Strange Things Strangely Told

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A Unique Document

Philologically speaking, the most wonderful thing about the Book of Mormon is that there is anything to discuss at all. Massive literary forgeries are very easily detected by those not determined to be taken in, and can be thoroughly discredited to any willing to listen to the evidence. Nothing could be easier than to expose the vast and detailed history of the Book of Mormon as fraudulent if it were such. Just to brush it aside is not enough—one can brush anything aside—but to ignore the Book of Mormon after the claims it has made, the influence it has exercised, and the opportunities it has offered the critics to expose it, is to run away from it. If the Book of Mormon is a fabrication, any ten pages of it should be quite sufficient to enable the student of ancient documents not only to reject it but to show the world exactly why he finds it fraudulent. This, strangely enough, no scholar has ever done, though many eminent scholars have put themselves confidently to the task of performing that easy and rewarding public service.

There are three possible explanations for the origin of the Book of Mormon. One is that it is a product of spontaneous generation. Another is that it came into existence in the way Joseph Smith said it did, by special messengers and gifts from God. The third is the hypothesis that Joseph Smith or some other party or parties simply made it all up. No experiments have ever been carried out for testing any of these theories. The first has not even been considered,

the second has been dismissed with a contemptuous wave of the hand, and the third has been accepted without question or hesitation.

And yet the third theory is quite as extravagant as the other two, demanding unlimited gullibility and the suspension of all critical judgment in any who would accept it. It is based on the simple proposition that since people have written books, somebody, namely Smith or a contemporary, wrote this one. But to make this thesis stick is to show not only that people have written big books, but that somebody has been able to produce a big book *like this one*. But no other such book exists. Where will you find another work remotely approaching the Book of Mormon in scope and daring? It appears suddenly out of nothing—not an accumulation of twenty-five years like the Koran, but a single staggering performance, bursting on a shocked and scandalized world like an explosion, the full-blown history of an ancient people, following them through all the trials, triumphs, and vicissitudes of a thousand years without a break, telling how a civilization originated, rose to momentary greatness, and passed away, giving due attention to every phase of civilized history in a densely compact and rapidly moving story that interweaves dozens of plots with an inexhaustible fertility of invention and an uncanny consistency that is never caught in a slip or contradiction. We respectfully solicit the name of any student or professor in the world who could come within ten thousand miles of such a performance. As a sheer tour-de-force there is nothing like it. The theory that Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon simply will not stand examination. What kind of a book is it?

The Book of Mormon is a colossal structure. Considered purely as fiction, it is a performance without parallel. What other volume can approach this wealth of detail and tight-woven complexity, this factual precision combined with simple, open lucidity? Any book we choose is feeble by

comparison: some of them have one quality and some another, but like Matthew Arnold's Homer, the Book of Mormon combines these usually incompatible qualities in a structure of flawless consistency. Our American literature is full of big, bumbling, rambling, brooding, preaching, mouthing books, spinning out a writer's personal (usually adolescent) reminiscences and impressions at great and unoriginal lengths. But this terse, compact religious history of a thousand years is something utterly beyond the scope of creative writing. To check this assertion, let the skeptical reader think of a number, any number between 10 and 30; then beginning with page 1 of the Book of Mormon, let him turn to every page in the book which is a multiple of that number and see what he finds there. Or let him think offhand of 50 or so numbers between one and 500—any numbers—and then consult those pages of the Book of Mormon. The point here is that we are choosing a large number of items from the Book of Mormon and choosing them completely at random. What a staggering wealth of detail we discover! What boundless prodigality of invention! Take every twentieth page, for example:

Page 1: A colophon explaining who wrote the book, his background, his sources of information, his reliability, his culture, the language he is writing in, an account of the time and setting of his story, the peculiar conditions prevailing, the worries and travels of Lehi—all this and more in the first five verses.

Page 20: Interprets a dream about a large and spacious building; Nephi sees in vision the wars, tribulations, and ultimate extermination of his descendants, great destructions upon the land, and a visit of the Savior to the survivors.

Page 40: Dissension and trouble on shipboard; Nephi is bound and the ship almost founders in a typhoon; the people arrive in the New World and continue their Old

World ways of farming and pastoral nomadism; they domesticate animals and search out precious metals.

Page 60: The ending of a thanksgiving hymn by Nephi, astonishingly like the Thanksgiving Hymn of the Dead Sea Scrolls. (Some have called this a psalm, but strictly speaking a psalm is a ritual hymn connected with the rites of the Temple.) Nephi's brothers charge him with royal ambition and plan to do away with him. He continues to migrate, taking along all who are willing. There is a description of the way in which civilizations are suffused through virgin lands.

Page 80: Entirely taken up with quotations from Isaiah; we have already seen some indication of how daring and ingenious these Isaiah translations can be.

Page 100: A discourse by Nephi on Satan's *modus operandi* in this world; he prophesies the final gathering of Israel and describes the conditions under which it is to take place.

To save space let us skip from the first hundred to the last hundred pages.

Page 420: Describes the aftermath of a major and very accurately depicted earthquake, which we hope to discuss later on.

Page 440: Here Jesus himself is addressing the people to whom he has appeared after the resurrection, showing them how all the prophets spoke of him.

Page 460: The ten-year-old Mormon receives instructions on the care of sacred records in the bad times ahead. A year later he goes with his father to Zarahemla and is overwhelmed by the sight of the place. A complicated local war is raging at the time.

Page 480: Takes us back thousands of years to the great dispersion from the Tower, describing in some detail the nature of those protohistoric migrations.

Page 500: The odd customs of Jaredite kings are de-

scribed—how they spend their days in captivity. Prophets, including Ether, go forth among the people.

Page 520: Moroni, having finished his sad history, finds time on his hands; he prescribes an acid test for the truth of his book and discourses on the various gifts of the Spirit.

But enough, the reader can continue the game for himself. Here we have selected at random less than two percent of the pages of the Book of Mormon and from each have taken just an item or two. This sort of exercise is a good way of calling attention to the dense compactness of the book's contents, the remarkably even distribution of material, the easy, competent, confident, unencumbered handling of vast and complicated detail. Where else will one find such inexhaustible invention combined with such unerring accuracy and consistency? To put it facetiously but not unfairly, the artist must not only balance a bowl of goldfish and three lighted candles on the end of a broomstick while fighting off a swarm of gadflies, but he must at the same time be carving an immortal piece of statuary from a lump of solid diorite. In an undertaking like this, merely to avoid total confusion and complete disaster would be a super-human achievement. But that is not the assignment; that is only a coincidental detail to the main business at hand, which is, with all this consummately skillful handling of mere technical detail, to have something significant to say; not merely significant, but profound and moving, and so relevant to the peculiar conditions of our own day as to speak to our ears with a voice of thunder.

