Ptahhotep "good words/speech" (*mdt nfrt*), (2) to identify the giver of the instructions (typically the father), and then (3) identify the recipient (typically a son).⁴⁷ The heads to Alma's instructions to his sons follow

this formula. That Alma's "commandments" to his sons can be properly considered wisdom teachings or instructions in the classical Egyptian (and Israelite) sense is justifiable by the fact that Alma instructs his sons in theological as well as moral matters, both of which feature prominently in ancient wisdom texts.⁴⁸ This is, I contend, a much better way to understand the heads to these portions of embedded text than the explanation offered by Davis, who sees them as simple "mnemonic cues" that granted Joseph Smith the ability to conjure 7,811 words extemporaneously.⁴⁹

Book of Mormon Heads Reconsidered

As mentioned above, the Egyptian narrative infinitive is not an exact parallel to the types of heads in the Book of Mormon. It is, however, conceptually and functionally close enough to merit our attention and consideration. The parallels between the Book of Mormon's markers of embedded content and the Egyptian textual apparatuses mentioned above are especially noteworthy. Readers can decide for themselves whether they find Davis' argument persuasive that Joseph Smith could have "extrapolate[d] lengthy narratives from very short outlines and extremely brief cues."⁵⁰ What they should keep in mind as they do evaluate his claim is that there are ways to account for the structure of the Book of Mormon that are consistent with its claim to being an ancient text.

Addendum: Chapters and Other Textual Divisions

Although not directly relevant to the discussion of heads in the Book of Mormon, I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to make one final tangential note. Ancient Egyptian texts sometimes used internal markers to signal content division within a text. This includes the use of numbered "chapters" (*hwt*) — so designated in Egyptological literature — as seen in the New Kingdom hymns to Amun preserved on P. Leiden I 350 and the Instructions of Amenemope preserved on P. BM 10474.⁵¹ In addition, divisions between different texts copied on the same papyrus roll were sometimes marked with the use of the *h3t-ꜥ m* ("beginning of ...") formula, as seen in the Bremner-Rhind Papyrus to differentiate between the Songs of Isis and Nephthys and the Book of Overthrowing Apep.⁵² As it happens, the latter is "split up into a number of subsections, each of which is prefaced" with the subtitle *šꜣyt nt* ... ("the book of ...").⁵³ We thus encounter within the Book of Overthrowing Apep:⁵⁴

- "The first book of felling 'Apep the foe of Re" (23/16–17)⁵⁵
- "The book of felling the foe of Re daily" (26/7)
- "The book of repelling of 'Apep the great enemy which is

- done at morning-tide” (26/11–12)
- “The book of knowing the creations of Re and felling ‘Apep” (26/21).
- Another version of the “book of knowing the creations of Re and felling ‘Apep” with the same title (28/20)
- “The stanza of conjuring their names” (29/16)
- “The book of felling ‘Apep” (32/3)
- “Another book of felling ‘Apep” (32/6)⁵⁶

How is this relevant to the Book of Mormon? “The evidence we have from the dictation of the Book of Mormon underscores that chapters were original to the plates — both for the small and large plates. Royal Skousen’s examination of the original manuscript suggests that, just as with breaks between books, there was something Joseph saw as he translated that caused him to indicate to his scribe that there would be a break, later marked as a chapter.”⁵⁷ Skousen suggests this may have been “a symbol of some kind” or “more likely ... the last words of the section were followed by blankness. Recognizing that the section was ending, Joseph Smith then told the scribe to write the word *chapter*, with the understanding that the appropriate number would be added later.”⁵⁸ Whatever the case, there is, as we’ve seen above, precedent in ancient Egyptian scribal practice for structuring textual content into both chapters and subsections. There is, incidentally, also ancient precedent for Skousen’s suggestion that Joseph was alerted to textual divisions by *vacat* space on the plates.⁵⁹

