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Author(s) John A. Tvedtnes and Matthew Roper

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Abstract Review of "Introductory Essay" (2002), by Francis J. Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen; "Does the Book of Mormon Reflect an Ancient Near Eastern Background?" (2002), by Thomas J. Finley; and "Rendering Fiction: Translation, Pseudotranslation, and the Book of Mormon" (2002), by David J. Shepherd.

One Small Step

John A. Tvedtnes and Matthew Roper

In 1997 Carl Mosser and Paul Owen, then graduate students at the Talbot School of Theology at Biola University in California, presented a paper entitled "Mormon Scholarship, Apologetics, and Evangelical Neglect: Losing the Battle and Not Knowing It?" at a regional meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society. It was subsequently published in *Trinity Journal.*[1] Noting that most evangelical responses to beliefs and practices of members of the Church of Jesus Christ came from uninformed sources (what we would call "anti-Mormons"), they proposed a new direction. They began by drawing attention to the scholarly training and publication record of Latter-day Saint researchers and suggested that it was time for evangelical scholars to lend their expertise to responding to this research. The

1. Carl Mosser and Paul Owen, "Mormon Scholarship, Apologetics and Evangelical Neglect: Losing the Battle and Not Knowing It?" *Trinity Journal,* n.s., 19/2 (1998): 179–205.

Review of Francis J. Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen. "Introductory Essay"; Thomas J. Finley. "Does the Book of Mormon Reflect an Ancient Near Eastern Background"; and David J. Shepherd. "Rendering Fiction: Translation, Pseudotranslation, and the Book of Mormon." In *The New Mormon Challenge: Responding to the Latest Defenses of a Fast-Growing Movement,* ed. Francis J. Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen, 334–95. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002. 535 pp. with glossary and indexes. $21.99.

book being reviewed here, a follow-up to that suggestion, assembles articles written by various evangelical scholars. Despite their credentials (Ph.D.s and Th.D.s), some of them make the same mistaken assumptions as their less educated coreligionists.

In this review, we shall address only a portion of *The New Mormon Challenge:* part 4, labeled "The Book of Mormon." It includes an introductory essay by the editors, followed by two articles—one by Thomas J. Finley, "Does the Book of Mormon Reflect an Ancient Near Eastern Background?" and the other by David J. Shepherd, "Rendering Fiction: Translation, Pseudotranslation, and the Book of Mormon."

The introduction has an error—one that can lead to some misunderstandings about the Latter-day Saint position. The editors write, "According to Smith and the Latter-day Saints, the theological aspect of the record contains the 'fullness of the gospel' that was lost when early Christianity suffered a 'Great Apostasy'" (p. 334). While it is true that we believe in an apostasy in early Christianity, it is not tied to the "fulness of the gospel" that is claimed for the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon itself is not the only source of restoration of truths that were lost—an honor that also belongs to "other books" (1 Nephi 13:39–40) and more especially to revelations received by the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Nephite record contains the "fulness of the gospel" because it describes in detail the nature of the atonement of Christ. The main thing lost in the apostasy was the priesthood, which was not restored by the Book of Mormon but by angelic ministrations.

Although Latter-day Saints frequently use the term *gospel* to refer generally to all truths to be learned through the restoration, there is a much narrower meaning found in the scriptures. The gospel is the good news of Christ's atonement, and its first principles and ordinances include faith, repentance, baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost. This is the gospel as it is set forth in the Book of Mormon (1 Nephi 10:14; 15:13–14; 3 Nephi 27:13–21; Ether 4:18), the Doctrine and Covenants (D&C 3:20; 13:1; 20:9; 27:5; 33:11–12; 39:5–6; 42:12; 76:40–42; 84:26–27; 107:20; 135:3; 138:2–4, 57), and the Pearl of Great Price (JS—H 1:34; Articles of Faith 3–4). Doctrine and Covenants 93:51 uses the expression "the gospel of salvation," while Abraham 2:11 speaks of "the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation,

even of life eternal" (cf. D&C 128:5, 17). In Jacob 7:6, the gospel is defined as "the doctrine of Christ," referring to the doctrine concerning Christ, rather than the totality of Christ's teachings, since he had not yet been born when these words were uttered (cf. Mormon 3:21; D&C 76:82). Elsewhere, the Book of Mormon equates the "fulness of the gospel" with coming "to the knowledge of the true Messiah" (1 Nephi 10:14; 15:13–14; cf. 3 Nephi 20:30–31; D&C 19:27). The Book of Mormon contains the most lucid explanation of the atonement of Christ (see especially 2 Nephi 2, 9; Mosiah 15; Alma 34, 42) and therefore clearly qualifies as containing the fulness of the gospel.

Unfortunately, from the works they cite, neither Finley nor Shepherd appears to be well acquainted with the scholarly literature on the Book of Mormon, and this critical weakness impairs their approach to the subject. We hope that by reviewing what they have written we can help them and other scholars to take a more in-depth look at the issues.

Shepherd on Translation and Pseudotranslation

David Shepherd is not the first to consider the question of translation vs. pseudotranslation in the case of the Book of Mormon. In 1986 Richard Lloyd Anderson compared the Book of Mormon with gospels that are known or at least generally believed to be fraudulent.[2] Shepherd might have begun with an examination of Anderson's work and then included a critique in his essay.[3] Shepherd's work is flawed by the fact that he is unacquainted with an array of scholarly work that has been done on the Book of Mormon.[4]

2. Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Imitation Gospels and Christ's Book of Mormon Ministry," in *Apocryphal Writings and the Latter-day Saints,* ed. C. Wilfred Griggs (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft and BYU Religious Studies Center, 1986), 53–107.

3. Ironically, Shepherd discusses some of the same texts that Anderson examined (see, for example, 376, 386).

4. Shepherd should have consulted Donald W. Parry, Jeanette W. Miller, Sandra A. Thorne, eds., *A Comprehensive Annotated Book of Mormon Bibliography* (Provo, Utah: Research Press, 1996). Also, since its inception in 1989, the *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* (subsequently changed to the *FARMS Review of Books* and now called the *FARMS Review*) has published annual bibliographies of published works relating to the Book of Mormon.

After examining the text of the Book of Mormon, David Shepherd concludes that the Book of Mormon is not a real translation of a real text, but a pseudotranslation or pretended translation.[5] While we disagree with his conclusions, we acknowledge that his approach is at least somewhat fair. After having presented some evidence, he adds that "As convincing as much of the above material would seem to be, it should be pointed out that this type of internal evidence is fundamentally weakened by the frank realization that our knowledge of the ancient world is fragmentary and must always be open to revision in the light of new discoveries" (p. 381).

Shepherd admits that searching for anachronisms "will always be susceptible to more or less plausible counterarguments," since "even if a particular text is viewed suspiciously on account of anachronisms and/or unusual or unexpected content, this does not necessarily imply pseudotranslation. While these issues of content may be relevant in judging the antiquity of a document, distinguishing between translation and pseudotranslation is ultimately a matter of assessing whether or not a linguistic transfer has taken place and how this transaction (or lack thereof) has been represented" (p. 381). He also admits that "arguments based on internal evidence that suggest pseudotranslation on the basis of anachronism will always be susceptible to counterarguments that legitimately recognize our incomplete knowledge of the past" (p. 384). Such declarations are a positive step in the dialogue between Latter-day Saints and those who reject the scriptures brought to light by Joseph Smith.

One of the problems that Shepherd notes is the lack of an original text. "It seems safe to presume," he writes, "that a bona fide translator, in order to validate his claims to have translated the source text faithfully, will be keen from the outset either to include a copy of the

5. For examples of recent pseudotranslations that rely on Latter-day Saint scriptures but purport to be translations of ancient texts discovered in a European archive, see John A. Tvedtnes's review of David T. Harris, *Truths from the Earth*, volume 2, in *FARMS Review of Books* 9/2 (1997): 68–73.

original language text or provide accurate information regarding its whereabouts" (p. 380). That would be ideal, of course, but it is a modern idea that was not the standard for scholars of Joseph Smith's day (or even a century ago); moreover, it has not always been possible. For example, the apocryphal book called Ecclesiasticus in the 1611 King James Version (KJV) of the Bible (and known as Ben Sirach to most scholars) was known only from Greek manuscripts until the mid-twentieth century when Hebrew fragments of the text were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls and at nearby Masada. Another example is the *Discourse on the Abbaton* by Timothy I, the late fourth-century A.D. archbishop of Alexandria and patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church. The text purports to be a translation from an earlier source text, but using Shepherd's methodology, it is impossible to determine whether it was originally written in Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, or was merely a pseudotranslation originally written in Coptic. Equally significant is the fact that no early Hebrew version of the Gospel of Mark is known, though some scholars believe that the available Greek text is a translation from Hebrew or its related language, Aramaic.[6] Shepherd grants that "the Koine Greek of the New Testament itself shows traces of Semitic influence. But unlike Tobit, no Hebrew or Aramaic 'original' of the New Testament has thus far come to light" (pp. 381–82).

On occasion, Shepherd steps outside the bounds of a study of translation vs. pseudotranslation to discuss other issues. He notes, for example, that the question of metallurgy in ancient America

> has prompted considerable research by scholars such as John Sorenson. Although it seems that some other professional archaeologists have been reluctant to be drawn into such discussions, the limited response suggests that the archaeological record simply does not support the presence of the type

6. See, e.g., Robert L. Lindsey, *A Hebrew Translation of the Gospel of Mark* (Jerusalem: Baptist House, n.d.).

> of metallurgy and metalworking in Mesoamerica *during the period relevant* to the ancient American setting of the Book of Mormon. Sorenson's primary explanation for the lack of early evidence is to emphasize the incomplete and contingent nature of the archaeological record. (p. 384)

We fail to see how "the limited response" says anything about the archaeological record. Sorenson has not, however, used the evidence for metallurgy to support the Book of Mormon but merely to counter critics by showing that the door is not yet closed on this issue. With so few pre-Classic sites excavated in Mesoamerica (most of the attention is given to Classic sites), one should not be surprised that little evidence has been found for metal working in that geographic and temporal horizon.

Shepherd assumes that

> considerable efforts have been expended to demonstrate that the English text of the Book of Mormon is a translation of a text written in either Egyptian or, as is often suggested, Hebrew (albeit in Egyptian script). In the case of the latter, for instance, the English text is examined for Hebraisms, that is, deviations from idiomatic English that reflect linguistic interference from the Hebrew original that supposedly lies behind the English version of the Book of Mormon. For example, John Tvedtnes has uncovered numerous "Hebraisms," which he sees as clear evidence that the English Book of Mormon is a translation of a Hebrew source. (p. 384)

As Tvedtnes read the Book of Mormon, he simply noticed examples of Hebraisms and did not dig for supportive evidence. Although Shepherd

> finds the case for Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon less than compelling, it is impossible to decide with complete certainty whether the Hebraized English undeniably present in the Book of Mormon reflects reliance on existing traditions

> of Hebraized English (e.g., AV [KJV]) or an actual Hebrew text. The absence of external evidence and our corresponding reliance on internal evidence will not allow the case to be closed definitively. (pp. 384–85)

"Everyone concerned," according to Shepherd, "seems resigned to the fact that no source text in 'reformed Egyptian' will be forthcoming—the doubters, because of their belief that the source never existed, the believers because they believe it has been returned to heaven" (p. 385). However, Hebrew and related Aramaic texts are now known to have been written in Egyptian characters in the time of Lehi, and neither Shepherd nor anyone else, as far as we can determine, has read the relevant studies or commented on them.[7]

Unlike many anti-Mormon writers, who continue to circulate explanations that were long ago disproved, Shepherd acknowledges that the Spaulding manuscript "bore little resemblance to the Book of Mormon," saying that it was Fawn Brodie's "authoritative dismissal of the 'Spaulding Theory' that dealt it its death blow" (p. 386). Unfortunately, that theory still lives on in the minds of some critics.

Shepherd agrees with Brodie that the Book of Mormon owes "its debt to nineteenth-century America rather than to antiquity" (p. 383). And while he rejects the Spaulding manuscript as a source for the Book of Mormon, he sees, instead, reliance on the King James Version of the Bible and Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* (pp. 386–87). Commenting on John W. Welch's assessment of the "unparallels" between *View of the Hebrews* and the Book of Mormon,[8] Shepherd maintains that the two texts differ from each other because "Joseph Smith might well have

7. See the following articles: John Gee, "La Trahison des Clercs: On the Language and Translation of the Book of Mormon," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 51–120; John A. Tvedtnes and Stephen D. Ricks, "Jewish and Other Semitic Texts Written in Egyptian Characters," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5/2 (1996): 156–63; John Gee and John A. Tvedtnes, "Ancient Manuscripts Fit Book of Mormon Pattern," *Insights* (February 1999): 4–5.