One stands aghast at the presumption of those journalists, professors, and hack-writers who through the years have made merry over the quaint language and unfamiliar subject matter of the Book of Mormon while choosing to ignore its unparalleled scope and mastery. One is amazed by the easy effrontery of those who still assure us that anyone with a little time on his hands and an open Bible at his elbow could produce a Book of Mormon.

The very least the candid student can do is to admit
that we are up against a problem here—there are things
about the production of the Book of Mormon which we
simply do not understand. This was frankly admitted in
Joseph Smith's day,[1] and the whole corpus of literature
devoted to exposing the Book of Mormon succeeds only in
exposing the confusion of its authors.[2] Students of the Bible
now find themselves in the same situation. Thirty years
ago every seminarist was convinced that he knew just
where the Bible—*and* the Book of Mormon—came from.
Those were the days when they knew all the answers, but
today new tests are being applied to the Bible text, and we
suggest the same tests for the Book of Mormon.

Problems of Testing

A forgery is defined by specialists in ancient documents
as "any document which was not produced in the time,
place, and manner claimed by it or its publisher."[3] The Book
of Mormon obligingly gives full information regarding the
time, place, and manner of its production. All we have to
do is to check these claims. How? Against what evidence?
By the same methods and using the same evidence now
employed to investigate the Bible. For the two books belong
to the same universe of discourse, not only spiritually but
also culturally and historically.

If the Book of Mormon were a work on mathematics,
it should be submitted before all to mathematicians for in-
telligent criticism; if it were a book on chemistry, chemists
should be called in; if it were about primitive races and
customs, anthropologists might with caution be consulted;
if it claimed to be a work on philosophy, we might submit
it to the examination of philosophers; if it were put forth
as a masterpiece of American literature, the English de-
partment might be invited to comment.

But it claims to be none of these, and as we have seen,
the authenticity of an ancient writing can be judged only

in terms of what it claims for itself, never of what others may claim *for* it. Otherwise one might begin by assuming that the Book of Mormon was written by an Eskimo hunter, a Portuguese fisherman, or a New York farmer, and from there proceed to seek out anything and everything in its pages that might confirm the theory. That won't do, because literary evidence can always be contrived, even unconsciously, by an ingenious and dedicated interpreter. What, then, is the Book of Mormon about by its own assertion?

First of all, the Book of Mormon is *not* a history of the Lost Ten Tribes, as many supposedly able critics have assumed; it is *not* a history of the Indians, but only of some very remote relatives of theirs living in a distant age with a totally different culture; it does *not* describe or designate any *known* ancient people, civilization, or individual in the Western Hemisphere, nor does it designate any recognized place, city, or territory in the New World—even Cumorah receives only limited recognition and only by Latter-day Saints. Strangely enough, nearly all Book of Mormon criticism in the past, whether favorable or unfavorable, has rested on one or more of these false assumptions. All have expended their powers in examining not what the Book of Mormon claims for itself, but only what others have claimed for it.

On the other hand, the book does designate *known* cities and territories in the Old World—there is no dispute as to where Jerusalem or the Red Sea is; it does supply specific dates in terms of absolute chronology—a tremendous aid to any serious investigation; it does designate well-known individuals, peoples, and civilizations in the Old World; it does explain fully the Old World cultural background of its authors, describing how that culture was transplanted into a new land with certain resulting changes; it does indicate the literary and linguistic traditions of its authors, and tells how the migrants viewed their own situation, zealously preserving their traditions and always conscious of the cen-

tral, perennial, Near Eastern core-culture from which they sprang.

The authors of the Book of Mormon carefully explain that they are writing a very specialized history, confining their attention to the doings of one particular and numerically very minor religious group, whose peculiar traditions they trace back to a long line of Messianic prophets who used to seek refuge along with their followers in the deserts of Judaea.

To whom, then, should the Book of Mormon be submitted for criticism? Plainly to those who today are at grips with the documents that hold the keys to both Jewish and Christian history.

Recently a Protestant journal of wide circulation reported with obvious satisfaction that there is "no non-Mormon archaeologist who holds that the Indians descended from the Jews, or that Christianity was known in the New World before Columbus."[4] That is hardly surprising. For years we have pointed out that such results are only to be expected as long as people insist on looking for the wrong things in the wrong places. How could an archaeologist, of all people, hope to prove "that the Indians descended from the Jews, or that Christianity was known in the New World before Columbus"? As one of the world's foremost archaeologists recently wrote, "The first thing that must be remembered is the fact . . . that material evidence will give material results. You cannot, from archaeological evidence, inform yourself on man's ideas, beliefs, fears, or aspirations. You cannot understand what his works of art or craftsmanship signified to him. . . . Without a written record, and one in some detail, you can have no knowledge of social or political systems, of ethical or legal codes."[5] In a word, it is to the written word that we must turn if we would test the Book of Mormon, specifically to that very literature from whose common background it purports to have sprung.

And here we find ourselves in an awkward situation. The geologist can impart edifying information to the most ignorant audience by showing them a piece of rock and talking about it; a botanist can tell us something important about a plant we have never seen before; even sophisticated mathematical ideas can be conveyed by an able teacher to the mathematically ignorant, and one can learn something basic about the stars the very first time one hears an astronomer talk about them. But an ancient manuscript means *nothing whatever* to a person who has not already laid a broad and solid foundation in its language.

It is for this reason that the study of the documents has steadily lost ground in the twentieth century in competition with more readily acquired sciences, until many have come to think of those ancient written records, which contain the lab notes and field notes for the entire history of the human race, as only dusty papers with nothing to say. It is as if one were to try to reconstruct the life of Lord Chesterfield by the careful examination of his bones, his clothes, the house he lived in, the food he ate, etc. — all of which are important — while throwing aside the man's daily journal, which tells us in his own handwriting where he was, what he saw and heard and did, and even what he thought and felt. This should be at least as instructive as the measurement of his bones.

The fond hopes of a few years ago that we would soon have electronic translators have today been dismissed by one who is generally regarded as the world's foremost authority on machine translation. Yehoshua Bar-Hillel states: "The machine will never be able to deliver flawless translation of scientific or technical works [by far the easiest to translate], if only because the relationships between a language and the ideas it seeks to express are by no means simple and direct. . . . The sooner we realize that the perfect translation machine is an illusion, the sooner we can

turn our attention to pursuing a real improvement in lin-
guistic communication."[6]

More recently the same authority has stated that the
"human translator . . . is often obliged to make intelligent
use of extra-linguistic knowledge which sometimes has to
be of considerable breadth and depth."[7] This rules the ma-
chine out either as a serious assistant or competitor, for
every word of an ancient religious text is loaded with extra-
linguistic associations. If anyone had ever produced such
a thing as a perfect translation, then we might design a
machine to duplicate the process. But it has never been
done, because we cannot even imagine a perfect transla-
tion—the very concept eludes us.