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Endnotes

1. For previous important studies on Book of Mormon heads, see Thomas W. Mackay, “Mormon as Editor: A Study in Colophons, Headers, and Source Indicators,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2, no. 2 (July 1993): 90–109; Brant A. Gardner, “Labor Diligently to Write: The Ancient Making of a Modern Scripture,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 35 (2020): 23–37, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/labor-diligently-to-write-the-ancient-making-of-a-modern-scripture-1/>.
2. Gardner, “Labor Diligently to Write,” 23.
3. Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 5, 72, 155, 277, 507, 564, 642.
4. The exception is the book of Mosiah. But, as noted below, this book is missing its opening chapters.
5. Gardner proposes, “It is probable [that Mormon created synoptic headers] because there were outline headers on the large plates (assuming that Nephi created them on the small plates because it was part of the style he had already incorporated for the large plates). While Mormon probably saw a header for each named book he edited, the specific headers he included were his own text, not copies of what was on the large plates. Mormon’s headers are specific to the selections he made from the large plates. Therefore, Mormon copied the concept of the headers, but not the text of the headers.” Gardner, “Labor Diligently to Write,” 24.
6. The first two chapters (at least) of the Book of Mosiah are not extant, having been lost by Martin Harris in the summer of 1828. See Royal Skousen, “Critical Methodology and the Text of the Book of Mormon,” *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6, no. 1 (1994): 137–139; Don Bradley, *The Lost 116 Pages: Reconstructing the Book of Mormon’s Missing Stories* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2019), 276–278. It seems very likely, but is impossible to prove, that this book too would have had a subtitle.
7. The subtitle in the current 1981/2013 edition (“The record of the Jaredites taken from the twenty-four plates found by the people of Limhi in the days of King Mosiah”) is not part of the original text, but was composed for the 1920 edition. See Royal Skousen,

Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part Six: 3 Nephi 19–Moroni 10 (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2009), 3715.

8. Gardner, “Labor Diligently to Write,” 25.
9. Here I am following, in part, the helpful and justifiable structure of this content provided by Grant Hardy, *The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ: Maxwell Institute Study Edition* (Provo, UT: The Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2018), 71, 134, 185, 224, 252, 259, 265, 286, 298, 336, 343, 345, 359, 432, 446, 478, 592. Unlike Hardy, I read Moroni 8:1a as a marker of embedded content. For the text I am once again following Skousen, *The Earliest Text*, 91, 157, 217, 254, 291, 300, 308, 338, 356, 406, 415, 417, 437, 530, 550, 593, 729.
10. See further Robert F. Smith, “Epistolary Form in the Book of Mormon,” *FARMS Review* 22, no. 2 (2010): 125–35.
11. William L. Davis, *Visions in a Seer Stone: Joseph Smith and the Making of the Book of Mormon* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020).
12. *Ibid.*, 89–159.
13. For reviews of Davis’s work, see Brian C. Hales, “Theories and Assumptions: A Review of William L. Davis’s Visions in a Seer Stone,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 39 (2020): 151–90, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/theories-and-assumptions-a-review-of-william-l-daviss-visions-in-a-seer-stone/>; Brant A. Gardner “Oral Creation and the Dictation of the Book of Mormon,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 39 (2020): 191–206, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/oral-creation-and-the-dictation-of-the-book-of-mormon/>.
14. See further Brant A. Gardner, “Nephi as Scribe,” *Mormon Studies Review* 23, no. 1 (2011): 45–55; Neal Rappleye, “Learning Nephi’s Language: Creating a Context for 1 Nephi 1:2,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 16 (2015): 151–159, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/learning-nephis-language-creating-a-context-for-1-nephi-12/>. Scholars do not doubt the Egyptian influence on Israelite scribal practices and literary culture, only the extent and the method of transmission. For recent views, see Bernd U. Schipper, “Die Lehre des Amenemope und Prov 22,17–24,22: Eine Neubestimmung des literarischen Verhältnisses (Teil