8. John W. Welch, "View of the Hebrews: 'An Unparallel,'" in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon,* ed. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 83–87.

chosen not to follow it on various 'major' points, whether out of a fear of incurring charges of plagiarism by agreeing too much with it or perhaps out of a genuine disagreement with Ethan Smith's account on any number of different grounds, including theological, literary, or historical" (p. 504 n. 71). By this reasoning, the Book of Mormon could be demonstrated to have derived from Ethan Smith's work whether it agrees or disagrees with that source.[9]

Shepherd believes that Stan Larson "shows quite conclusively that the Book of Mormon's version of the 'Sermon on the Mount' is demonstrably dependent on the English version that appears in the AV Gospel of Matthew" (p. 387). And he does "not find the critique of R. Skousen . . . sufficiently convincing to vitiate Larson's thesis" (p. 504 n. 75). He does not refer to the response of John W. Welch (the target of Larson's criticism) to Larson, which appeared in the same volume as Skousen's response.[10]

Shepherd targets Tvedtnes's study of the Isaiah variants in the Book of Mormon, though he misstates the argument. He refers the reader to David P. Wright's response to this essay, in which "Wright shows that the divergences are most easily and economically ex-

9. Finley admits that "it is clear from the 'unparallels' that *View of the Hebrews* was not the sole or even the primary source for the Book of Mormon" (p. 387). One wonders if he, like some other critics, believes that Joseph Smith used the expensive five-volume Irish atlas showing the Comora islands or the *Wonders of Nature,* which describes the effects of volcanic eruptions, or some of the centuries-old magical books that others suggest he used. For our part, we find it difficult to believe that Joseph Smith was so well read that it took decades and sometimes more than a century for critics to scour the libraries to "find" the "sources" he reputedly used. The fact that Joseph's mother wrote that he hardly ever read seems not to bother any of these people. Lucy Mack Smith, *History of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1902), 84.

10. John W. Welch, "Approaching New Approaches," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 145–86. See also Welch, "The Sermon at the Temple and the Greek New Testament Manuscripts," in his *Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount: A Latter-day Saint Approach* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 145–63. This was a response to Stan Larson's original article, "The Sermon on the Mount: What Its Textual Transformation Discloses concerning the Historicity of the Book of Mormon," *Trinity Journal* 7 (1986): 23–45.

plained as Smith's response to italicized words in the AV, his desire for smoothing and harmonizing irregularities, and his willingness to include additional material (such as conjunctions)" (p. 388).[11] A more recent study of the original and printer's manuscripts of the Book of Mormon shows that the words that are italicized in the King James Version of Isaiah were usually included in the manuscripts, but that they were dropped prior to the actual printing of the Book of Mormon.[12] This argues against Wright's suggestion that Joseph Smith knew that the italicized words represented material not reflected in the Hebrew but necessary for the flow of the passage in English. It seems clear that the italics, the centerpiece of Wright's argument, did not influence Joseph Smith in making modifications to the biblical text. Based on the new data, we cannot know who decided to remove or modify those italicized words. It could have been Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, or even the typesetter.

Shepherd's condemnation of the Book of Mormon on the ground that it includes what now appear to be KJV errors seems to be his only means of testing his claim that the text is a pseudotranslation. He mentions Wright's point about "instances where erroneous AV translations were uncritically reproduced by Joseph Smith in BoM Isaiah" (p. 389). We find no serious problem with this, since it is well known that New Testament quotations from the Old Testament tend

11. See John A. Tvedtnes, "The Isaiah Variants in the Book of Mormon," a book-length preliminary report (Provo, Utah: FARMS TVE-81), and the shorter version, "Isaiah Variants in the Book of Mormon," in *Isaiah and the Prophets: Inspired Voices from the Old Testament,* ed. Monte S. Nyman (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft and BYU Religious Studies Center, 1982), 165–77. Wright's article, "Isaiah in the Book of Mormon: Or Joseph Smith in Isaiah," found on the Internet, has recently appeared in Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe, eds., *American Apocrypha: Essays on the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 2002), 157–234. Tvedtnes plans to review that material in the pages of the *FARMS Review*.

12. Royal Skousen has been working on a multivolume study of the Book of Mormon manuscripts, of which the first two volumes, *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon,* and the two-part *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon,* were published by FARMS in 2001.

to draw upon the Greek Septuagint rather than the Hebrew text, even when the Greek is mistranslated. Writers of scripture, it seems, use whatever version of the scriptures is familiar to their audiences. Consequently, we are not troubled by the examples given by either Shepherd or Wright.

"Although it will be faint praise indeed for defenders of Smith's 'translation' work," Shepherd writes, "it seems clear to the present author that the Book of Mormon is the most complex, ambitious, and influential pseudotranslation that the world has ever seen or is, indeed, ever likely to see" (p. 395). Given Joseph Smith's minimal education, what appears to be his disinterest in reading prior to 1829, the short time span during which the Book of Mormon was dictated (roughly two months), and his rather parochial surroundings, we believe that the Prophet's claim to have had divine assistance in the translation of the Book of Mormon remains plausible.

Finley on the Book of Mormon and the Ancient Near East

At the 1998 annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Thomas J. Finley delivered a paper entitled "A Review of Hugh Nibley's Comparisons between the Book of Mormon and the Lachish Letters."[13] In that paper he listed several criteria that should be met in order for comparisons between the Book of Mormon and ancient Near Eastern texts to be valid. He began his most recent article with a reiteration of

13. Finley's critique of Hugh Nibley's use of the Lachish Letters as evidence for the Book of Mormon was read to the Society for the Study of Alternative Religions (SSAR) at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, 19 November 1998, in Orlando, Florida. The paper, "A Review of Hugh Nibley's Comparisons between the Book of Mormon and the Lachish Letters," has been posted on the "Mormons in Transition" Web site at www.irr.org/mit/nibley.html. Nibley's article, "The Lachish Letters: Documents from Lehi's Day," appeared in the *Ensign,* December 1981, 48–54, and was reprinted in Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989), 380–406. Of Finley's many objections to Nibley's article, we are especially mystified by the fact that he objects to Nibley's use of the only study of the Lachish letters available to him at the time Nibley's piece was published. Surely Finley cannot expect Nibley to have been sufficiently clairvoyant to know that a later study of the letters would take the place of the earlier one. Even if all his points were valid, this would reflect negatively on Hugh Nibley, but not on the Book of Mormon.

the first four criteria plus one additional criterion.[14] We are in general agreement with his lists.[15] We would, however, add two other criteria:

• A parallel is strongest when the two texts are set in the same geographical, temporal, and cultural context. Thus, when Lehi attributed to his ancestor Joseph the same prophecy attributed to him in early Jewish texts unavailable to Joseph Smith, we consider the parallels to be strong support for the Book of Mormon.[16]

• An accumulation of parallels is evidence for a common milieu if not a common source. Thus, if one finds (as is, indeed, the case) that a number of Christian writers who lived prior to the fourth century A.D. describe ten or more beliefs or practices known from their time that were introduced by Joseph Smith long after Christianity had forsaken them, this is prima facie evidence for the Prophet's contention that he received the information by divine inspiration. The

14. "1. A parallel should be specific enough that it cannot be explained other than by general human experience. 2. A parallel should be unique to the Lachish Letters and not more readily explained by sources that were easily available to Joseph Smith, such as the KJV. 3. Any parallel should be examined thoroughly to see how it functions in both contexts. . . . 4. One should always keep in mind the possibility of accidental parallels." Finley's original fifth criterion was specific to the Lachish letters that he was discussing, though it could be applied to other similar studies: "One should also remember the nature of the Lachish Letters themselves. They do not give comprehensive descriptions of their times but offer only brief and usually fragmentary insights into particular issues. They are also subject to various interpretations because of their fragmentary nature."

15. Actually, we find the example that he gives in his third criterion to be opaque. The terminology in this case is certainly descendant. It would also have been nice if Finley had elaborated some means of determining when an anachronism might be the result of prophecy (say in Isaiah's prophecy of Cyrus or the prophecy of Josiah in 1 Kings 13:2) rather than anachronism.

16. See John A. Tvedtnes, "Joseph's Prophecy of Moses and Aaron," *Insights* 21/1 (January 2001): 2. Hugh Nibley has been especially active in comparing Latter-day Saint scriptures with texts from antiquity. For example, some of the parallels in his *Enoch the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1986) are not strong evidence for the Book of Moses because the parallel quotations are from non-Enochian texts. But where they are quotations from an Enoch text, they are certainly relevant. Douglas F. Salmon argued against the use of parallels in his "Parallelomania and the Study of Latter-day Scripture: Confirmation, Coincidence, or the Collective Unconscious?" *Dialogue* 33/2 (2000): 129–56. See the review of this article in William J. Hamblin, "Joseph or Jung? A Response to Douglas Salmon," *FARMS Review of Books* 13/2 (2001): 87–107.

parallels would be weaker if attested only in early Jewish texts since Joseph Smith claimed to be restoring the early Christian Church.

Finley's general approach is more sophisticated than that of earlier critics of the Book of Mormon. We are, however, disappointed because he seems unaware of much of the Book of Mormon scholarship that has been published during the past few decades. We suspect that the fault may lie in what his editors provided him. When commenting on an article entitled "Book of Mormon Names Attested in Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions,"[17] Finley's arguments make it clear that he did not consult the work of Jeffrey R. Chadwick and Terrence L. Szink, whose earlier articles were cited in the notes,[18] nor does he consider other articles on the names Lehi and Sariah in the same issue of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*.[19] This seems to indicate that Finley never actually held a copy of the journal in his hands but was responding to only one article sent to him.[20]

Another concern, particularly in view of Finley's background in Bible studies, is his discussion of the language of scriptural translations. "It is true," Finley writes, "that one would expect a translation of ancient material to occur in the idiom of the translator, but in this case the language of the KJV [King James Version] was already archaic even in the time of Joseph Smith" (pp. 338–39). But the language found in the

17. John A. Tvedtnes, John Gee, and Matthew Roper, "Book of Mormon Names Attested in Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 9/1 (2000): 40–51.

18. Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "Sariah in the Elephantine Papyri," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2/2 (1993): 196–200; and Terrence L. Szink, "Further Evidence of a Semitic Alma," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8/1 (1999): 70.

19. "Seeking Agreement on the Meaning of Book of Mormon Names," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 9/1 (2000): 28–39.

20. One of the distinctive features of Finley's article is his general ignorance of Book of Mormon scholarship and his repeated lack of attention to the full range of scholarship on an issue. This is particularly disappointing given Parry, Miller, and Thorne's *Comprehensive Annotated Book of Mormon Bibliography.* Perhaps Mosser and Owen's complaint still holds with respect to the Book of Mormon: "Currently there are (as far as we are aware) no books from an evangelical perspective that responsibly interact with contemporary LDS scholarly and apologetic writings." Mosser and Owen, "Losing the Battle," 181.

KJV was already archaic in the time of King James. The KJV was not a direct translation from the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible but is a slightly modified version of the Bishop's Bible (1569). Written instructions from the archbishop of Canterbury to the members of the translation committee specified that they were to modify the wording of the Bishop's Bible only when its wording did not agree with the meaning of the Hebrew Old Testament or Greek New Testament texts. The Bishop's Bible was in turn a revision of the Great Bible (1539), which was a revision of Taverner's Bible (1539), which was a revision of Matthew's Bible (1537), which was a revision of Coverdale's Bible (1535), which was in turn based on the translation made by William Tyndale in 1526–31. Tyndale relied in part on the translation prepared in the late fourteenth century by John Wycliffe, and he retained some of Wycliffe's wording.

Finley claims it is "highly likely that Joseph Smith was imitating the style of the KJV rather than translating an ancient Hebrew original" (p. 365). Why could he not have done both? Why must one assume that the use of KJV style excludes his translating an ancient text? The KJV set the standard for scriptural language in Joseph Smith's day. He seems to have used this style in his translation of the Book of Mormon, the Books of Abraham and Moses, and also in the revelations found in the Doctrine and Covenants. But Joseph Smith was not alone in following this practice. Nearly a century after the publication of the Book of Mormon, Robert H. Charles prepared his magnum opus, a two-volume translation of ancient texts known as *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*.[21] Charles made it a point to imitate the style of the King James Version of the Bible. He did so for several reasons; for example, the New Testament cited some of these works or earlier writings on which they were dependent. Because the KJV was the Bible most commonly read in the English-speaking world, this ensured that readers of Charles's work would readily make the tie between the KJV and those other texts.[22] Oxford

21. Robert H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913).

22. See the appendix of this review for examples from Charles's work.

University Press continues to publish Charles's book. Jewish scholar Theodor H. Gaster intermingled KJV language and modern English in his *Dead Sea Scriptures.*[23] When citing passages from the Dead Sea Scrolls that were also found in the Bible, he employed the older style of English. When Robert L. Lindsey began his work in Israel with the Gospel of Mark, he initially translated it "into simple modern Hebrew from the Greek text. The text was then distributed to Hebrew-speaking readers and comments invited." Many of those who reviewed the work expressed "the desire that the Gospels, as ancient works, should be read in Old Testament Hebrew style."[24] Lindsey returned to the task and prepared a translation of Mark in biblical Hebrew that has received wide acclaim.