A perfect translation would have to convey, imply, sug-
gest, hint, recall, and suppress the same things (no more
and no less) in the mind of its reader that the original does
to a reader of the original; it would have to bring identical
images to the minds of the two readers. But the only reason
we have a translation in the first place is that the two readers
do not live in the same world and therefore do not have
the same images. A word designating even as simple a
thing as a house or a tree suggests quite different pictures
to people living in different parts of the world, and it is the
genius of a language to bring to mind the peculiar images,
situations, moods, and memories of the culture that pro-
duced it, and of no other. A language produces almost
automatically a photographic likeness of just one culture.[8]
If we try to switch or substitute photographs, all kinds of
explanations and clarifications are necessary, and that is
why every translation that strives to be exact must fall back
continually on elaborate explanatory notes. So we learn a
language not in order to translate, but because there is so
much in that language that can never be translated.

Every scholar in reading an ancient document for the
first time constantly asks himself where its ideas and the
expressions come from. Even the most original writer is

influenced by somebody, and with the ancients originality was by no means the highest virtue in a composition; as a result, every ancient composition is a composite of concepts and expressions handed down from earlier times, each period having its own characteristic emphasis and preferences. This makes it possible to test the derivation and hence the authenticity of ancient texts. What makes the comparison of the New Testament and the Dead Sea Scrolls really significant, for example, is the fact that they "draw from a common reservoir of terminology and ideas."[9] When we are told that "echoes of New Testament thoughts and phraseology are clear in the scrolls; especially those having apocalyptic associations,"[10] we are brought to realize that in this field of study "key words and phrases are an index to thought."[11] Translation destroys all the clues.

In a field surrounded by language barriers, proficiency in language can itself be a pitfall, since the superior linguist, lording it over his fellows, can easily forget that any degree of proficiency attainable in a human lifetime is still pitifully inadequate. Every scholar in considering the possible background of a text he is examining is naturally limited to the consideration of texts he already knows about. Hence a researcher who knows Sanskrit but not Chinese might declare a document of Sanskrit origin because of the many points of relationship he finds between it and the literature he has studied, but be quite unaware that the same document might well contain three times as many references to Chinese sources. Literary critics of the Book of Mormon in the past have nearly all been ornaments of the English Department, who naturally detect in the Book of Mormon many things reminiscent of nineteenth century American literature, which is not surprising since it was written in nineteenth century America and since any two large collections of writings are bound to present many parallels. And so they have announced that they have quite definitely discovered the real origin of the Book of Mormon.

But the shock and horror with which the Book of Mormon was received in nineteenth century America, the scandal and the hilarity of it all, should be quite enough to show that this was by no means a typical product of the times. If the critics had been able to look around more widely they would soon have discovered parallels to the Book of Mormon everywhere, and might have come to suspect that their source criticism was suffering from a serious shortage of sources. But will just any sources do for comparative purposes? By no means; the *first* rule of textual criticism is always to assume that a document is genuine and test it first of all against its purported background: if it does not fit into that, then its claims are indeed questionable; but if it shows any tendency to be at home in that setting then it deserves a careful and respectful examination. Unfortunately this is *not* the way in which critics have dealt with the Book of Mormon.

Two tests are important here, a literary and a cultural, since a writing betrays its origin both by its language — style, vocabulary, imagery, etc. — and by the things it talks about and describes, which inevitably betray something of its real background. The first test is, broadly speaking, Source History or Source Criticism (*Quellengeschichte*), looking around for the possible written sources on which the ancient writer drew; and the second is Form Criticism (*Formgeschichte*), which seeks to reconstruct the kind of setting in which a passage was written from the tone and content of the passage itself. Once employed by rival schools, these two formidable tools are now combined to explore the background of the Bible. But their effectiveness is by no means limited to that book — indeed biblical scholars have borrowed their tools largely from Classical scholarship; one cannot imagine a more perfect subject for the source critic and the form critic than the Book of Mormon, for if ever there was a book crying for investigation this is it; and if any other writing can match its wealth of literary oddities
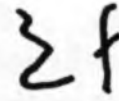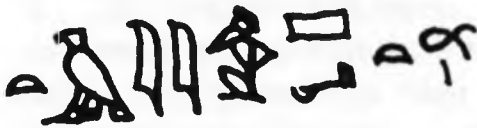
"Ammon"
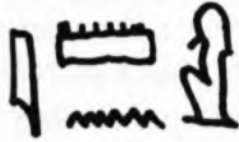
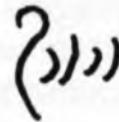Hieroglyphic   Hieratic   1400 B.C.   600 B.C.

. . . my letter"

Hieroglyphic   Demotic

Styles of Egyptian writing. What could be more "Reformed"? (After Erman)

and its exotic *Sitz im Leben* we have yet to hear of it. Here then is an eminently testable document whose author all his days asked nothing better of the learned world than to subject it to the severest tests they could devise.

Some Peculiarities of Composition

In matters of language and composition the Book of Mormon from the first presented a welcome target to the critics: here was something that even a child could see was fraudulent, something that no intelligent person, let alone a clever deceiver would dream of—"from the *reformed Egyptian!!!*" screamed Alexander Campbell, with three exclamation points.[12] Nobody knew anything about reformed Egyptian then. The word Demotic had not yet come into general use. Lacking that, "Reformed Egyptian" is as good a term as any to describe that peculiar and remarkably abbreviated style of "cursive writing developed out of the Hieratic by systematic abbreviation from the eighth to the fourth centuries," which enjoyed the heyday of its international popularity in Lehi's own time.[13] We pointed out long ago that that peculiar type of writing known as Mer-

oitic, a baffling and still largely undeciphered Egyptian script which developed out of Demotic under circumstances remarkably paralleling the purported development of Nephite writing, has the most striking affinities to the characters on the so-called Anthon Transcript, which is thought to be Joseph Smith's own copying of a sample of the writing on the plates. The point is that there was such writing.[14]

"It Came to Pass . . . "

Nothing delighted the critics more than the monotonous repetition of "it came to pass" at the beginning of thousands of sentences in the Book of Mormon. Here again is something that Western tradition found completely unfamiliar. Instead of punctuation, the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon divides up its phrases by introducing each by an "and," "behold," "now," or "It came to pass . . . ." Simply outrageous—as English literature, but it is standard Egyptian practice. Egyptian historical texts, Grapow points out, "begin in monotonous fashion" always with the same stock words; at some periods every speech is introduced with the unnecessary "I opened my mouth."[15] Dramatic texts are held together by the constant repetition of Khpr-n, "It happened that" or "It came to pass."[16] In Egyptian these expressions were not merely adornments, as Grapow points out, they are a grammatical necessity and may not be omitted.[17] Paul Humbert has traced the origin of prophetic biblical expressions to archaic oracular formulas.[18] At any rate they are much commoner in Egyptian than in the Bible, just as they are much commoner in the Book of Mormon. However bad they are in English, they are nothing to be laughed at as Egyptian.