- 1) *Zeitschrift für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 117 (2005): 53–72; Schipper, “Egypt and Israel: The Ways of Cultural Contacts in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age (20th–26th Dynasty),” *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 4, no. 3 (2012): 30–47; Schipper, “Egyptian Backgrounds to the Psalms,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*, ed. William P. Brown (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 57–75; Nili Shupak, “The Contribution of Egyptian Wisdom to the Study of Biblical Wisdom Literature,” in *Was There A Wisdom Tradition?: New Prospects in Israelite Wisdom Studies*, ed. Mark R. Sneed (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015), 265–304; Michael V. Fox, “From Amenemope to Proverbs: Editorial Art in Proverbs 22,17–23,11,” *Zeitschrift für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 126 (2014): 76–91; Shirly Ben-Dor Evian, “Egypt and Israel: The Never-Ending Story,” *Near Eastern Archaeology* 80, no. 1 (2017): 30–39.
15. James P. Allen, *Middle Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 190–91.
16. Daniel L. Selden, *Hieroglyphic Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Literature of the Middle Kingdom*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 208.
17. Ariel Shisha-Halevy, “Determination-Signalling Environment in Old and Middle Egyptian: Work-Notes and Reflections,” in *Studies in Semitic and General Linguistics in Honor of Gideon Goldenberg*, ed. Tali Bar and Eran Cohen (Münster, DEU: Ugarit Verlag, 2007), 251.
18. James P. Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature: Eight Literary Works of the Middle Kingdom* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 66.
19. Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, 65–66.
20. *Ibid.*, 70.
21. *Ibid.*, 72.
22. *Ibid.*, 73–74.
23. *Ibid.*, 98.
24. *Ibid.*, 10.
25. Sir Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*, 3rd rev. ed. (Oxford, UK: Griffith Institute, 1957), 230, emphasis in original. Compare Allen, *Middle*

- Egyptian: An Introduction*, 190; James E. Hoch, *Middle Egyptian Grammar* (Mississauga, CAN: Benben Publications, 1997), 68.
26. Burkhard Backes, „Was zu sagen ist“ – zum Gesamttitel des Totenbuchs,” in *Ausgestattet mit den Schriften des Thot. Festschrift für Irmtraut Munro zu ihrem 65. Geburtstag* (Wiesbaden, DEU: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 5, translation mine: “Es ist allgemein bekannt, dass neben den Titeln der einzelnen Sprüche ein längerer Gesamttitel eine Totenbuch-Handschrift einleiten kann.”
 27. Backes, “Was zu sagen ist,” 5–28.
 28. Backes, “Was zu sagen ist,” 14.
 29. Translation mine, following P. BM 10470 (the Book of the Dead of Ani); hieroglyphic text reproduced in Backes, “Was zu sagen ist,” 15.
 30. Raymond O. Faulkner, trans., *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, rev. ed. (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2010), 34.
 31. Helpfully gathered in John Gee, “Literary Titles in Greco-Roman Egypt,” in *En détail – Philologie und Archäologie im Diskurs Festschrift für Hans-W. Fischer-Elfert*, ed. Marc Brose, Peter Dils, Franziska Naether, Lutz Popko, and Dietrich Raue (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019), 330–334.
 32. Translation mine, following P. Louvre 3073 (anonymous Book of the Dead); hieroglyphic text reproduced in Backes, “Was zu sagen ist,” 13; cf. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 177.
 33. Translation mine; P. Louvre 3284 in Michael D. Rhodes, *The Hor Book of Breathings: A Translation and Commentary* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002), 53.
 34. In this case, the *r* + infinitive construct. See Allen, *Middle Egyptian: An Introduction*, 188.
 35. Gee, “Literary Titles,” 347.
 36. See further Gee, “Literary Titles,” 329–352.
 37. Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, 117.
 38. *Ibid.*, 125.
 39. William K. Simpson, “The Kamose Texts,” in *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae*,

- Autobiographies, and Poetry*, ed. William Kelly Simpson, 3rd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 349.
40. Simpson, "The Instruction of Hardedef," in *Literature of Ancient Egypt*, 127.
41. Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, 171.
42. Translation mine. For the hieroglyphic text, see Wolfgang Helck, *Der Text der „Lehre Amenemhets I. für Seinen Sohn“* (Wiesbaden, DEU: Harrassowitz, 1969), 7–10.
43. Translation mine. For the hieroglyphic text, see Wolfgang Helck, *Die Lehre des dwꜣ-ḥtjj* (Wiesbaden, DEU: Harrassowitz, 1970), 12–13, 19.
44. Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, 157.
45. Simpson, "The Instruction of a Man for His Son," in *Literature of Ancient Egypt*, 176.
46. Simpson, "The Instruction of Amunnakhte," in *Literature of Ancient Egypt*, 221.
47. See additionally Vincent A. Tobin, "The Teaching for King Merikare," in *Literature of Ancient Egypt*, 153: "[The beginning of the Instruction made by the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Khet]y, for his son, Merikare."
48. These two categories are interwoven abundantly in the instructions for Merikare, to cite the most obvious example. Tobin, "The Teaching for King Merikare," 153–65. See further the comments in Mark A. Awabdy, "Teaching Children in the Instruction of Amenemope and Deuteronomy," *Vetus Testamentum* 65 (2015): 1–8.
49. Davis, *Visions in a Seer Stone*, 140–41. Davis fails to appreciate not only the tight literary, theological, and narrative structure of these chapters, particularly the chiasmic structure of Alma 36, but also the precise intertextuality displayed throughout these chapters with the words of other Book of Mormon prophets, including some whose words would not be translated or otherwise rendered into English until after the rendering of Alma's words to his sons. See, e.g., John W. Welch, "A Masterpiece: Alma 36," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, ed. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1991), 114–131; Joseph Spencer, *An Other Testament: On Typology*, 2nd ed. (Provo, UT: The Neal A. Maxwell Institute