It is possible that the Book of Mormon might have met with the same fate as Lindsey's modern Hebrew version of Mark had Joseph Smith rendered it in nineteenth-century English. It would not have sounded scriptural to Americans and Englishmen acquainted with the King James Version of the Bible. Another reason for using the KJV style in the Book of Mormon is that it makes it easier for the reader to recognize when the Nephite prophets were paraphrasing or quoting biblical books. The language of the Book of Mormon fills the same role as Charles's translation of apocryphal and pseudepigraphic texts.

Finley's general approach is laudable, but we find fault with some of the details. We are concerned that he sometimes comments only on the weakest points made by Latter-day Saint scholars and ignores the stronger ones.

Metal Records

According to one of the earliest criticisms of Joseph Smith's account of translating the Book of Mormon from the golden plates, the ancients never wrote on metal but only used materials such as

23. Theodor H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures* (New York: Anchor Doubleday, 1956).

24 From Robert L. Lindsey's introduction to *A Hebrew Translation of the Gospel of Mark* (Jerusalem: Baptist House, n.d.), 76; see also 78–79.

papyrus or parchment.[25] This claim is false; during the mid- and late-twentieth century hundreds of ancient texts written on metal plates have come to light. Like the Book of Mormon plates, many of these were also buried in stone boxes.[26]

Finley does not, however, repeat the argument that the ancients never wrote on metal plates.[27] Instead, he uses the backup position established by the critics after it had been demonstrated that this practice actually existed. "There is no question," he admits, "that metal was sometimes used as writing material in the ancient world, including the Near East. However, such examples do not seem to parallel the lengthy Book of Mormon, since they normally contain a small amount of material and imitate standard writing procedures for the time" (p. 340).

By not advancing the earlier position held by critics of the Book of Mormon, Finley makes Joseph Smith's claim to have translated from metal records acceptable, though earlier critics found this claim preposterous. Once the original argument can no longer be maintained, critics concentrate on a narrower aspect.[28] In this instance, Finley

25. See, for example, John Hyde Jr., *Mormonism: Its Leaders and Designs* (New York: Fetridge, 1857), 218.

26. See H. Curtis Wright, "Ancient Burials of Metal Documents in Stone Boxes," in *By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley,* ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990), 2:273–334. The article was based on Wright's earlier study, "Ancient Burials of Metallic Foundation Documents in Stone Boxes," *Occasional Papers, University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science* 157 (December 1982): 1–42. Wright drew on Richard Ellis's Yale University doctoral dissertation on Mesopotamian foundational deposits.

27. In this connection, Hugh Nibley's observation seems almost prophetic: "It will not be long before men forget that in Joseph Smith's day the Prophet was mocked and derided for his description of the plates more than anything else." Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 107.

28. This tactic can be illustrated by Thomas Key, author of *A Biologist Examines the Book of Mormon,* 14th ed. revised and enlarged (Marlow, Okla.: Utah Missions, 1995). Key argued that the Book of Mormon was wrong in claiming that the Jaredites brought bees to the New World, for bees were not known in the Americas prior to the coming of Columbus. In a private communication with Key, Matthew Roper noted that the Book of Mormon mentions bees only in connection with the Jaredite travels in the Old World,

does not adopt the earlier argument against the concept of writing on metal plates but instead focuses on the narrower claim that none of the other metal records are lengthy accounts like the Book of Mormon.

To support this claim, he cites three examples of metal documents that have been discussed by Latter-day Saints. Two tiny silver scrolls containing excerpts from the priestly blessing in Numbers 6:24–26 were discovered in Jerusalem and date to preexilic times, providing a clear example of scriptural texts written on metal. Finley does not feel that these are relevant to Book of Mormon examples since the text contains only brief excerpts and "they are tiny scrolls that were rolled up in such a way that a string could be inserted through the center so they could be worn around the neck" and were therefore meant to serve as phylacteries (p. 340). The two Darius plates found in a stone box at the palace of Darius have often been cited by Latter-day Saints as an example of records written on metal plates and buried in a stone box. Finley complains that these contain "only eight lines of cuneiform writing repeated in three languages" (p. 340).[29] The famous *Copper Scroll* (one of the Dead Sea Scrolls) is obviously a much lengthier text; however, according to Finley, "unlike the brass or gold plates discussed in the Book of Mormon, this work attempted to imitate a 'standard parchment scroll.' The text did not contain religious or literary matter but 'appears to be an administrative document which simply enumerates, in a dry bookkeeping style' the inventory of items" (p. 341).

prior to their ocean crossing. Roper also provided an extensive bibliography of articles written by scholars outside the Church of Jesus Christ who clearly demonstrate the presence of bees and the harvesting of honey by the Maya of Mesoamerica in pre-Columbian times. Rather than drop the argument, Key just reinvented it, acknowledging that while there were bees in ancient Mesoamerica, they were unknown in what is now the state of New York.

29. Actually, only the Elamite text comprises eight lines; the Persian text takes up to ten lines and the Babylonian seven, for a total of twenty-five lines for each plate. Darius was not the only ancient king named in ancient metal plates; one of the plates of the Assyrian king Sargon II, deposited at Khorsabad, has thirty lines of script.

Clearly Finley wants to show that, in contrast to the documents described by the Book of Mormon, ancient records on metal were rare, were short, did not contain religious material, and in form normally imitated scrolls, but one wonders how Finley can generalize from a few examples. That some metallic documents had short texts is clear from the Jerusalem silver scrolls and the short text of the Darius plates, yet the *Copper Scroll* has a much longer text. The tiny silver documents from Jerusalem were clearly made in imitation of scrolls, but the Darius plates certainly were not; and while the *Copper Scroll* may not contain religious material, the preexilic documents from Jerusalem, although short, contain scripture. Rather than provide a negative contrast with the Book of Mormon, even these few examples show that ancient metallic documents include a variety of elements, forms, and uses.

Finley's discussion of metal plates is inadequate. He fails to deal with several standard Latter-day Saint sources on the subject of ancient metal plates, including studies by Franklin Harris,[30] Paul Cheesman,[31] Curtis Wright,[32] and William Hamblin.[33] While the works of Cheesman and Harris are now out of print, the omission of the latter two is curious. Wright's article is a standard discussion of the issue from a Latter-day Saint perspective. Hamblin has surveyed about thirty examples of plates known from the archaeology and literature of the ancient Near East and Mediterranean region. Although not comprehensive, Hamblin's survey highlights the variety of plates used in antiquity. He shows that (1) writing on metal plates was a relatively old practice dating back to the third millennium B.C. in Mesopotamia in the general region and at the approximate time

30. Franklin S. Harris Jr., *The Book of Mormon Message and Evidences* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1953), 95–105.

31. Paul R. Cheesman, *Ancient Writing on Metal Plates* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon, 1985).

32. H. Curtis Wright, "Metallic Documents of Antiquity," *BYU Studies* 10/4 (1970): 457–77.

33. William J. Hamblin, "Sacred Writing on Bronze Plates in the Ancient Mediterranean" (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1994).

of the Jaredite departure, (2) it was known in the Syro-Palestinian region and Israel, (3) some ancient Near Eastern peoples wrote on metal plates in scripts that can reasonably be described as reformed Egyptian, and (4) evidence suggests that the practice of writing ancient sacred law on metal plates was adopted by Greeks and Romans from the ancient Near East sometime between the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., approximately the time when Lehi's family retrieved the plates of brass and commenced their own tradition of keeping records on metal.

The longest texts that Finley mentions are the *Copper Scroll* and the trilingual plates of Darius. A more recent find is much longer:

> On Sunday, the twentieth of July 1986, P. Neve could record the surprising, first-time find of a metal tablet, which was made on the occasion of the restoration work on the inner side of the Hittite city wall for Yerkapi. The findspot, lying 35 meters west of the Sphinx gate in the south of the old city, proved to be a pit, dug about 30 cm under the surrounding plaster street level, in whose clay fill the bronze tablet lay horizontally embedded. This consisted of a rectangular plate of 35.0 x 23.5 cm in length and width and a thickness of 8 to 10 mm. Its weight was 5 kg. In the corners on the small side, two circular holes 1.8 cm in diameter are cut out, through which formerly ran a bronze chain 31 cm long consisting of 13 pieces. . . . The actual metal plate is closely written on both sides after the fashion of a clay tablet and is, on each side, divided into two columns. . . . Each column contains about 100 lines with the exception of column IV, which is less closely written, with the height of the characters being about 3 mm.[34]

The text on the bronze tablet was published in German in 1988 and in English in 1995. The English translation of this tablet of 350 lines takes ten pages and discusses a treaty between Tudhaliya IV of

34. Heinrich Otten, *Die Bronzetafel aus Boğazköy: Ein Staatsvertrag Tutḫalijas IV* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1988), 1; translated into English by John Gee.

Hatti and Kurunta of Tarhuntassa, giving the genealogy of the dominant party as well as historical precedents and religious dimensions to the treaty.[35] It curiously "represents the sole example of a metal tablet yet recovered from Hatti, although such objects are elsewhere mentioned in Hittite diplomatic documents."[36] And yet Finley claims that "there is no parallel among materials in cuneiform writing for the many plates it would have taken to record even the book of 1 Nephi" (p. 341). This is demonstrably untrue.

Nor should we forget the Egyptian examples of metal plates, which Finley does not mention.[37] Two bronze plates are found in the British Museum (BM 57371 and 57372), one of which (BM 57371) contains fifty-eight lines of demotic text, while the other contains a bilingual inscription of which thirty-one lines of the hieroglyphic and sixteen lines of the demotic inscription are preserved. Both plates were written by the same individual, who can confidently be dated to the first century B.C.[38] In reference to these bronze plates, one scholar notes that "the value of all metal during the ancient period virtually excludes the survival of such records except in the most fortuitous circumstances. The practice would certainly have been more common than the surviving material would suggest."[39] He further notes that "since the two tablets are inscribed on both sides they can hardly have been intended for display in the temple of Dendera." He reasons that "the most likely place for them to have been kept would have been in a temple treasury or magazine and to have been found with a hoard or hoards of ritual and

35. Gary Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 114–23.

36. Ibid., 108, with references to tablets of silver and iron.

37. For an overview, see Adel Farid, *Fünf demotischen Stelen aus Berlin, Chicago, Durham, London und Oxford mit zwei demotischen Türinschriften aus Paris und einer Bibliographie der demotischen Inschriften* (Berlin: Achet Verlag, 1995), 198.

38. Ibid., 413, Abb. 30.

39. A. F. Shore, "Votive Objects from Dendera of the Graeco-Roman Period," in *Glimpses of Ancient Egypt: Studies in Honour of H. W. Fairman,* ed. John Ruffle, G. A. Gaballa, and Kenneth A. Kitchen (Warminster, Eng.: Aris and Phillips, 1979), 158.

votive objects enumerated here."[40] The plates of brass were similarly kept in Laban's "treasury" (1 Nephi 4:20).[41]

While not lengthy, a number of other examples of writing on metal plates are worth mentioning. One copper tablet calls itself "the Phylactery of Moses."[42] It was excavated in Acre near Syracuse, and although written on copper, it was supposed to have been written on a gold plate.[43] The thirty-two lines of Greek text describe how Moses was protected in the holy of holies from the divine presence there. The text also has specific instructions about it being "something that you should not hand over to anyone except your offspring."[44] Though the text dates to the end of the second century or beginning of the third century A.D. and was found farther away in the Mediterranean basin, it shows a *terminus ad quem* for this Jewish practice.

A gold plate from about a century earlier was discovered in 1827 during the excavation of the Cefn Hendre in Segontium (Caernarvon), Wales.[45] The gold plate dates from the earliest period of Roman occupation of the site, although no details of the discovery are known. "The text preserves a Jewish liturgical formula written in Greek letters," but the underlying language of most of the text is Hebrew.[46] The plate is rather small (only twenty-six lines), but it is worth noting for its material (gold), Jewish elements, and Hebrew written in a non-Hebrew script.

While Finley focuses on examples from the ancient Near East, metal plates from the greater Mediterranean region are also relevant since the Greeks and Romans seem to have adopted the practice from the ancient

40. Ibid.

41. For a discussion of treasuries as a repository for writings, see John A. Tvedtnes, "Books in the Treasury," chap. 9 in *The Book of Mormon and Other Hidden Books* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2000), 155–66.

42. Roy Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets: The Inscribed Gold, Silver, Copper, and Bronze "Lamellae": Part I. Published Texts of Known Provenance* (Opladen, Germany: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), 126–54.