Bad Grammar

The occasional change of person or number in the middle of a sentence or speech in the Book of Mormon is bad English grammar, but quite characteristic of ancient

composition. How can we tell whether it is just a blunder here or the faithful — too faithful — rendering of the original? We can't, but there is an interesting coincidence to consider. J. Sperber has shown that *Personenwechsel* is characteristic of the more emotional passages of the Old Testament (not the New Testament), especially the inspired utterances of the prophets, and is most particularly characteristic of Isaiah.[19] Perhaps the best example of this in the Book of Mormon is in the impassioned speech of the prophet Abinadi on pages 182–83 of the first edition. One might profitably examine the distribution of such slips in the first edition — perhaps they are more than a mere coincidence. At least they are by no means contrary to ancient usage.

The Colophons

The major writings of the Book of Mormon are introduced and concluded by "colophons," which have the purpose of acquainting the reader with the source of the material given and informing him of the authorship of the particular manuscript. Such colophons are found at 1 Nephi 1:1–3; 22:30–31; Jacob 1:2; 7:27; Jarom 1:1–2; Omni 1:1, 3–4; Words of Mormon 1:9; Mosiah 1:4; 9:1; Helaman 16:25. In his opening colophon Nephi refers to the excellence of his parents, the good education his father has given him, tells how he has been blessed of heaven, describes the nature of the record he is writing and the sources from which he is taking it, including personal experience — "a record of my proceedings in my days" — and the important information that he can vouch for the truth of the record, having written it with his own hand. This complacent advertising of one's own virtues, in particular one's reliability, is a correct and indeed a required fixture of any properly composed Egyptian autobiography of Nephi's time — a time at which the writing of autobiographies was very fashionable. The colophon of the famous Bremer-Rhind Papyrus contains "(1) the date; (2) titles of Nasmīn (the author); (3) the names of

his parents," his father's prophetic calling and virtues, and (4) a curse against "any foreigner who shall take the book away from him" into whose hands it comes legitimately.[20] One colophon, which occurs at the end of no less than four famous Egyptian writings (Sinuhe, the Prisse Papyrus, the Man Weary of Life, and the Shipwrecked Sailor) reads (in the Shipwrecked Sailor version): "The account from beginning to end as found in a writing of . . . a scribe reliable of fingers, Amoni the son of Amonah, may he live, prosper and be healthy." The note on the reliability of the writer's fingers is matched by Nephi's "and I make it with mine own hand." The interesting pair of names, Amoni and Amonah, should catch the eye of any reader of the Book of Mormon.

Literary Genres

We have discussed elsewhere the surprising presence in the pages of the Book of Mormon of a full-blown *Qaṣida* or primitive desert poem, recited under exactly the proper circumstances and in exactly the proper form by Father Lehi.[21] His son Nephi shows a no less impressive familiarity with the accepted forms of literary composition and imagery, as we shall soon see.

The first part of the Book of Mormon is Nephi's *autobiography*, in which he has included large parts of his father's autobiography. It so happens that in Nephi's day the autobiography was the most popular form of composition in Egyptian, the main purpose of such an exercise being, as J. Janssen pointed out, to acquire a good name with men and gods and pass on edifying and pious instructions to one's successors.[22] Such is plainly Nephi's purpose as stated in his colophons.

It should also be noted that with all its pious and didactic tendencies, the Book of Mormon is virtually devoid of proverbs — this is a peculiarity of Egyptian literature at all times,[23] while the completely historical orientation of the book is a

peculiarity of Hebraic scripture;[24] the one oddity reflects "the language of the Egyptians," the other "the learning of the Jews" (1 Nephi 1:2). One prophet in the Book of Mormon indulges in withering irony and sarcasm; that is Abinadi, who happened to be a diligent student of the Hebrew prophets, whose style of irony he displays. The point here is that the irony has only been recognized by recent critics.[25] Such literary details deserve closer attention than they have received; but they are not likely to get it from a generation of scholars who spend more time at air terminals than in libraries.

Peculiar Imagery

The Book of Mormon is full of rather odd imagery, not found in the Bible and quite out of place in the world of Joseph Smith, but well attested in the documentary discoveries and researches of recent years. To take a few examples:

1. *The Star.* Nephi in a vision saw certain heavenly beings, whose "brightness did exceed that of the stars in the firmament. And they came down and went forth upon the face of the earth" (1 Nephi 1:9–11).

Now we all know that Lucifer fell "as a star from heaven," and the Book of Enoch says that that prophet "saw many stars descend and cast themselves down from heaven to that first star."[26] There is in fact a great deal in the early Apocrypha about the coming down of fallen stars from heaven to circulate among men upon the earth.[27] But this is matched in the same writings by the other side of the picture, the coming down to earth of stars for the salvation of men. Lehi reports that "he saw One descending out of the midst of heaven, and he beheld that his luster was above that of the sun at noon-day. And he also saw twelve others . . . and their brightness did exceed that of the stars in the firmament" (1 Nephi 1:9–10). Ignatius of Antioch says that when Christ was born "there shone a

star in heaven brighter than all the stars, . . . and all the other stars, with the sun and the moon made a chorus to that star."[28] Speaking of the star of Bethlehem, an early Apocryphon says "it was in the form of a star" that Michael guided the magi to Christ.[29] After long ages of darkness, says the Testament of Judah, "shall a star rise to you from Jacob in peace, and a man shall arise like the sun of righteousness, . . . and the heavens shall be opened to him."[30] Or, as the Testament of Levi puts it, "Then shall the Lord raise up a new priest; . . . His Star shall rise in heaven as of a king . . . and the heavens shall be opened."[31] 'The stars shone in their watches and were glad," says 1 Baruch, speaking of God's ministers as stars. "They shone with gladness unto him that made them," and gladly responded when he summoned them.[32] In the Battle Scroll the deliverer in war is called "the Star from Jacob,"[33] and in the Zadokite Fragment the leader of the sect in its wanderings is called simply "The Star."[34] The author of the *Clementine Recognitions* resents the pirating of Christian ideas by the Zoroastrians, who call their prophet "The Living Star,"[35] and Eusebius says that Barcochebas, "the Star," who has left us a letter in his own handwriting among the Dead Sea Scrolls, was really "a fallen star."[36] In one of the early Apocrypha, Mary says to the apostles, "Ye are shining stars."[37]

All this is imagery having nothing to do with star worship: the early Christians avoided the pitfalls of astrology into which the later churchmen fell when they abolished flesh-and-blood prophets and depersonalized God, leaving the heavenly bodies as the only means of communication between heaven and earth.[38] It is simply a conventional imagery, and the point to notice is the idea that chosen spirits which come down to minister to men upon the earth are conceived as circulating stars. This is the image behind the concept of the Seven Wise Men,[39] but the explicit sit-

uation depicted in Lehi's vision is that peculiar to the early Apocrypha.