- for Religious Scholarship, 2016), 1–32; Kerry M. Hull, Nicholas J. Frederick, and Hank R. Smith, eds., *Give Ear to My Words: Text and Context of Alma 36–42* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2019); John W. Welch, “Textual Consistency” and “Three Accounts of Alma’s Conversion,” in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book; Provo, UT: FARMS, 1992), 21–23, 150–153; John Hilton III, “Textual Similarities in the Words of Abinadi and Alma’s Counsel to Corianton,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (2012): 39–60; S. Kent Brown, “Alma’s Conversion: Reminiscences in His Sermons” in *A Book of Mormon Treasury: Gospel Insights from General Authorities and Religious Educators* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2003), 246–61. I leave it to the individual readers to decide for themselves whether the repetitious “mnemonic cues” of a meager eight words each would be sufficient to launch “Smith’s performance into [an] ensuing narrative” (Davis, *Visions in a Seer Stone*, 141) as vibrant and rich as Alma 36–42.
50. Davis, *Visions in a Seer Stone*, 158.
 51. Alan H. Gardiner, “Hymns to Amon from a Leiden Papyrus,” *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache* 42 (1905): 12–42; E. A. Wallis Budge, *Facsimiles of Egyptian Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum: With Descriptions, Summaries of Contents, Etc.* (London: The British Museum, 1923), 41–51; Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1976), 147.
 52. P. Bremner-Rhind 1/1, 22/1; in Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Papyrus Bremner-Rhind (British Museum No. 10188)* (Bruxelles, BEL: Fondation égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1933) 1, 42; Faulkner, “The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus: I. A. The Songs of Isis and Nephthys,” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 22, no. 2 (December 1936): 121–140; Faulkner, “The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus: III. D. The Book of Overthrowing ‘Apep,” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 23, no. 2 (December 1937): 166–185.
 53. Faulkner, “The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus: III,” 166.
 54. The complete name of which is: “The book of the felling of ‘Apep the foe of Re and the foe of King Onnophris, justified, which is performed daily in the temple of Amen-Re, Lord of the Thrones

- of the Two Lands, who dwells in Karnak.” See Faulkner, “The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus: III,” 166.
55. Followed by a “second chapter” (*ḥwt mḥt*-2) at 24/21; cf. Faulkner, “The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus: III,” 166.
 56. Faulkner, “The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus: III,” 166.
 57. Gardner, “Labor Diligently to Write,” 30, citing Skousen, “Critical Methodology,” 137; cf. Royal Skousen, “Translating the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript,” in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1997), 85–87; “How Joseph Smith Translated the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7, no. 1 (1998): 27–28.
 58. Skousen, “Translating the Book of Mormon,” 85.
 59. The Dead Sea Scrolls and other sources from antiquity show signs of subdividing textual units through the use of *vacats* and other spacing practices on the manuscript. “It should be noted that *vacats* appear throughout the Qumran Scrolls. They are scribal conventions to divide the texts into meaningful units.” James H. Charlesworth and James D. McSpadden, “The Sociological and Liturgical Dimensions of Psalm Peshier 1 (4QPPSa): Some Prolegomenous Reflections,” in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Princeton Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 334n55. See also Emmanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 50–53; H. Gregory Snyder, “Naughts and Crosses: Peshier Manuscripts and Their Significance for Reading Practices at Qumran,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 7, no. 1 (2000): 26–48.