43. Ibid., 129–30.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid., 3.

46. Ibid., 4, 8–9.

Near East. In addition to the examples surveyed by Hamblin, other metal plates include the bronze Tabula Contrebiensis (87 B.C.),[47] the Tabula Bembina (104 B.C.),[48] the Entella Tablets (254–241 B.C.),[49] and the Larinum Bronze tablet (A.D. 19).[50] The Iguvium Bronze Tablets (first to second century A.D.) are among the most significant surviving examples of bronze plates. These consist of seven bronze plates, five of which are written on both sides; they explain the details of Umbrian sacrificial rituals and contain, as Hamblin has noted, the sociological "equivalent of parts of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, which the Book of Mormon claims were on the Hebrew bronze plates."[51] Significant for other reasons as well, the Iguvium plates—"written partly in an Etruscan, partly in a Latin alphabet—are all that remains to us in writing of the Umbrian language."[52] They are "the only extant records of any considerable extent in the Umbrian dialect; that is, in that language which, with Oscan, Latin, and several other dialects, makes up the Italic branch of the Indo-European family. . . . No other body of liturgical texts from pre-Christian Europe can compare with the Iguvine Tables in extent. They have therefore an extraordinary importance both for the linguistic and the religious history of early Italy."[53]

47. J. S. Richardson, "The *Tabula Contrebiensis*: Roman Law in Spain in the Early First Century B.C.," *Journal of Roman Studies* 73 (1983): 33–41; Guillermo Fatás, "The *Tabula Contrebiensis,*" *Antiquity* 57 (1983): 12–18; Peter Birks, Alan Rodger, and J. S. Richardson, "Further Aspects of the *Tabula Contrebiensis*," *Journal of Roman Studies* 74 (1984): 45–73.

48. Harold B. Mattingly, "The Two Republican Laws of the *Tabula Bembina*," *Journal of Roman Studies* 59 (1969): 129–43; Mattingly, "The Extortion Law of the *Tabula Bembina*," *Journal of Roman Studies* 60 (1970): 154–68; Mattingly, "The Agrarian Law of the *Tabula Bembina*," *Latomus* 30 (April–June 1971): 281–93.

49. William T. Loomis, "Entella Tablets VI (254–241 B.C.) and VII (20th century A.D.?)," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 96 (1994): 127–60.

50. Barbara Levick, "The *Senatus Consultum* from Larinum," *Journal of Roman Studies* 73 (1983): 97–115.

51. Hamblin, "Sacred Writings on Bronze Plates in the Ancient Mediterranean," 17.

52. Giuliano Bonfante and Larissa Bonfante, *The Etruscan Language: An Introduction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), 48.

53. James Wilson Poultney, *The Bronze Tables of Iguvium* (Baltimore: American Philological Association, 1959), 1.

Nephi and other Book of Mormon prophets indicated that one of the chief values of the plates of brass, in addition to records themselves contained on them, was their value in helping to preserve the language of their fathers. Thus Nephi reminded his brothers, "It is wisdom in God that we should obtain these records, that we may preserve unto our children the language of our fathers" (1 Nephi 3:19). Hundreds of years later, King Benjamin taught his sons, "For it were not possible that our father, Lehi, could have remembered all these things, to have taught them to his children, except it were for the help of these plates; for he having been taught in the language of the Egyptians therefore he could read these engravings, and teach them to his children, that thereby they could teach them to their children" (Mosiah 1:4). Clearly many significant parallels exist between ways plates were used in antiquity and in the Book of Mormon.

While Finley rewords the old argument about plates in terms of what is known from the Old World, other critics have defined it differently, pointing out that no metal records have been found in the New World. The point is made moot by the fact that the Nephite scribes do not suggest that the use of metal plates was widespread in their culture. While most Nephite writing was probably on perishable materials (Alma 14:8, 14 speaks of records being "burned and destroyed by fire"), just a handful of records are written on metal, specifically on the brass plates of Laban, the small plates of Nephi, the large plates of Nephi, and the abridgment plates of Mormon.[54] In effect, the plates from which Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon seem to have been unique. Indeed, the use of plates to write large books seems to have been confined to a single family, that of Lehi and Laban.[55]

Finley argues that the volume of materials written on the brass plates of Laban made it "at least awkward to transport them from place

54. The record of Ether was kept on only 24 gold plates and thus is not in the same category as these other, longer texts.

55. Lehi found the genealogy of his fathers on the plates of Laban, whose fathers had kept the record, suggesting that they were closely related (1 Nephi 5:14).

to place," then contrasts this with the "leather, papyrus, and parchment" used for Bible materials, which were "much more easily transportable and convenient to use. While metal was used in the ancient Near East for writing material, the dissimilarities in usage with the Book of Mormon outweigh the similarity of material" (p. 342). This is like arguing that the tabernacle of Moses, with all of its metal implements, could not have existed because it would have been "awkward to transport" and that archaeological evidence for the existence of stone temples in the ancient Near East suggests that the use of tent-shrines is improbable. As a believer in the Bible, Finley, like us, would reject that argument. Moreover, his argument against the plates of brass seems to be based on the assumption that they were intended to be carried about from place to place. But unlike Moses' tabernacle, they were not intended to be transported across vast distances.

In his treatment of writing materials used in the ancient Near East, Finley draws attention to the fact that the *Copper Scroll,* the only metal document found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, as well as the small inscribed silver scrolls found in Jerusalem, were rolled up, demonstrating "that the normal form of writing for literary content was on *scrolls*" (p. 341). While we cannot disagree with his conclusion, we find it interesting that he is inconsistent in his argument. Noting that "the two 'tables of stone' that Moses received from the Lord contained the Ten Commandments," he adds that "otherwise, stone was used for monumental inscriptions" (p. 341). When dealing with the Book of Mormon plates, he argues that they must fit the usual pattern, but when it comes to the Bible, he makes an exception for the Ten Commandments. It seems that his religious leanings, like ours, determine how he evaluates evidence.

Hebraisms

Finley's discussion of Hebraisms, listed in one of John Tvedtnes's articles, is useful and demonstrates that while Hebraisms might be expected in an English translation from an ancient text (as occasionally with the King James Version of the Bible), they are not necessarily

strong evidence for the Book of Mormon unless they are unattested in the KJV.[56] Of course, in some cases Finley is merely reinventing the wheel as the discussion of Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon has a long bibliography. He acknowledges that some of the examples "seem more unique to the Book of Mormon" (p. 344) but rejects others on the basis that similar idioms can be found in the KJV. Thanks to searchable computer versions of the scriptures, we are able to find such parallels, making some of us wonder how Joseph Smith managed to do it, especially given his mother's statement that he was not wont to read books and his wife's indication that he had no written materials with him during the translation.[57]

Sometimes, one cannot be sure where Finley stands on the issue of Hebraisms. For example, he seems to correct Tvedtnes about the occasional placement of the "relative pronoun" (actually a particle), which "in Hebrew normally directly follows its antecedent noun or noun phrase, just as in English. Sentences like the example he gives from 1 Nephi 17:27 would be rare, though perhaps possible in biblical Hebrew" (p. 344). He then compares the Book of Mormon verse with Jeremiah 37:1, perhaps intending to suggest that Joseph Smith merely borrowed the usage from the KJV, despite the fact that Finley had just said the usage was only "perhaps possible in biblical Hebrew" (p. 344). If it is only "perhaps possible" (which seems to be less certain than "possible"), why then use an example from the KJV that, as Finley notes, "gives the literal order" (p. 345)?

But having provided evidence that the "perhaps possible" Hebrew usage actually exists in the Bible (both in the Hebrew and the KJV English), Finley argues that if 1 Nephi 16:37 were really drawn from a Hebrew text, it would use "and" rather than "who." We concur that the conjunction would have been a possible reading, but what then do

56. Tvedtnes plans to make a stronger case in one of the chapters of his forthcoming book, *The Book of Mormon and the Ancient World*.

57. For an in-depth discussion, see Gee, "La Trahison des Clercs," 100–101.

we do with the example from Jeremiah 37:1, which uses "whom" in a similar context, as Finley himself notes (pp. 344–45)?[58]

Finley draws another example, saying, "Tvedtnes's third example, if translated literally from a Hebrew text, should read, 'then the-ones-living without God shall confess.' Mosiah 27:31 has, 'Then shall they confess, who live without God in the world,' while the better English form suggested by Tvedtnes is 'then shall they who live without God in the world confess.' The degree to which Tvedtnes's suggested translation and the translation in the Book of Mormon reflect the literal Hebrew appears to be roughly the same" (p. 345). But there is a big difference when one realizes that Hebrew sentences usually begin with the verb. In Hebrew one expects "confess" to appear before the active participle "the-ones-living without God," and that is precisely how it appears in the Book of Mormon. In this case, Finley has obscured the relevant facts.

Tvedtnes observed (like Sidney B. Sperry before him) that Alma 13:18, which says that Melchizedek "did reign under his father," should be understood in the sense of the Hebrew word for "under," which also means "instead of." Finley dismisses the argument on the grounds that "in English the two prepositions communicate entirely different ideas," meaning that Joseph Smith's "translation would fail to communicate properly" (pp. 345–46). Finley not only disallows evidence for Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon but also condemns its improper usage of English terms, making Joseph Smith damned if he did and damned if he didn't use Hebraisms in his translation.

The most impressive Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon are words that reflect wordplays understandable only in Hebrew and words that are better understood in Hebrew terms than in English due to the range of meaning of the corresponding Hebrew words.[59] Here are a few examples:

58. Readers confused by my questions should realize that Finley's argument is confused and confusing.

59. For a discussion of a Hebrew wordplay in Alma 32:21, see John A. Tvedtnes, "Faith and Truth," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 3/2 (1994): 114–17.

• In Alma 49:4, we read that the Lamanites attempted to "cast their stones and their arrows" at the Nephites atop the wall of the city Ammonihah. Alma 49:22 speaks of "the stones and arrows which were *thrown*." While in English, we would appropriately use the verb "throw" for stones, this is not so for arrows, where we would expect "shoot." But the Hebrew verb *yrh,* meaning "to throw" or "to cast" (e.g., Exodus 15:4, 25; Joshua 18:6; Job 30:19), also has the meaning of "shoot" for arrows (e.g., Exodus 19:13; 1 Samuel 20:11, 20, 36–37; 2 Kings 13:17; 19:32). Indeed, in 2 Chronicles 26:15, the Hebrew verb (with a variant spelling) is used in the passage rendered "to shoot arrows and great stones" in the King James Version of the Bible.

• In 1 Nephi 1:6, we read that as Lehi "prayed unto the Lord, there came a pillar of fire and *dwelt* upon a rock before him." The English term "dwelt" normally connotes setting up house or at least staying for a long time, and we would expect to read that the pillar of fire "sat" or "rested" on the rock. Significantly, the Hebrew verb *yšb* means both "dwell" and "sit." For example, Jacob's sons "sat down to eat" (Genesis 37:25), but "Israel dwelt in that land" (Genesis 35:22). The same verb is used in both passages.

• In Helaman 9:6, we read that the Nephite judge had been "stabbed by his brother by a *garb* of secrecy." Critics have contended that this makes no sense in English, since "garb" has the same meaning as "garment" or "clothing." This idiom is the same as the English "under cloak of secrecy."[60] But the Hebrew word *beged* means both "garment" or "garb" (e.g., Genesis 39:12–13) and "treachery."[61] This would seem to be a wordplay in the Hebrew original of the Book of Mormon. As for the preposition "by," in Hebrew its range of meaning includes "in," "with," and "by means of."

• Jacob wrote that Nephi instructed him regarding Nephite sacred preaching, revelations, and prophecies that "I should engraven

60. In 1 Samuel 28:8, we read that "[King] Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment" so he would not be recognized. See also 1 Kings 22:30 and Joshua 9:2–16.

61. The adjectival and adverbial forms are rendered "treacherous" and "treacherously" in Isaiah 24:16, Jeremiah 12:1, and Zephaniah 3:4.

the *heads* of them upon these plates" (Jacob 1:4). We really expect something more like "most important" to be used here. Indeed, the Hebrew word for the head of the body is sometimes used to describe things as "chief" (Deuteronomy 33:15; Psalm 137:6; Proverbs 1:21; Amos 6:1) or "precious" (Song of Solomon 4:14; Ezekiel 27:22), which seems to be the sense in which Jacob used the word.

- The land of Jershon has a valid Hebrew etymology, *Yershon,* meaning "place of inheritance." Significantly, it appears in passages that employ the words "inherit" (Alma 27:24) and "inheritance" (Alma 27:22; 35:14). The wordplay makes sense only in Hebrew.