We have mentioned the Way of Light and the Way of Darkness as an expression of man's life as a time of probation. The contrast of light and dark is, as is well known by now, an obsession with the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls, but no more so than with the writers of the Book of Mormon.[40] But since the contrast is a perfectly natural one, a more particular instance is in order to point up the common idiom of the Apocrypha and the Book of Mormon.

"These arrayed in white." Such an instance is the image of the white garment, specifically, the "three men in white." Recently Professor E. Goodenough has pointed out that the earliest known art of the Jews represents "their great heroes . . . in white garments to symbolize their 'luminous' nature. . . . Another striking element . . . is the great prominence of groups of three figures, usually in this dress. . . . The choice of three was arbitrary, and the total number of scenes which represent a group of three seemed quite beyond coincidence. . . . Philo himself made the vision of the 'three men' into a vision of the essential nature of God."[41]

The "three men" is a constantly recurring motive in the Apocrypha, and Cyrus Gordon has commented on the peculiar preoccupation of the early Hebrew epic with "triads of officers," celestial and earthly.[42] Enoch ascends with two other glorious beings,[43] and in Jubilees when the Lord descends to see the tower he is accompanied by two others as in Genesis 18.[44] In the newly found Sayings of Moses we learn that the Law was delivered not by Moses alone but by Moses and his two counselors, Eleazar and Joshua.[45] When we read in the Manual of Discipline that "God . . . through His Anointed One, has made us to know His holy Spirit," we are plainly dealing with three who speak to man.[46] According to the Mandaean doctrine, three celestial beings assisted at the creation and occasionally visited the

earth; these were not the Godhead, however, but three messengers who later lived upon the earth as prophets.[47]

In a strange old writing known as the Pseudo-Philo, Samuel tells Saul that it is not the Witch of Endor who has called him up, "but the precept which God spoke to me while yet I lived, that I should come and tell thee that thou hast sinned a second time." The witch is quite overpowered and says that this is not the result of her conjuring powers, for this is no ordinary human spirit, "for he is arrayed in a white robe and hath a mantle upon it, and two angels leading him."[48] It is the three men in white again.

The Book of Mormon has a good deal to say about messengers in white. Lehi's desert vision opens with "a man, and he was dressed in a white robe," who becomes his guide (1 Nephi 8:5). Lehi is shown "twelve ministers, . . . their garments . . . made white" (1 Nephi 12:10), followed by three generations of men whose "garments were white, even like unto the Lamb of God" (1 Nephi 12:11). Soon after, Nephi also in a vision "beheld a man, and he was dressed in a white robe," this being John who was to come (1 Nephi 14:19).

"There can no man be saved," says Alma, "except his garments are washed white" (Alma 5:21). He tells how the ancient priesthood "were called after this holy order, and were sanctified, and their garments were washed white through the blood of the Lamb. Now they . . . [have] their garments made white, being pure and spotless before God" (Alma 13:11–12). But the most moving and significant passage is his formal prayer for the city of Gideon: "May the Lord bless you, and keep your garments spotless, that ye may at last be brought to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the holy prophets, . . . having your garments spotless even as their garments are spotless, in the kingdom of heaven to go no more out" (Alma 7:25).

Here Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are *the* "three men in white."[49]

2. *Desert Imagery*: We have commented before on the vivid little pictures of ancient desert life that Nephi gives us, but what we have not noted is the desert *imagery*, which is a different sort of thing. A person may employ desert imagery though he has never lived with the Beduins in his life, its inspiration being not in a real but in a literary experience. The desert imagery of Nephi's writings has been studied against the real desert background before now, but it has never been compared with the rich desert imagery in the apocryphal writings, both Jewish and Christian—which is not surprising, since *Lehi in the Desert* appeared before the Dead Sea Scrolls had been published. Take Nephi's supplication:

"O Lord, wilt thou . . . that I may walk in the path of the low valley, that I may be strict in the plain road! O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness! O Lord, wilt thou make a way for mine escape before mine enemies! Wilt thou make my path straight before me! Wilt thou not place a stumbling block in my way—but that thou wouldst clear my way before me, and hedge not up my way, but the ways of mine enemy" (2 Nephi 4:32–33).

It is all straight desert lore—the low valley, the plain road, the flight from relentless enemies, the great sheikh placing the fringe of his robe (*kuffeh*) around the shoulder of the kneeling suppliant as a sign of his protection, the open passage, and the stumbling blocks—but it is also authentic apocryphal imagery. So Ben Sirach: "His paths are plain for the blameless; even so they present stumbling-blocks to the offender."[50] Sirach sees in the dangerous journey through the desert the most compelling image of man's dependence on God, as Nephi does.[51]

The latter describes those who fall away as being led "away into broad roads, that they perish and are lost" (1 Nephi 12:17; cf. 1 Nephi 8:32). In our culture the broadest roads are the safest, but it was not so in the desert. In the

Desert wilderness along the Gulf of Aqaba

popular Egyptian literature of Lehi's day it was a common teaching "that a man should never depart from the right path . . . but be righteous, not associate his heart with the wicked or walk upon the path of unrighteousness."[52] Recently Couroyer has shown that there was actually a close connection between this Egyptian concept and the "way of life" teachings in Israel, the two stemming from a common literary tradition.[53] "We went astray from the way of truth," says the Wisdom of Solomon, " . . . and we journeyed through trackless deserts, but the way of the Lord we knew not."[54] This is exactly the lesson of the Liahona: "Therefore, they tarried in the wilderness, or did not travel a direct course . . . because of their transgressions" (Alma 37:42).

Lehi, in "a dark and dreary wilderness" (1 Nephi 8:4), found a wonderful tree (1 Nephi 8:10), and near it "a river

of water" (1 Nephi 8:13) at whose source he saw the righteous members of his family standing as they considered where to go from there (1 Nephi 8:14); he called them to join him at the tree (1 Nephi 8:15), and also called Laman and Lemuel to join the rest of them, but these refused (1 Nephi 8:17–18). While some got to the tree by taking hold of an iron rod, "Many were drowned in the depths of the fountain; and many were lost from his view, wandering in strange roads" (1 Nephi 8:32). The obedient members of the family found both the waters and the tree of life. The tree and the water are often mentioned together, for the simple reason that in the desert the two necessarily occur together (cf. the First Psalm of David).

Lehi's appeal to his sons must have sounded like that of the Odes of Solomon: "Come and take water from the living fountain of the Lord. . . . Come and drink and rest by the fountain of the Lord!"[55] "He that refuses the water shall not live!" says the Zadokite Fragment.[56] "I saw the fountain of righteousness," says 1 Enoch, telling of *his* vision, "and around it were many springs of wisdom, and all the thirsty drank from them and were filled. . . . But woe unto ye who . . . have forsaken the fountain of life!"[57] The Thanksgiving Hymns of the Dead Sea Scrolls often refer to the knowledge of God as a fountain and declare that only the humble of broken heart and contrite spirit partake of it.[58] This theme is strongly emphasized in Lehi's story, where those who partake of the fruit are mocked for their humility (1 Nephi 8:25–28).