Finley argues against Royal Skousen's assertion that the Book of Mormon uses the *if-and* construction known from the Hebrew Bible for result clauses, a construction unfamiliar to speakers of English.[62] He writes that "while Skousen's observation is interesting, I think it may still be the case that this construction was influenced by the KJV in its original form. The conjunction *and* occurs 51,714 times in the KJV. By comparison, the NIV reduces this by about 40 percent. It is surely a prominent feature of the KJV, and that could have influenced Joseph Smith to use it even in some of his result clauses" (p. 347). The statistics notwithstanding, Finley fails to give even one example of the use of the conjunction in the KJV that matches the examples Skousen listed from the Book of Mormon. Does one even exist in the English Bible? Shepherd seems to have thought so. He also challenges Skousen's study, claiming that this Hebraic feature is known from the King James Version of Jeremiah 5:1 (p. 503 n. 64). He has, however, misanalyzed the text, which can be diagrammed as follows:

62. See Royal Skousen, "Critical Methodology and the Text of the Book of Mormon," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 132–35. Skousen notes that the examples he cites were changed in later editions of the Book of Mormon, with the omission of the word "and," thus giving the text the appearance of idiomatic English rather than Hebrew. Tvedtnes notes that the omission of "that" before some subordinate clauses in later editions of the Book of Mormon destroyed a Hebrew idiom in the process of making it conform to standard English usage. See John A. Tvedtnes, "The Hebrew Background of the Book of Mormon," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon,* ed. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1991), 86–87.

Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem,
and see now,
and know,
and seek in the broad places thereof,
    if ye can find a man,
    if there be any that executeth judgment,
        that seeketh the truth;
and I will pardon it.

The English antecedent for "it" in the final "and" clause is not "man." If this were an example of the *if-and* construction discussed by Skousen, we should have "and I will pardon him."[63]

Finley also mangles his quotation of 1 Nephi 17:50, which we give here in four different versions to show that Latter-day Saints have consistently and correctly understood the scriptural passage completely different from Finley's idiosyncratic understanding. For the original manuscript, we provide the context for the *if-and* construction.

Original manuscript: God had commanded me that I should build a ship & I sayeth unto them if [G]od had commanded me to do all things I could do it **if** he should command me that [I] should say unto this water be thou earth **&** it **shall** be earth & if I should say it it would [b]e done.[64]

Printer's manuscript: **If** he should command me that I should say unto this water be thou earth it **should** be earth & if I should say it it would be done.[65]

1830 edition: **If** he should command me that I should say unto this water, Be thou earth, it **should** be earth; and if I should say it, it would be done.

63. The Hebrew text uses the feminine, suggesting that the antecedent is the city Jerusalem.

64. Royal Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2001), 144. We have changed the markings to standards for our field and have eliminated some of the diacritics.

65. Royal Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon,* 2 vols. (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2001), 1:120. We have changed the markings to the standard Leiden bracket system and have eliminated some of the diacritics.

1981 edition: **If** he should command me that I should say unto this water, be thou earth, it **should** be earth; and if I should say it, it would be done.

Finley's version: **If** he should command "Say unto this water, be thou earth and it **shall** be earth"; and if I should say it, it would be done (p. 346).

Skousen's point was that the *if-and* construction had been eliminated in the printer's manuscript because it is impossible English. Finley's reformulation of the sentence to eliminate the *if-and* construction does so by eliminating four words of the quotation, "me that I should" (p. 346), which changes the grammatical construction of the sentence significantly. We agree that if those four words were not in the text, Finley's understanding of the construction would be correct. Unfortunately, they are in the text and Finley's understanding of the construction is not superior to Skousen's. Skousen can account for the construction as it stands in the original manuscript, while Finley must emend the text.

In Finley's treatment of Skousen's other examples, he must admit that "these instances more clearly use *and* to introduce the result clause" (p. 347), which is an admission that Skousen is right. Finley argues that because of the ubiquitous use of *and* in the KJV (and almost everything written), Joseph Smith must have randomly thrown in *and* even where it made no sense in English. This can hardly be construed as a coherent, much less a cogent, argument.[66]

66. We wonder how Professor Chaim Rabin, former head of the Hebrew Language Academy in Jerusalem, would have reacted to Finley's comment about the frequent use of the conjunction "and" in the Book of Mormon. In 1971 Tvedtnes received a letter from a friend, Robert F. Smith, who was then attending the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Smith told of an English lecture on the history of the Hebrew language in which Rabin had cited a passage from the Book of Mormon to illustrate the use of the Hebrew conjunction *waw* and told the assembled students that the Book of Mormon reflected Hebrew better than the English Bible. When Tvedtnes later went to Israel and took courses from Rabin, he found that Rabin had other positive things to say about "Hebraisms" in the Book of Mormon.

Egyptian Characters

Finley's objection to the use of Egyptian characters is that "someone from those who supported Jeremiah would be expected to use Hebrew rather than Egyptian" (p. 351). This is merely an assumption, as is the statement that "it is more likely that the idiom of the KJV, rather than an underlying Hebrew or Egyptian, influenced Joseph Smith" (p. 351).

Finley relegates to a footnote his comments on the use of Egyptian characters in Hebrew inscriptions. He dismisses the use of *Papyrus Amherst 63* as evidence for the Book of Mormon. The text, including a quotation from Psalm 20:2–6, was written in Egyptian demotic script though the language is actually Aramaic, a language closely related to the Hebrew used by the Jews after the Babylonian captivity. Relying on a dating of the second century B.C. assigned to the text by earlier scholars,[67] he concludes that "it is rather late in relation to the alleged time of Nephi" (p. 493 n. 46). But Gee and Tvedtnes have shown that subsequent scholarship dates the text to the fourth century B.C., considerably closer to Nephi's time.[68]

Book of Mormon Names

Finley also evaluates the essay "Book of Mormon Names Attested in Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions," mentioned earlier in this review.[69] In that article, we did not address all the issues and evidence relating to Book of Mormon names but focused only on recently attested names in Hebrew inscriptions. We showed that many Book of Mormon names that were once ridiculed and dismissed as shallow, modern creations are now attested in authentic Hebrew inscriptions, most of which predate 587 B.C., a time and context in which they could have been known to Lehi's family.

67. Stephen D. Ricks and John A. Tvedtnes used this date in their article "Jewish and Other Semitic Texts Written in Egyptian Characters," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5/2 (1996): 160.

68. Gee and Tvedtnes, "Ancient Manuscripts Fit Book of Mormon Pattern."

69. Tvedtnes, Gee, and Roper, "Book of Mormon Names."

Finley's response to our article does contain some useful information and not just obfuscation. For example, Finley claims that "it should first be noted that some of the names may not be found directly in the KJV but can easily be derived from it, and they were attested as names used during the time of Joseph Smith. This applies to the names Sam and Josh, which quite plausibly come from Samuel and Joshua. Regardless of whether or not a Hebrew inscription contains one of these names, the derivation from the KJV and a name current with Joseph Smith has to be considered a viable explanation" (p. 353).

Finley's comment misses the mark since the names Sam and Josh and many others were criticized when the Book of Mormon appeared because they sounded modern. The evidence we presented in our article shows that these names are attested in Hebrew inscriptions and are entirely appropriate for Lehi's time.[70] Finley seems to be aware of only half the problem in attributing the names to a nineteenth-century origin. It is not just a question of how Joseph Smith might have fabricated a few names, but how he could have known that these names would, long after his death, be attested and dated to an appropriate time period consistent with the claims of the Book of Mormon. One must also explain how some Book of Mormon names, though not yet attested in ancient inscriptions, have an etymology consistent with the context in which they are used or appear in that record.

We can, however, agree that, from a scholarly point of view, one must consider all possible explanations. Finley does not seem willing to consider that the ancient Hebrew derivations are a viable possible explanation. It seems that, for those who are convinced a priori that Joseph Smith was a charlatan, no evidence from the ancient Near East is acceptable. For those who accept Joseph as a prophet and the Book of Mormon as authentic ancient scripture, the evidence seems significant. Finley's rejection of this evidence seems ironic when one considers the fact that a paper on "Hebrew Names in the Book of Mormon," which Tvedtnes presented at the thirteenth annual World

70. Ibid.

Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem in August 2001, was given a warm reception by the Hebrew scholars in attendance.

Finley offers specific comments about the Book of Mormon names and how they compare with the ones found in ancient Hebrew inscriptions that we have discussed. Of the name Isabel (Alma 39:3), Finley notes that "she was a 'harlot' who caused Coriantum [Corianton], the son of Alma, to 'forsake the ministry.' While the Isabel mentioned here is not the same as Jezebel, the Phoenician princess who married Jeroboam the son of Nebat (1 Kgs 16:31), the context makes it clear that there is some thematic connection. . . . Surely biblical Jezebel could be the inspiration for Isabel in the Book of Mormon" (pp. 353–54). That approximates our contention, though we must correct Finley by noting that it was King Ahab, son of Omri—not Jeroboam, son of Nebat—who married Jezebel; he has simply misread the Bible text, taking 1 Kings 16:31 in isolation from verse 30.[71]

Not wishing to credit Joseph Smith with knowing "what the underlying Hebrew was," Finley finds another explanation for the name that we demonstrated was known from an ancient Hebrew inscription.[72] For him, Isabel is merely an early French variant for Elizabeth that came into use in both England and the United States (p. 354). Are we to believe that Joseph Smith was clever enough to compose a fraudulent book (the Book of Mormon) but dumb enough to give himself away by using English names like Sam, Josh, and Isabel? Finley seems to have fallen for the standard anti-Mormon view in which Joseph seems to be cleverly pulling hoaxes while at the same time tripping over his own words.

"As for the name Abish," writes Finley, "Tvedtnes, Gee, and Roper cite the name ʾbšʾ" in two ancient texts, but "their explanation fails to account for the final *aleph* in the name on the cited inscriptions"

71. Alan Goff, "Boats, Beginnings, and Repetitions," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1 (1992): 67–84, has shown in detail that the repetition of themes in the Bible and Book of Mormon is an argument not against, but for, both texts.

72. Tvedtnes, Gee, and Roper, "Book of Mormon Names," 47, 49.

(p. 355). Actually, we did account for it, and had Finley read more carefully, he would have noted the sidebar that reads,

> There is abundant evidence from the inscriptional material that hypocoristic forms sometimes have a suffixed aleph, represented in transliteration by ʾ. Thus we have the biforms *Šbnʾ* (biblical Shebna) alongside *Šbnyhw* (Shebniah), both attested in Hebrew inscriptions. Similarly, the biblical name Ezra (Hebrew *ʿzrʾ*), whose name is borne by one of the books of the Bible, has a final aleph and is hypocoristic for biblical Azariah *(ʿzryh),* the name of two biblical kings. The longer form is also known from contemporary inscriptions, as is the form *ʿzr*. Neriah (Hebrew *Nryh*), known from the Bible as the name of the father of Jeremiah's scribe Baruch, is attested in inscriptions in both its long form and in the hypocoristic form Nera (Hebrew *Nrʾ*). Alongside the biblical name Obadiah *(ʿbdyh),* whose hypocoristic form Obed *(ʿbd)* is also known in the Bible, the inscriptions have several occurrences of the hypocoristic form *ʿbdʾ,* with suffixed aleph. Also known from the inscriptions are the biblical name Asaiah (*ʿśyh*) and its hypocoristic form *ʿśʾ*. Finally, we have the name *Ḥzdʾ,* hypocoristic for an unattested *Ḥzdyh.* These facts suggest that Alma, which is written with a final aleph on a document found in Nahal Hever in 1961, may also be hypocoristic.[73]

We did not invent the concept, which is accepted by other Bible scholars of whose work Finley seems not to be aware. Contrary to his contention, we found the suffixed *aleph* entirely explainable in terms of ancient Hebrew names, as have other scholars before us. In addition to the work of Avigad and Sass, cited above, we should also note that such eminent Semitics scholars as William Foxwell Albright,[74] Frank Moore Cross

73. Ibid., 50. For a discussion of the hypocoristic nature of names ending in *aleph,* with an extensive listing of examples, see Nahman Avigad and Benjamin Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1997), 471.

74. W. F. Albright, "Northwest Semitic Names in a List of Egyptian Slaves from the Eighteenth Century B.C.," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 74 (1954): 227, and "The Early Alphabetic Inscriptions from Sinai and Their Decipherment," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 110 (1948): 21 n. 77.

Jr. and David Noel Freedman,[75] Wolfgang Röllig,[76] and Frank L. Benz[77] have discussed what has been called "afformative 'aleph'" in Hebrew and other Northwest Semitic languages.

Finley's carelessness is illustrated by his declaration that "*Sariah* (the wife of Lehi[,] and Nephi's mother), according to some Mormon writers, is the same as the woman named Seraiah or Saryah in an Elephantine papyri of the fifth century B.C." (p. 358). We know of no one who has claimed that Lehi's wife lived at Elephantine in Egypt in the fifth century. Rather, the claim, supported by the evidence, is that the name in the Elephantine papyri is identical to that of Lehi's wife. Finley added that the name Sariah "can be compared with the common masculine name Seraiah in the KJV" (p. 358). We have made that very comparison in our article and wonder why Finley claims it as his own. If he wants to suggest that the name cannot be used for a woman, we have dealt with that issue as well, even drawing attention to a bulla with Solomon as the name of a woman. Also note that the name Saria is now known from a fifth-century B.C. Jewish inscription found in the Bosphorus region.[78]

Finley claims that "from all of the preexilic evidence from the Hebrew inscriptions we would expect the name to be spelled with a long ending for the -iah part of it, yielding Sar-yahu instead of Sar-ya" (p. 358). Finley should carefully examine the references we cited in our footnotes as sources for the Hebrew names. We showed that both the long and short versions of the divine name appear in names on preexilic seals and bullae as well as in the Bible, though the long form has a longer history.

75. Frank Moore Cross Jr. and David Noel Freedman, *Early Hebrew Orthography: A Study of the Epigraphic Evidence* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1952), 49.

76. H. Donner and Wolfgang Röllig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1962–79).

77. Frank L. Benz, *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions: A Catalog, Grammatical Study and Glossary of Elements* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1972), 240. Benz wrote that the afformative *aleph* is a "hypocoristic termination and mark of abbreviation . . . well attested in Northwest Semitic during the second millennium B.C."

78. "Institute Scholar Speaks at Congress of Jewish Studies," *Insights* 21/9 (September 2001): 1.

In his critique of the name Aha, Finley makes some of the same points we made, making us wonder if he really read our comments. He astounded us by noting that "the expression 'Aha!' appears 10 times" in the Old Testament (p. 356). Does he think that Joseph Smith sat trying to think up another name, turned to Psalm 35:21, and said, "Aha! That's what I'm looking for"? (This also does not explain how Joseph Smith was able to know that Aha would be attested in a Hebrew inscription predating Lehi's day.) Elsewhere, Finley suggests that the Prophet may have taken the name Nahom from "Nachon's threshingfloor" in 2 Samuel 6:6 or from Naham of 1 Chronicles 4:19 (p. 363).

Finley may be correct in his critique of Nibley's identification of the Book of Mormon place-name Shazer with Arabic *shajer*. Were we to argue Finley's case for him, we would point out that the real problem is with the use of two sibilants (*sh* and *z*) consecutively—something that rarely occurs in Semitic languages. Failing to bring this up, Finley argues that "perhaps a more likely source for Shazer was the place name Jazer in the KJV. . . . Note especially Isaiah 16:8, 'they are come even unto Jazer, they wandered through the wilderness'" (p. 362). This seems to suggest that Joseph Smith went through the Bible looking for obscure names used in connection with the word *wilderness* so he could use the information in the book he was fabricating. Even with searchable electronic versions of the scriptures on the computer, the task would be difficult.

In some cases, Finley simply protests too much. He objects that one cannot know whether the names Alma, Abish, Aha, and Ammonihah would have been written with the Hebrew letter *ayin* or the letter *aleph* (p. 355). In fact, the ancient Hebrew texts to which we referred settle the question for each of these names. Finley does the same with the letter *h* in the names Aha and Nahom: does it represent Hebrew *heh* or *heth* (pp. 356, 363)? Again, the inscriptions we cited answer that question; Finley is much too dismissive of the evidence.[79]

79. In an Internet posting of 10 June 2002, David Wright suggested that the Book of Mormon place-name Nahom "may be Nah- with an -om suffix." He then argued that "it is consequently not clear whether the place name Nahom (whose root could be nh/nah- given the evidence of the BM onomasticon) is to be associated with the Arabic place name

In his discussion of the name Alma, Finley acknowledges that the name (with initial *aleph* rather than *ayin*) is attested in one of the Bar Kochba letters of the early second century A.D. and at Ebla in the late third millennium B.C. His footnotes draw attention to books written by two scholars outside the Church of Jesus Christ but do not inform his audience that it was Latter-day Saint scholars who first made the tie between those ancient texts and the Book of Mormon. (We repeated the information in our article.) But Finley leans toward "modern potential sources for the name Alma," such as "the phrase *alma mater* or even the transliterated Hebrew word for 'virgin' or 'young woman,'" noting that "it is quite possible that the young Joseph Smith heard the term in a sermon on Isaiah 7:14 ('Behold, a virgin [*'alma*] shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel')" (p. 355). Can anyone seriously picture Joseph Smith thinking, "Virgin—now there's a good name for me to give to my male protagonist"? Is it not more plausible to hold that the reason so many Book of Mormon names have shown up in ancient Hebrew

Nehhem (whose root is nhm) in Yemen." Somehow, he wants to believe that just because -om or -um may be a suffixed element in other Book of Mormon names, it follows that it functions in a similar fashion here, meaning that it cannot be considered equivalent to the Arabic name because they are of different roots (*nh* vs. *nhm*). Wright gives no evidence for this contention, basing his comments on later Nephite names rather than on names known from the ancient Near East. In a footnote, Wright writes as follows: "John Tvedtnes' article 'Hebrew Names in the Book of Mormon' at www.fair-lds.org treats Nahom briefly (p. 3 of the PDF file). He chooses to associate Nahom with Hebrew n-kh-m, but wrongly implies that Nehhem in Yemen is the same root. If one associates Nahom with n-kh-m (hard-h), then one cannot credibly associate it with the different root lying behind Nehhem (n-h-m; soft-h). As I noted in a post of several months back, Kent Brown seeks to associate both roots in his JBMS article on the Yemenite altar with the gentilic adjective nhmy 'Nehemite' written on it. This dual association stretches credulity." But Brown notes, "The exact equivalency of the root letters cannot be assured. It is probable that the term *Nahom* was spelled with the rasped or fricative Hebrew letter for 'h' (ḥet or chet) whereas the name Nihm, both in modern Arabic and in the ancient Sabaean dialect, is spelled with a softer, less audible *h* sound. . . . One has to assume, it seems to me, that when the members of Lehi's party heard the local name for 'the place that was called Nahom' they associated the *sound* of that local name with the term Nahom, a Hebrew word that was familiar to and had meaning for them." S. Kent Brown, "'The Place That Was Called Nahom': New Light from Ancient Yemen," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8/1 (1999): 79 n. 3.

texts is due to the historical accuracy of the book rather than to Joseph Smith dreaming up nonsense such as this?

Finley objects to Nibley's suggestion (which he mistakenly attributes to Tvedtnes) that "the form -ihah may be due to Joseph Smith's 'transliteration,'" noting that "forms with -iah also occur in the Book of Mormon (e.g., Sariah and Mosiah)" (p. 356). Finley here has misstated several facts, having confused what we wrote on the name Ammoniah with what Nibley wrote on the subject. In our article, we suggest that the Nephites may have used a longer form of the divine name *Yhwh* (which, the reader will note, has the letter *h* twice), while the Jews used the shorter form *Yh*. Indeed, the names that have the -ihah ending are all from later Nephite history, suggesting that this was a later internal development.

Of the Hebrew name that we identified with the Book of Mormon Ammonihah, Finley notes that "other scholars read it as Imannuyah(u), meaning 'Yahweh is with us' and corresponding to Immanuel, 'God is with us.' The Mormon writers give no evidence for equating the name with Ammonihah rather than the accepted Immanuyah" (p. 356). We acknowledge that other readings are possible for this and other names, due mostly to the fact that the Hebrew names in the inscriptions are all written without vowels. Our vocalization is, however, a possible reading, but nothing can settle this kind of issue. We can say that the door is simply not shut on the authenticity of ancient names in the Book of Mormon.

Similarly, Finley objects to our claim that the Bible name Haggith "'may have been vocalized Hagoth anciently.' They give no evidence for this assertion" (p. 357). Since the books of the Bible were originally written without vowels, which were added later to the text, we cannot produce the evidence for the vocalization Hagoth, but neither can one demonstrate that the later Bible manuscripts are correct in rendering it Haggith. Another factor that must be considered is linguistic drift, by which pronunciation changes over time. The way the Nephites pronounced a name in the fourth century A.D. may not be the same as the way they and other Israelites pronounced it in the sixth century B.C.—especially the vowels.

We thank Finley for noting one error, namely that the name Heman in the Bible does not begin with the same consonant as *Hmn* on the two Israelite seals. We cannot know whether the initial *h* in the Book of Mormon name Himni represents the Hebrew letter *heth* or the letter *heh*. But Himni has the *-i* suffix of gentilic names and could derive from either of the attested Hebrew names. In his discussion of the name Jarom, Finley writes that "from the analogous examples they give in their note, however, the name should be Jarum" (p. 357). But in vocalized Hebrew the vowels *u* and *o* are both denoted by the letter *waw.*

Regarding the Book of Mormon names Mathoni and Mathonihah, which we, like Finley, compared with biblical Mattan and Mattaniah,[80] Finley draws attention to New Testament Matthew, saying, "it is significant that the only spelling with a /th/ occurs in the New Testament. That reflects the Greek transcription of a name of the same general form as the Old Testament name. The Hebrew form, if indeed it were as early as the time of Nephi, would not have had the sound /th/ in it; the KJV forms with /tt/ are closer to what would be expected from an underlying Hebrew form" (p. 357). That is true only of the later vocalized Hebrew texts, but vowels weren't written in Nephi's day. The Hebrew letter *tav* is sometimes transliterated *t,* sometimes *th,* in the KJV Old Testament as well (e.g., Ruth, Jotham, Jonathan). Vocalized Hebrew discloses that the *t* in Mattan and Mattaniah is geminated because of the assimilation of a *nun* to the *tav*. This was clearly understood by the Massoretes of post–New Testament times, who developed the rules for vocalization, but we do not know how it was seen by people in Nephi's time or by the Nephites of six centuries later who bore the names Mathoni and Mathonihah.

Finley claims that "the vowels on the name *Muloki* (Alma 20:2; 21:11) were almost certainly not part of the name *Mlky* found on a bulla from Jerusalem that dates to about 600 B.C. That name was Malki" (p. 357). Again, however, we are dealing with a language for which vowels were not originally written. It may have been Malki, as Finley says, but that does not necessarily hold for a name used in the Book

80. Tvedtnes, Gee, and Roper, "Book of Mormon Names," 51.

of Mormon centuries later, when vocalic shifts could have occurred (as they have in various European languages). Indeed, regular patterns are one of the evidences for such shifts, and in Muloki ("Mulekite"), we have the *o* as the last vowel in the stem, just as in other Nephite gentilics, Lamoni ("Lamanite") and Moroni ("Moronite").

Finley objects that "the name *Ammon* occurs only as the name of a people. . . . It is never found as a personal name" (p. 356). While we did not discuss that name in our article, we see that Finley here breaks his own rule about deciding whether the Book of Mormon name begins with an *aleph* or an *ayin*. If the latter, then it would clearly be related to the people of that name (Psalm 83:7, as Finley notes). If the former, we must draw attention to "Amon the governor of the city" (1 Kings 22:26; 2 Chronicles 18:25) and the Jewish king of the same name (2 Kings 21:18–19, 23–25; 1 Chronicles 3:14; 2 Chronicles 33:20–23, 25).

Our comparison of the Book of Mormon name Luram with the name Adan-Luram known from eighth century B.C. inscriptions from Syria came under fire from Finley, who objects that "the letter *l* stands for a particle on the front of the verb and marks the name as Aramaic rather than Hebrew." The name could be Aramaic, but we challenge Finley's statement that "it seems unlikely that an Aramaic name would turn up among the Lamanites about a thousand years after the alleged migration to the New World" (p. 358). Aramaic, called "Syrian" and "Syriack" in the KJV, is a sister language to Hebrew that was adopted by the Jews during the Babylonian captivity. But educated Jews already used Aramaic a century before Lehi left Jerusalem, as is clear from the story recounted in 2 Kings 18:26 and Isaiah 36:11. Part of the book attributed to Daniel, who was a contemporary of Lehi,[81] is known only in Aramaic, beginning with Daniel 2:4 and going through the end of chapter 7.[82] The name Luram is a perfectly valid hypocoristic

81. To be sure, some Bible scholars believe Daniel was written much later than the prophet of that name, but evangelical Protestants and Latter-day Saints typically accept it as a contemporary account.

82. For a discussion, see John A. Tvedtnes, "Nebuchadnezzar or Nabonidus? Mistaken Identities in the Book of Daniel," *Ensign,* September 1986, 54–57.

form, i.e., a name that omits the theophoric element (probably to avoid the too frequent repetition of the name of deity).