Filthy water. In the tree-and-river image the emphasis is sometimes on the fruit, sometimes on the water. Nephi gives a special interpretation to the latter when he says that his father failed to notice that the water of the river was filthy, and that it represented "the depths of hell" (1 Nephi 15:26–29; 12:16). "This was a typical desert *sayl*," we wrote some years ago, "a raging torrent of liquid filth that sweeps whole camps to destruction."[59] The same queer and un-

pleasant imagery meets us in the Odes of Solomon: "Great rivers are the power of the Lord, and they carry headlong those who despise him: and entangle their paths; and they sweep away their fords, and catch their bodies and destroy their lives."[60] The foolish ones who refuse counsel are swept away in the wreckage of the flood.

The Thanksgiving Hymns use the same flood image in a different but related sense — the vanity of the world is the torrent; "the way of the princes of this world" is such a confused rush of water that brings only ruin and is soon dried up.[61] The early Christian Acts of Thomas contrasts the pure perennial water with the filthy seasonal flood: God's fountain being "never filthy, and the stream thereof never faileth," it is "the sweet spring that never ceaseth, the clear fountain that is never polluted."[62]

In the Thanksgiving Hymns the soul that refuses to drink of "the Wellspring of Life, even though it was yielding [life or water] everlasting" becomes "as . . . rivers in flood, for they poured forth their mire upon me."[63] Again the filthy water. The Zadokite Fragment speaks of the false teachers of Israel as drenching the people with "waters of falsehood," the evil counterpart of the waters of life: "There arose the 'man of scoffing,' who dripped [or preached] to Israel 'waters of falsehood' and 'caused them to go astray in a wilderness without way' by 'causing eternal pride [or pride of the world] to become low' by turning aside from the pathways of righteousness."[64]

It is not only the images but the combinations of images that are arresting here. Let us recall that Nephi saw that "many were drowned in the depths of the fountain [of filthy water]; and many were lost from his view, wandering in strange roads" (1 Nephi 8:32). This wandering, he explains, was the direct result of "the attitude of mocking" (1 Nephi 8:27) of the people in the fine house that represented "the pride of the world" (1 Nephi 11:36). Scoffing, filthy waters, the pride of the world, and straying in the wilderness are

a strange combination, but the coincidence is explained by Rabin's translation, which we are giving here; in it, almost every phrase is put in quotation marks, because almost every phrase is actually a quotation from the Bible or (usually) some old apocryphal work. Nephi's imagery meets us again in Baruch: "Thou hast forsaken the fountain of wisdom" and wandered away from the way of God,[65] and in a striking passage of the Talmud, where Rabbi Isaac says, "I will give you a likeness: Once there was one wandering hungry, weary and thirsty, in the desert, and he came to a tree with beautiful fruit and shade beside a stream of water."[66]

The newly found Apocalypse of Elijah tells how the righteous are led to the place where "they may eat of the Tree of Life and wear a white garment . . . and they will never thirst."[67] In these instances the tree and the water go together. The two things most wonderful of all things, according to the Acts of Thomas, are "the incorruptible food of the tree of life and the drink of the water of life."[68]

An odd aspect of the tree in the Book of Mormon is the perfect whiteness of it (the whitest of trees, 1 Nephi 11:8) and of its fruit (1 Nephi 8:10–11). Whiteness is not an appetizing quality in trees or fruit, and so it is impressive to learn from the Creation Apocryphon that though the tree of life looks like a cypress, its fruit is perfectly white.[69]

Sometimes imagery seems to get remarkably jumbled up in the Book of Mormon, as in Helaman 3:29–30: "whosoever will may *lay hold* upon the word of God, . . . which shall *divide asunder* all the cunning and the *snares* and the wiles of the devil, and lead the man of Christ in a straight and *narrow course* across that everlasting *gulf.* . . . And *land* their souls . . . at the *right hand* of God in the kingdom of heaven, to *sit down* with Abraham, and Isaac, and with Jacob . . . to go no more out."

Here in a single sentence we have the image of the rod or staff ("lay hold"), the sword, the nets, the path, the

yawning gulf, the ship, the throne, and the kingdom. To us this may appear rather tasteless and overdone, but it is typical. Take this from an important Mandaean writing attributed to John: "Come, come to me! I am the shepherd, whose ship soon comes. . . . Who does not hearken to my call shall sink. . . . I am the fisherman . . . come, I will rescue you from the filthy birds. I will rescue my friends and bring them into my ship. I will clothe them in garments of glory and with precious light."[70]

The Land of No Return, long viewed as the fatal blunder of the Book of Mormon by the oracles of the English Department, hardly deserves mention, since there is nothing the least bit peculiar about it. It is a commonplace in the literature of the whole Near East from the earliest times to the present. We pointed out years ago that Lehi's use of the expression is strictly formulaic and did not necessarily reflect his real belief about death at all.[71] An interesting confirmation of this is to be found on early Christian and Jewish epitaphs, wherein the pious dead are described as "sleeping their last sleep," a thing which the authors of the epitaphs, as J. Frey observes, did not believe for a minute.[72] The "land of no return" is, however, a good illustration of the pitfalls of impulsive criticism. Even English majors should know that it does not have to come from Shakespeare. The most famous poem of Catullus, on the death of his lady's pet sparrow, contains a couplet that is nearer to Lehi's language than Shakespeare's: *Qui nunc it per iter tenebricosum, Illuc unde negant redire quemquam.* Which Lord Bryon rendered: "Now having pass'd the gloomy bourn from whence he never can return."[73]

Peculiar Expressions

There are some odd expressions found in the Book of Mormon that do not turn up in the Bible but do turn up elsewhere, notably in the Apocrypha, where they go along with the strange imagery we have just mentioned.

An Identification Test

Even using the texts of present-day translations of early Apocrypha, we can mix up sentences from them with sentences from Joseph Smith's translation and defy even experts to tell which come from the Old World documents and which from the New. Let the reader decide which of the following are taken from the Book of Mormon and which from the Apocrypha. None of the translations are ours.

1. Let us prepare our souls that we may enter into possession of, and not be taken possession of.[74]

2. (In preparing for the Messiah) they have become free forever . . . to act for themselves and not to be acted upon.[75]

1. But judging them little by little thou gavest them an opportunity of repentance, Thou knewest their nature was evil.[76]

2. And thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.[77]

1. He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it, and he that setteth a snare shall be taken in it.[78]

2. That great pit which hath been digged for the destruction of men shall be filled by those who digged it.[79]

1. Woe to you, ye rich, for ye have trusted in your riches, and from you your riches shall depart.[80]

2. But wo unto the rich, . . . their hearts are upon their treasures. . . . And behold, their treasure shall perish with them also.[81]

3. Because they have set their hearts upon their riches, [I] will hide up their treasures.[82]

4. Ye are cursed because of your riches, and also are your riches cursed because ye have set your hearts upon them.[83]

1. May the Lord bless thee forever, for thy seed shall not utterly be destroyed.[84]

2. Fulfill my prayer, to leave me a posterity on earth, and not destroy all the flesh of man.[85]

3. He has promised unto us that our seed shall not utterly be destroyed, according to the flesh.[86]

1. And now my children . . . how . . . awful it is to come before the face of the ruler of heaven. . . . Who can endure that endless pain?[87]

2. They are consigned to an awful view of their own guilt . . . which doth cause them to shrink from the presence of the Lord into a state of misery and endless torment.[88]

Here we seem to have a plain case of plagiarism: In a father's warning to his children the operative words are "And now my children" (And again my brethren — Mosiah 3:1), *awful*, the *face* of the ruler of heaven (the presence of the Lord), *endless pain* (endless torment), all occurring in that order. The only trouble is that the document from which the Book of Mormon is plagiarizing was not discovered until 1892.

These parallels illustrate the fact that in the preachments of the Book of Mormon we are dealing with a consciously formulaic, that is, deliberately unoriginal, type of literature. This readily explains the parallels; but if the Book of Mormon were not a genuine literary product of its age, it would not survive for an hour set against the ancient stereotypes.

There are a number of New Testament expressions which were loudly denounced as obvious anachronisms but are now known to have gone back to times well before the New Testament was written:

Synagogue and *Church* are applied in the Book of Mormon to the institutions most closely resembling them in the Old World. The question is purely one of translation. "The origin of the synagogue," wrote Zeitlin, "dates back to the

time when local assemblies were occasionally summoned to consider the needs of a community."[89] The existence of such synagogues, he notes, was by no means restricted to the times after the destruction of the Temple—the synagogue was simply the local Jewish religious assembly, in contrast to the Great Synagogue, which was an assembly "of a national character . . . to consider problems affecting the whole" nation.[90]

Synagogue though a Greek word was used only by Jews to designate a Jewish assembly in the diaspora or at Jerusalem; "the pagans, who did not know Hebrew, . . . called it a proseuche, not synagogue." No better word, in fact no *other* word, could be found to indicate ancient Jewish assemblies and assembly places in any part of the world than *synagogue.* The early Christians designated their assemblies by the same Aramaic term, *beth ha-keneseth,* as they gave to a Jewish house of worship; but when they spoke Greek they distinguished between the two, according to Zeitlin, by calling the Christian house an *ekklesia* — which we translate into church. Since Zeitlin's study, however, the Dead Sea Scrolls have come forth; in them the community is designated as a *yehad,* which Molin, in the most careful study of the word, decided could only be translated properly as church—a pre-Christian church![91] Or as Professor Cross styled it, "a church of anticipation."[92] Gaster noted at the same time that the other word used for the community at Qumran was ʿedah, which is actually the old Syriac word for church.[93] If the Book of Mormon used "synagogue" to designate the early Jewish assemblies, and "church" to designate such assemblies after they had become Christian, it is hard to think of more appropriate terms—bearing always in mind that this is a translation, and the purpose of the words is not to convey what the Nephites *called* their communities, but how we are to picture them in our minds.

"Alpha and Omega" in the Book of Mormon is another apparent anachronism. But here again, since it is an ac-

cepted *English* expression, we may view it as the best way of conveying the meaning of a certain Nephite expression to English readers. The purpose of a translation is to transmit meanings, not words: the original words are already there—they don't need to be translated. T, and not long-O, is the last letter of the old Greek as well as the old Semitic (including Hebrew and Phoenician) alphabets. But to say "I am the A and the T" would be meaningless to *English*-speaking readers, to whom the meaning of "Alpha and Omega" is perfectly clear. In addressing Jewish communities in notoriously bad Greek, but in the peculiar idiom of the ancient sectaries, John uses the expression in Revelation 1:8 because they too were familiar with the expression. It remained the standard designation of Christ as Redeemer and Judge throughout the Middle Ages among people who knew no Greek.[94] On the other hand, in the old ritual alphabet of the Mandaeans, a purely Semitic alphabet, "the first and last letters, the 'alpha and omega,' are the same and represent perfection of *light and life*." Both letters "have as their sign a circle, possibly representing the sun-disk as a symbol of light."[95] Hence there may be more behind 3 Nephi 9:18 than a *mere* literary convention: "I am *the light and the life*. . . . I am Alpha and Omega."

The word *"antichrist"* in the Book of Mormon is also a translation. In the oldest definition of the word, Polycarp writes, "For any one who does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is Antichrist."[96] Such a title fits Korihor perfectly, since the whole burden of his teaching was that the Messiah, being nothing but a myth, would not and could not come in the flesh (Alma 30:6).

The constant use of "seed" in the Book of Mormon to designate progeny is strictly according to the Egyptian rule, by which, according to Grapow, "seed" is *"always* used to designate 'Son' or 'Descendant.' "[97]

Helaman's "lay hold upon the word of God," while reminding us of the iron rod, is also authentic usage. Mor-

mon wants us to "lay hold upon the gospel" (Mormon 7:8), and five times Moroni speaks of laying hold on every good thing (Moroni 7:19, 20, 21, 25; 10:30). The Zadokite Document deplores Israel's refusal to "grasp instruction," as Rabin translates it, noting that the expression is found in other early Jewish Apocrypha;[98] and urges the people to "Take hold of the way of God," another expression found in other Apocrypha.[99]

Another characteristic expression is that of failing to heed "the mark" set by prudence and tradition. In the Zadokite Fragment the false teachers of the Jews are charged with having "removed the mark which the forefathers had set up in their inheritance,"[100] and there is a solemn warning to "all those of the members of the covenant who have broken out of the boundary of the Law," or stepped beyond the designated mark.[101] The early Christian Gospel of Truth says Israel turns to error when they look for that which is beyond the mark.[102] How well Jacob puts it in the Book of Mormon when he tells how the clever Jews "despised the words of plainness, and killed the prophets, and sought for things that they could not understand. Wherefore, because of their blindness, which blindness came by looking beyond the mark, they must needs fall" (Jacob 4:14).