Summarizing his discussion of Book of Mormon names, Finley writes that "it is next to impossible to claim with any certainty that a name in an ancient inscription matches one found in a source where the names are transliterated into a different script and no originals are available for comparison" (p. 359). The underlying assumption behind this claim is that no Book of Mormon names are valid for comparison with those found in ancient texts because Joseph Smith left us only the English version of the Book of Mormon. He adds that "the claim of the Mormon writers that the names are not found in the KJV has to be tempered with the fact that many of those names (Sam, Josh, etc.) can be derived rather easily from a name in the KJV" (p. 359). Ironically, he never discusses the evidence we presented that Josh is an attested hypocoristic for Josiah, an Old Testament name. Finley's approach is based on the a priori assumption that the Book of Mormon is not a translation of an ancient text, meaning that all of it must be explainable only in terms of Joseph Smith's world. Thus he is able to dismiss some of the evidence by saying that "a few isolated instances of apparent correspondence (certainty is prevented by the lack of vowels for the inscriptional evidence) are most likely accidents of history" (p. 359).

What is the bottom line? At least fifteen nonbiblical Book of Mormon names are now attested in ancient Hebrew inscriptions, fourteen of which date to before 587 B.C. None of these were known or published in Joseph Smith's day. Many of these are in a hypocoristic form that was criticized as too modern when the Book of Mormon appeared but can now be shown to be acceptable since it was known in ancient Israel from preexilic times. Additionally, non-Hebrew names such as Paanchi and Pahoran (both Egyptian) are also attested.[83]

83. Though not a name, the word *sheum,* included in a list of grains in Mosiah 9:9, can be compared with the Akkadian *she'um*, denoting grain. Akkadian was spoken in the region from which the Jaredites emigrated to the New World and the word may have been

Then there are as yet unattested Book of Mormon names with valid Hebrew etymologies (e.g., Jershon, discussed earlier).[84] Here are some examples:

- Zarahemla, "seed of compassion," designates the city founded by a descendant of the only surviving son of the Jewish king Zedekiah, who was led to the promised land by the hand of the Lord.
- Current editions of the Book of Mormon render a Nephite monetary unit as *shiblum* (Alma 11:16). A study of the printer's manuscript shows that this was actually *shilum,* which in Hebrew means "payment" or "reward" and is entirely appropriate for the content of Alma 11's description of the wages of the judges.

The issue of Book of Mormon names concerns not just one or two but a whole complex of elements that deserve careful examination and continued study. Finley would likely argue that all of these are "accidents of history"; yet one wonders how many "accidents of history" one must suggest before the criticism of the nineteenth-century explanation of Book of Mormon names becomes untenable. Our assumption is the opposite of Finley's: believing that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon from an authentic ancient text and that linguistic and cultural evidence supports this view, we look beyond the English text.

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applied to a New World grain with which they were unfamiliar and later adopted by the Nephites by means of the Mulekites.

84. Major articles dealing with Book of Mormon names include Paul Y. Hoskisson, "An Introduction to the Relevance of and a Methodology for a Study of the Proper Names of the Book of Mormon," in *By Study and Also by Faith,* 2:126–35; Hoskisson, "Book of Mormon Names," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* 186–87; John A. Tvedtnes, "Since the Book of Mormon is largely the record of a Hebrew people, is the writing characteristic of the Hebrew language?" I Have a Question, *Ensign,* October 1986, 64–66; Tvedtnes, "What's in a Name? A Look at the Book of Mormon Onomasticon," *FARMS Review of Books* 8/2 (1996): 34–42; Stephen D. Ricks and John A. Tvedtnes, "The Hebrew Origin of Some Book of Mormon Place Names," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6/2 (1997): 255–59. The last several issues of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* have discussed the etymology of specific Book of Mormon names. Irreantum, one of the place-names for which the Book of Mormon gives a meaning (1 Nephi 17:5), is the subject of Finley's criticism. We recommend the article "Irreantum," by Paul Y. Hoskisson, Brian M. Hauglid, and John Gee, in the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 11 (2002): 90–93.

Artifacts

Writing of the Liahona, also called a ball or director, Finley notes that "elsewhere this device was called a 'compass' (1 Nephi 18:12). The principle behind the compass apparently was first discovered in the twelfth century" (p. 362). We were surprised Finley adopted this old canard long used by critics of the Book of Mormon. The objection raised here fails to note that Nephi at no time suggests that this was a *magnetic* compass! This instrument, used by European mariners only since the twelfth or thirteenth century, derives its name from an English word meaning "round," because of its circular designation of 360 degrees of arc. (The compass we use for drawing circles is certainly not magnetic.) The Liahona was, indeed, a round object (see 1 Nephi 16:10); hence the name compass is perfectly acceptable. That a magnetic compass was not intended is easily demonstrable by Nephi's statement that "the pointers which were in the ball . . . did work according to the faith and diligence and heed which we did give unto them" (1 Nephi 16:28; see also v. 29).

Commenting on 1 Nephi 16:18, 21, Finley asserts that "there is no evidence I am aware of for bows made of steel in ancient times. The 'bow of steel' mentioned several times in the KJV should actually be a 'bow of bronze'" (p. 363). This is another long-standing but unwarranted criticism. The English word *steel,* together with the KJV passages regarding the "bow of steel," did not originally denote carburized iron as it does today. It originally denoted anything hard, and we still use the verbal form "to steel" in the sense of "to harden." Webster's 1828 dictionary, which reflects usage in Joseph Smith's day, defines steel not only as iron mixed with carbon but notes that its derivation is "probably from setting, fixing, hardness." One of the four meanings of the noun is "extreme hardness; as heads or hearts of steel," while it is used figuratively of "weapons; particularly, offensive weapons, swords, spears and the like." One of the meanings of the verbal form is "to make hard or extremely hard."[85] So just like the "bow of steel" in

85. Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Converse, 1828), 2:81.

the KJV (2 Samuel 22:35; Job 20:24; Psalm 18:34), Nephi's bow may have consisted of a copper alloy like bronze.[86] However, it is likely that the metal was only one component of the bow. Roland de Vaux argued that the "bronze bow" in the biblical passages "refers to the metal covering of certain bows," sometimes used to reinforce composite bows.[87]

The Geography of 1 Nephi

The latter part of the twentieth century saw a surge of interest in the question of Lehi's trail from Jerusalem to the land he called Bountiful. Finley challenges some of this research. "Using only the details found in the Book of Mormon," he writes, "it is impossible to discern whether [the valley of Lemuel] was located in the western Sinai or in the northwestern part of the Arabian peninsula" (p. 360).[88] But 1 Nephi makes it clear that, after traveling south-southeast from the valley, keeping "in the borders near the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 16:13–14, 33), Lehi's party turned "nearly eastward" to reach the land they called Bountiful (1 Nephi 17:1). We now know that there is a fertile region in precisely the location where one would expect to find Bountiful (i.e., the Dhofar province of Oman in the southern part of the Arabian peninsula). We also know that Nahom, the name of the place where Ishmael was buried just before the party turned east, is reflected in three inscriptions from the time of Lehi found at precisely the region where Nahom should be located if Lehi traveled through Arabia.[89]

86. The same Hebrew term is also rendered "steel" in Jeremiah 15:12 KJV.

87. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Volume 1, Social Institutions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 243. See also the important discussion by William J. Hamblin, "The Bow and Arrow in the Book of Mormon," in *Warfare in the Book of Mormon,* ed. Stephen D. Ricks and William J. Hamblin (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990), 373–79.

88. One wonders who is the target of Finley's remarks. He seems to be saying that the Sinai peninsula is the most logical setting for the story in 1 Nephi, which is more an argument against modern Book of Mormon scholars than against the Nephite record.

89. Brown, "'The Place That Was Called Nahom,'" 66–68; see S. Kent Brown, "New Light from Arabia on Lehi's Trail," in *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon,* ed. Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2002), 81–83.

Finley claims that "Nephi makes no reference to any countries traversed on this journey, which presumably would have included Moab, Edom, and Sheba if the journey was actually made through Arabia" (p. 360). Not quite. Moab was located in what is today Jordan, east of the Dead Sea, while Edom is immediately on the south of Moabite territory. The people of Moab and Edom were essentially nomadic shepherds in ancient times and Lehi's party could have easily passed through either territory virtually unnoticed. Even today, one can walk for many days through the region and not see another soul—or at least ensure that no one sees you. If, as many think, Lehi traveled south through the hills of Judah prior to descending to the Arabah Valley that leads to the Red Sea, he would have bypassed Moab altogether and would have traversed only the tip of Edomite territory in the south. The ancient kingdom of Sabaʾ (KJV Sheba) was situated in Yemen and was the most populated region in the Arabian peninsula. But Lehi's group turned east after burying Ishmael at Nahom, so they would have passed only on the outskirts of Sheba. More to the point, however, is that 1 Nephi is an abridgment that Nephi prepared thirty years after their departure from Jerusalem (2 Nephi 5:28–33). He specifically wrote that "if my people desire to know the more particular part of the history of my people they must search mine other plates" (2 Nephi 5:33), meaning the large plates, which contained a more detailed history.[90]

Finley finds the "three days in the wilderness" of 1 Nephi 2:6 problematic:

> Does this mean three days after they arrived at the Red Sea or three days since they left Jerusalem? . . . If the reference is to the time since leaving Jerusalem, then it would be much too short for a journey by foot to the Red Sea. [Eugene] England assumes that Nephi means three days after the party

90. If, as some critics claim, Joseph Smith had access to Bible dictionaries, one might expect that he would have looked at one of the maps and selected place-names published thereon. The fact that the Book of Mormon does not mention Moab, Edom, Sheba, etc., is evidence that Joseph Smith did not consult other materials.

> arrived at the Red Sea. This is a possible reading of the passage, but it also means that Nephi did not mention how long the journey from Jerusalem to the Red Sea took. (pp. 360–61)

On foot it takes at least five days to travel from Jerusalem to Elath on the Red Sea, but Hugh Nibley has argued that Lehi must have used pack animals since he took tents with him (1 Nephi 2:4).[91] If the party rode donkeys or camels, the journey would have been considerably faster. It seems to us irrelevant that Nephi omitted details, since the small plates were an abridgment of materials previously recorded on the large plates, which Nephi did not prepare until arriving in the New World (1 Nephi 19:1), at least eight years after the group's departure from Jerusalem. Still, it seems likely that the three-day journey denotes the time it took to arrive at the valley of Lemuel after reaching the borders near the Red Sea. An oasis with a perennial stream running to the Red Sea about seventy miles south of the Jordanian city of Aqaba fits Nephi's description of the journey.[92] One wonders if Finley considers this to be another of Joseph Smith's lucky guesses.

In his critique of Eugene England's assumption that the term *borders* in 1 Nephi denotes a wadi,[93] Finley writes, "England's discussion fails to account for the different prepositions *by* and *in*. . . . Plus, if *borders* means *ravines,* one wonders why Joseph Smith didn't choose a term like *valley* or something that would be more descriptive" (p. 361). However, the Hebrew preposition ב *(b)* can be (and is, in the KJV) translated either "in" or "by," so the question makes no real sense in terms of Hebrew. Other researchers have suggested that the "borders" of which Nephi wrote were mountains. Anciently, borders tended to be natural barriers (e.g., ravines, shorelines, or mountains). Indeed, the

91. Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert,* 55.

92. George D. Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8/1 (1999): 54–63.

93. Eugene England, "Through the Arabian Desert to a Bountiful Land: Could Joseph Smith Have Known the Way?" in *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins,* ed. Noel B. Reynolds and Charles D. Tate (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft and BYU Religious Studies Center, 1982), 143–56.

KJV often renders the Hebrew word גבול (used in the KJV passages employing "borders" in the examples cited by Finley) as "coast," a word that, in modern English, is used only for a seashore.[94] Finley should know this. Rather than ask "why Joseph Smith didn't choose a term like *valley,*" perhaps we should ask why Nephi didn't write it. The fact that Joseph correctly reflected the Hebrew term is really evidence in favor of the Book of Mormon. Still, in this, as in some of his other comments about the writings of Hugh Nibley and Eugene England, Finley's comments are directed toward the researchers rather than toward the object of their research, the Book of Mormon.

Lehi and his family went neither west nor north, but *south* down by the borders of the Red Sea (1 Nephi 2:5).[95] Recently researchers have identified a plausible site for the valley of Lemuel approximately seventy miles from Aqaba (well within a three-day journey from there whether on camel or on foot). The valley has cliffs suggestive of Lehi's references to firmness and steadfastness and immovability (1 Nephi 2:10), and it also has a perennial stream, a "continually running" river (1 Nephi 2:9) that has existed there for millennia and that empties into the Red Sea, apparently the only stream known in that region that would fit Nephi's and Lehi's descriptions.[96] Other research indicates that a group traveling in a south-southeast direction from there would have followed or shadowed the spice road along the east-

94. KJV employs the word "coasts" in the New Testament as well, describing territories that do not border on shorelines (e.g., Matthew 2:16; 16:13).

95. In 1842 one critic chided, "Why were they not directed to the Mediterranean Sea, which was so near Jerusalem, instead of being made to perform the long and perilous journey to the borders of the Red Sea? more especially since the voyage through the former would have been shorter by six or seven thousand miles, (no trifling distance,) than the one performed according to the data given. An easterly course from the borders of the Red Sea would have taken them across the Desert of Arabia to the Persian Gulf." Daniel P. Kidder, *Mormonism and the Mormons: A Historical View of the Rise and Progress of the Sect Self-Styled Latter-day Saints* (New York: Carlton and Lanahan, 1842), 265.