Another illustration of this point is found in the names *Christ* and *Christian* in the Book of Mormon. These of course were also denounced as hopeless anachronisms, but today the origin of the names is no longer regarded as the open-and-shut proposition it once was. The newly discovered "Gospel of Philip" has an interesting commentary on the names of Jesus and Christ. "The name Jesus," it says, "does not exist in any other tongue [than Hebrew], but he is always called Jesus. But Christ is Messiah in Syriac, while in Greek it is the Christ."[103] One and the same word must be translated as Messiah when used in one context and as Christ when used in another: Christ is the Messiah in a special and particular sense. This can be clearly seen in

Arabic, where the word *al-masih* must be translated Messiah if the author is a Moslem but Christ if the author is a Christian, since the Christian thinks of the Messiah in a different and special sense. "We cannot, every time we meet the Hebrew term 'Messiah,' assume, outside the New Testament, that it means what it means in the New Testament," H.R.C. Leaney notes.[104] Messiah is the more general term, Christ the more limited and particular. It is interesting that in the *early* parts of the Book of Mormon we read only of the Messiah, while in the later parts he is definitely Christ. When the Samaritan woman said, "I know that Messiah comes, who is called Christ" (John 4:25), she must have used two different words. Yet she was an ignorant woman who spoke no Greek but a language very close to Hebrew — what word could she possibly have used for "Christ" to distinguish it from Messiah? We must ask the same question of the Book of Mormon rather than hastily condemning it as an anachronism.

A number of studies have recently come forth dealing with the origin of the name *Christian,* all of them unsatisfied with the conventional idea that it was a term of derision first applied to the followers of Christ at Antioch. These studies agree that it was the Christians themselves who first took the name — as in the Book of Mormon, and that for them the mere uttering of the name was "a summary confession of faith."[105] This is exactly how it is taken in the Book of Mormon.

Proper Names

The greatest bonanza any philologist could ask for in coming to grips with the Book of Mormon is the generous supply of proper names, West Semitic and Egyptian, which the author dumps in his lap. Here is more than enough rope to hang any impostor and put an effective bridle on the well-known exuberance of people who play around with

Potsherd found in 1938 on the Gulf of Aqaba, dating from approximately the time of Lehi, and bearing the name *Lehi* (from *BASOR*, #80, 1940)

names. Let us add to our older lists a few examples that we have recently run across.

Egyptian: — We have always thought that the oddest and most disturbing name in the Book of Mormon was Hermounts, since there is nothing either Classical or Oriental about it. So we avoided it, until not long ago a student from Saudi Arabia asked point blank what the funny word was. Well, what does the Book of Mormon say it is? Hermounts in the Book of Mormon is the wild country of the borderlands, the hunting grounds, "that part of the wilderness which was infested by wild and ravenous beasts" (Alma 2:37). The equivalent of such a district in Egypt is Hermonthis, the land of Month, the Egyptian Pan — the god of wild places and things. Hermounts and Hermonthis are close enough to satisfy the most exacting philologist.[106] The

Egyptian Month of Hermonthis was an extremely popular figure in Lehi's day, to judge by the great frequency with which his name occurs in the composition of proper names in various forms: Montu, Mendes, Menti, etc; it is the Book of Mormon Manti, next to Ammon the commonest name element in the Nephite onomasticon.[107] It is hard to explain bull's-eyes like Korihor, Pahoran, and Paankhi as pure accidents. Paankhi was a popular Egyptian name in the seventh century B.C., but it was not known until the end of the last century; and what American would dream of cooking up such combinations as "aa" or "kh"? Interestingly enough, there are two separate Korihors (the name is spelled variously) in the Old World, the one a genuine Egyptian name (Kherihor, Hurhor, etc., was a high priest of Ammon and chief judge who seized the throne in 1085 B.C.), and the other of Asiatic origin going back to the dawn of history.[108] This is interesting because there are also two forms of the name in the Book of Mormon, the one (Corihor) being an important Jaredite name, and the other (Korihor) the name of a Nephite chief judge.

Book of Mormon theophoric names such as Gadianhi, Korihor, Amnihor, etc., follow the proper rules of construction with the conventional employment of mimation and nunation. The Egyptian names even fall into the Old World statistical pattern with an absolute predominance of the name Ammon, with Manti second in order, and a heavy emphasis on names beginning with "Pa" and high frequency of the elements "mor" and "hor."[109]

Zinapa, the cuneiform rendering of an Egyptian name, certainly suggests the Book of Mormon Zeniff.[110] Since the writing on the Anthon Transcript looks most like Meroitic, it may be significant that Meroitic names have a way of suggesting Book of Mormon names—to us, at least. Thus the names Pachoras and Pakazi occur in a short Meroitic inscription (cf. Book of Mormon Pahoran, Pachus);[111] others that the Book of Mormon student will recognize are Keb

or Kib (Book of Mormon Gib),[112] Horon, Pikhas (Book of Mormon Pachus), Aminap (Book of Mormon Aminadab), Anlaman, Piankhi.[113] One easterner living in Egypt was Teumman (Book of Mormon Teomner).[114]

Which brings us to the Hebrew names in the Book of Mormon. A large part of the Hebrew names in the Book of Mormon are nonbiblical, but preserve the authentic forms of the Hebrew names of the period as attested in newly discovered documents.[115] Some important place names we have only in translation in the Book of Mormon, the best known being Bountiful and Desolation. Bountiful is a typical colonizer's name (cf. Olbia, Euxin), while it is known that the ancient Semites gave the name Hormah, meaning Destruction or Desolation, "to any scene of defeat."[116]

Here are some interesting old West Semitic names that seem to come right out of the Book of Mormon: Matianoi Mittani (Book of Mormon, Middoni), Amminaadbi (Edomite, cf. Book of Mormon Aminadab), Seriah, Jabish (contemporaries of Jeremiah); Lomni (Old Hebrew, cf. B.M. Omni); Gadiahu, Hezron, Ziph, Epher, Jalon, Ezer, Amnon, Rinnah (Old Hebrew Seals), Jether or Ether.[117]

A surprisingly large number of studies have appeared in recent years on the subject of Egyptian names for the Red Sea, the reason being that the Egyptians had many names and were always making up others. Especially in the late period, according to a recent report, the Egyptians were fond of "evolving new names for different seas."[118] Again, the reason for the odd practice is not known, but it is entirely in keeping with Lehi's behavior: "And we beheld the sea, which *we* called Irreantum, which, being interpreted, is many waters" (1 Nephi 17:5). "Many waters" is a typical Egyptian designation (that is the meaning of Fayyum, in fact), but what about "Irreantum"? It is not a Semitic name, and Lehi even goes to the trouble of translating it. It has recently been shown that one of the more common Egyptian names for the Red Sea was Iaru, which

is not Egyptian and whose meaning is unknown.[119] That
would take care of the "Irre-" element in Lehi's name, while
"antum" can be matched by two characteristic Egyptian
forms, *iny-t* and *'anjt,* both describing large bodies of water,
the former possibly the Gulf of Suez, and the latter the
"Waters of Busiris." On the other hand, since "Iaru" has
never been explained, could it be related to the old Indo-
European word for "sea," the Hittite form of which is *aru-
nash*?[120] *Aru-na-sh* corresponds closely enough with Irre-an-
t (um), but we won't include it among our more valid par-
allels since we throw it in just for fun.[121]