96. How could there be "a valley at the mouth of a river on the border of the Red Sea, where there never was a river for more than 300 miles either way along the shore of the sea[?]" S. Burnet, *The Evangelist* (30 September 1880), cited by Joseph Smith III in *The Spaulding Story Re-examined* (Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Office, 1883), 14. For a detailed description of this site, see Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia," 54–63.

ern side of the Red Sea where wells that occasionally provided water are now known to have existed. A site known as *Nhm* is located at the eastward turning of this route precisely as Nephi's account suggests. Although unknown to Joseph Smith, that name is attested as early as the seventh to fifth centuries B.C. in the region. Almost directly eastward of *Nhm* is a "bountiful" region that also fits Nephi's description. Even if Joseph Smith had by some fortuitous chance learned of a fertile region on the southeastern shores of the Arabian Peninsula, the Book of Mormon specifies the characteristics of that region.

- Bountiful was nearly eastward from a place called Nahom (1 Nephi 17:1).
- Terrain and water sources from Nahom eastward apparently permitted reasonable access from the interior deserts to the coast (1 Nephi 17:1–3).
- Bountiful was a fertile region (1 Nephi 17:5–6).
- It was a coastal location (1 Nephi 17:5–6).
- Fruit and wild honey and possibly other food sources were available (1 Nephi 17:5–6; 18:6).
- The availability of fruit (1 Nephi 17:5–6; 18:6) and the plentiful nature of the region suggests the availability of fresh water at this location as well.[97]
- Timber was available that could be used to construct a ship (1 Nephi 18:1).[98]
- A mountain was nearby (1 Nephi 17:7; 18:3).
- Substantial cliffs existed near the ocean from which Nephi's brothers might attempt to throw him into the sea (1 Nephi 17:48).

97. "Here, again, is a blunder of ignorance of known factors. The coastline of the Persian Gulf was utterly inhospitable and barren." Gordon H. Fraser, *What Does the Book of Mormon Teach? An Examination of the Historical and Scientific Statements of the Book of Mormon* (Chicago: Moody, 1964), 37. As recently as 1985 one critic confidently proclaimed, "Arabia is bountiful in sunshine, petroleum, sand, heat, and fresh air, but certainly not in 'much fruit and also wild honey,' nor has it been since Pleistocene times." Thomas Key, "A Biologist Examines the Book of Mormon," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 37/2 (1985): 97.

98. For objections to timber, see Fraser, *What Does the Book of Mormon Teach?* 37, and Key, "A Biologist Examines the Book of Mormon," 97.

• Sources of flint (1 Nephi 17:11) and ore (1 Nephi 17:9–10) were available in the region.[99]

• Suitable wind and ocean currents were available to carry a vessel out into the ocean (1 Nephi 18:8–9).[100]

Researchers have been able to identify only one location along the whole southeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula that meets all these criteria. Although subsequent research has suggested modification of some of his arguments, our conclusions agree with those made by Hugh Nibley in his pioneering work fifty years ago on Lehi's desert journey: "It would have been quite as impossible for the most learned man alive in 1830 to have written the book as it was for Joseph Smith. And whoever would account for the Book of Mormon by any theory suggested so far—save one—must completely rule out the first forty pages."[101]

Too Simple for Words

Finley assumes that everything and anything that could have been known in Joseph Smith's time about the ancient world must have come to his attention, whether by the Prophet reading the relevant material or by listening to preachers' sermons. If this was so, one wonders how it is that no Latter-day Saint scholars noticed the material until a century or more later. Did Joseph Smith have sufficient funds to procure the materials,[102] and was he also able to remember

99. "Although the territory is one that in expanse is comparable to that portion of the United States lying between the Mississippi River and the Atlantic Ocean, yet in all that range of territory there has been no metal discovered that would be suitable for ship construction, except in the *central part* and in the *Sinaitic peninsula,* either of which is hundreds of miles distant from the reputed spot where the vessel was built. And this fact goes far to strengthen the oft repeated assertion that 'the author and proprietor' of the Book of Mormon was illiterate." Samuel W. Traum, *Mormonism against Itself* (Cincinnati: Standard, 1910), 98. For recently discovered evidence for ore, see Wm. Revell Phillips, "Metals of the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 9/2 (2000): 36–41.

100. David L. Clark, "Lehi and El Niño: A Method of Migration," *BYU Studies* 30/3 (1990): 57–65.

101. Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert,* 123.

102. See the discussion in William J. Hamblin, "That Old Black Magic," *FARMS Review of Books* 12/2 (2000): 256–60.

everything he had read in the KJV Bible or heard in a sermon? Was he a charlatan as the critics maintain? Of the scholarly opinions expressed about Joseph Smith, we prefer the assessment given by William Foxwell Albright of Johns Hopkins University in 1966:

> I do not for a moment believe that Joseph Smith was trying to mislead anyone; I accept the point of view of a Jewish friend of mine at the University of Utah, that he was a religious genius and that he was quite honest in believing that he really could decipher these ancient texts. But to insist that he did [try to mislead people] is really doing a disservice to the cause of a great church and its gifted founder.[103]

Summary

While Finley and Shepherd clearly insist on a nineteenth-century origin for the Book of Mormon, neither of them deals with the question of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon. According to Finley, "It is not my purpose here to examine the validity either of Joseph Smith's testimony or of the witnesses" (p. 338). This may have been his way of establishing a scholarly distance, but he seems not to understand that one cannot separate the contents of the Book of Mormon from the declarations of the eyewitnesses, as Terryl L. Givens has recently demonstrated.[104]

In their original call for better anti-Mormon attacks by evangelicals, Mosser and Owen wrote as follows about *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*:[105]

> It has become common for evangelicals to defer to this book. This is quite disturbing. Many of the authors of this volume

103. William F. Albright, letter to Grant S. Heward, 25 July 1966. A photocopy is in the hands of Boyd Petersen.

104. Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). Givens's book is one of the most insightful examinations of Book of Mormon scholarship to date.

105. Brent L. Metcalfe, ed., *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993).

> (though not all) are thorough-going naturalists. The methodology they sometimes employ to dismantle traditional views of the Book of Mormon could equally be used to attack the Bible. D. P. Wright, one of the contributors to the work, writes, "This, by the way, shows that the conclusions made here about the Book of Mormon cannot be used to funnel Mormons into fundamentalist Christianity. *It is the height of methodological inconsistency to think that critical method of study can be applied to the Book of Mormon and that its results can be accepted while leaving the Bible exempted from critical study.*"[106]

The irony is that Mosser and Owen as editors tacitly accept Finley's and Shepherd's wholesale adoption of exactly this presumably "disturbing" approach. They have, in addition, almost totally neglected the response by members of the Church of Jesus Christ. Put another way, they do not "respond to contemporary Mormon scholarship."[107] Instead, they have embraced what they previously described as "the height of methodological inconsistency." Based on the portion of their book devoted to the Book of Mormon, Mosser and Owen's original verdicts still stand:

- "There are, contrary to popular evangelical perceptions, legitimate Mormon scholars."[108]
- "Mormon scholars and apologists . . . have, with varying degrees of success, answered most of the usual evangelical criticisms," and "the issue[s are] much more complex" than the evangelicals realize.[109]
- "Currently there are (as far as we are aware) no books from an evangelical perspective that responsibly interact with contemporary LDS scholarly and apologetic writings."[110]

106. Mosser and Owen, "Losing the Battle," 203 n. 109, emphasis added.
107. Ibid., 204.
108. Ibid., 180.
109. Ibid.
110. Ibid., 181.

• "At the academic level evangelicals are . . . losing the debate with the Mormons."[111]

• "Most involved in the counter-cult movement lack the skills and training [in ancient history and in things pertaining to the Church of Christ] necessary to answer Mormon scholarly apologetic."[112]

Appendix: KJV Language

We maintain that the language of the King James Bible played an important role in Joseph Smith's translation of the Book of Mormon not because he "plagiarized" from the Bible (as some critics maintain), but because the Bible was a crucial part of his cultural and linguistic heritage. The same could be said of other nineteenth- and early twentieth-century translators. For example, in the following chart we compare the work of two different translators, Robert H. Charles[113] and Howard C. Kee,[114] each of whom translated the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.* Charles's work was published in 1913; Kee's appeared seventy years later. While both are considered excellent translations, Charles chose to follow the biblical style of the Kings James Version, while Kee used more modern terminology.[115]

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid.

113. R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 2:282–367.

114. Howard C. Kee, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 1:775–828.

115. Two recent translators, H. W. Hollander and M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), have, in some cases, preferred to use the KJV style in their English translation. Wherever they have used the same words as Charles and the KJV, an asterisk appears by Charles's translation.

Charles	Kee	KJV
**reserved* for eternal punishment (*T. Reuben* 5:5)	destined for eternal punishment (*T. Reuben* 5:5)	*reserved* unto judgment (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6)
**lusted after* (*T. Reuben* 5:6)	filled with desire (*T. Reuben* 5:6)	*lust after* (1 Corinthians 10:6; Revelation 18:14)
**the Mighty One of* Israel (*T. Simeon* 6:5)	the Great One in Israel (*T. Simeon* 6:5)	*the mighty One of* Israel (Isaiah 1:24; 30:29)
thrones and *dominions* (*T. Levi* 3:8)	thrones and authorities (*T. Levi* 3:8)	thrones, or *dominions* (Colossians 1:16)
**the fashion of* the gentiles (*T. Levi* 8:14)	the gentile model (*T. Levi* 8:14)	*the fashion of* this world (1 Corinthians 7:31)
laid waste (*T. Levi* 16:4)	*razed* to the ground (*T. Levi* 16:4)	["*lay/laid waste*" very common; "rase" only in Psalm 137:7]
**filthy lucre* (*T. Judah* 16:1)	sordid greed (*T. Judah* 16:1)	*filthy lucre* (1 Timothy 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 5:2)
written upon the *hearts* of men (*T. Judah* 20:3)	written in the affections of man (*T. Judah* 20:3)	I will . . . write it in their *hearts* (Jeremiah 31:33); write them upon the table of thine *heart* (Proverbs 3:3)
*to offer Him the *firstfruits* (*T. Judah* 21:5)	to present as offerings (*T. Judah* 21:5)	["*firstfruits*" very common]
them that have familiar spirits (*T. Judah* 23:1)	ventriloquists (*T. Judah* 23:1)	*them that have familiar spirits* (Leviticus 19:31; 20:6; Isaiah 19:3)
*And from your root shall arise a *stem;* And from it shall grow up the rod of righteousness unto the Gentiles (*T. Judah* 24:5–6)	and from your root will arise the Shoot, and through it will arise the rod of righteousness for the nations (*T. Judah* 24:6)	And there shall come forth a rod out of the *stem* of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: . . . And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek (Isaiah 11:1, 10)

*singleness of *eye* (*T. Issachar* 3:4)	singleness of vision (*T. Issachar* 3:5)	thine *eye* is single (Luke 11:34; Matthew 6:22)
**singleness* of your heart (*T. Issachar* 4:1; 7:7)	integrity of heart (*T. Issachar* 4:1); sincerity of heart (*T. Issachar* 7:7)	*singleness* of heart (Acts 2:46; Ephesians 6:5; Colossians 3:22)
bowels of mercy (*T. Zebulon* 7:3)	merciful in your inner self (*T. Zebulon* 7:3)	*bowels* and mercies (Philippians 2:1)
we were all scattered unto the *ends of the earth* (*T. Naphtali* 6:7)	we were all dispersed, even to the *outer limits* (*T. Naphtali* 6:7)	["the *ends of the earth*" used in passages relating to scattering (Isaiah 26:15) and gathering (Isaiah 43:6; Micah 5:4) of Israel]
*it *stirreth* him up (*T. Gad* 4:4)	he conspires (*T. Gad* 4:4)	*stir* him up (Numbers 24:9; Job 41:10; Song of Solomon 2:7; 3:5; 8:4; 2 Peter 1:13)
*true repentance after a *godly* sort (*T. Gad* 5:7)	for according to God's truth, repentance destroys disobedience (*T. Gad* 5:7)	for *godly* sorrow worketh repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10)
**abstaineth from meats* (*T. Asher* 2:8)	is abstemious in his eating (*T. Asher* 2:8)	to *abstain from meats* (1 Timothy 4:3)
beguile me (*T. Joseph* 6:2)	lead me astray (*T. Joseph* 6:2)	*beguiled* me (Genesis 3:13; 29:25)
*let this *suffice* me (*T. Joseph* 7:6)	that is enough (*T. Joseph* 7:6)	let it *suffice* (Deuteronomy 3:26; Ezekiel 44:6; 45:9)