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"We Are a Remnant of the Seed of Joseph": Moroni's Interpretive Use of Joseph's Coat and the Martial nēs-Imagery of Isaiah 11:11–12

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"We Are a Remnant of the Seed of Joseph": Moroni's Interpretive Use of Joseph's Coat and the Martial *nēs*-Imagery of Isaiah 11:11–12

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Abstract: *Genesis 30:23–24 offers a double etiology for* Joseph *in terms of "taking away"/"gathering" (ʾāsap) and "adding" (yāsap). In addition to its later narratological use of the foregoing, the Joseph cycle (Genesis 37–50) evidences a third dimension of onomastic wordplay involving Joseph's* kĕtōnet passîm, *an uncertain phrase traditionally translated "coat of many colours" (from LXX), but perhaps better translated, "coat of manifold pieces." Moroni₁, quoting from a longer version of the Joseph story from the brass plates, refers to "Joseph, whose coat was rent by his brethren into many pieces" (Alma 46:23). As a military and spiritual leader, Moroni₁ twice uses Joseph's torn coat and the remnant doctrine from Jacob's prophecy regarding Joseph's coat as a model for his covenant use of his own coat to "gather" (cf. ʾāsap) and rally faithful Nephites as "a remnant of the seed of Joseph" (Alma 46:12–28, 31; 62:4–6). In putting that coat on a "pole" or "standard" (Hebrew nēs — i.e., "ensign") to "gather" a "remnant of the seed of Joseph" appears to make use of the Isaianic nēs-imagery of Isaiah 11:11–12 (and elsewhere), where the Joseph-connected verbs yāsap and ʾāsap serve as key terms. Moroni's written-upon "standard" or "ensign" for "gathering" the "remnant of the seed of Joseph" constituted an important prophetic antetype for how Mormon and his son, Moroni₂, perceived the function of their written record in the latter-days (see, e.g., 3 Nephi 5:23–26; Ether 13:1–13).*

The biography of Joseph the biblical patriarch surfaces in intriguing ways throughout the Book of Mormon, attesting its importance among the Nephites throughout their entire existence. For example, at the beginning of Nephite history, Nephi uses Joseph's name and

biography as a literary means of framing his own familial role and his brothers' abusive treatment of him (e.g., "and they hated him *yet the more* [*wayyôsipû ʿôd*]" [Genesis 37:5, 8] ≅ "their anger did increase [*yāsap*] against me" [2 Nephi 5:2]).[1] At the very end of Nephite civilization, in his abridged book of Ether, Moroni₂ (son of Mormon) makes Joseph's name, his bringing his father down into Egypt, and his consequent preservation of his father "a type" for the preservation of "a remnant of the seed of Joseph," the building "again" (cf. *yôsîp*) of "the Jerusalem of old," the building of a "New Jerusalem," which would be "a holy city unto the Lord like unto the Jerusalem of old" and the promise that both "shall no more be confounded" (Ether 13:1–13).[2] Moroni returns to this promise at the very conclusion of the Book of Mormon (see Moroni 10:31).[3]

John Tvedtnes has keenly observed that the use of the "remnant" (*šĕʾērît*) idiom in Ether 13:7 very closely matches the function of the idiom in Genesis 45:7 in the Joseph cycle ("And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity [*šĕʾērît*, literally, remnant] in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance").[4] In other words, Joseph's removal to Egypt provided a typological preservation of the "remnant" of Israel, not merely the preserving of a "posterity" (as rendered in KJV). Tvedtnes writes, "The Genesis passage is particularly interesting because of its subtle yet telling contextual affinity to the way the Book of Mormon typically uses the expression 'remnant of Joseph.' In both cases the expression appears in contexts that imply or directly convey the idea of

1. On Nephi's autobiographic use of Joseph's name and permutation of the biblical wordplay on Joseph's name, see Matthew L. Bowen, "'Their Anger Did Increase Against Me': Nephi's Autobiographical Permutation of a Biblical Wordplay on the Name Joseph," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 23 (2017): 115-36. On Nephi's use of other details of Joseph's biography, see further Alan Goff, *A Hermeneutic of Sacred Texts: Historicism, Revisionism, Positivism, and the Bible and Book of Mormon* (MA thesis, Brigham Young University, 1989), 104–32. Citations of Book of Mormon passages in this study will generally reflect Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 2009).

2. On the onomastic wordplay involving the name Joseph evident in Ether 13:1-13, see Matthew L. Bowen, "'They Shall No More Be Confounded': Moroni's Wordplay on Joseph in Ether 13:1–13 and Moroni 10:31," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 30 (2018): 91–104.

3. In both Ether 13:1–13 and Moroni 10:13, Moroni taps the language of 1 Nephi 14:2 and 1 Nephi 15:10 and the wordplay on Joseph found there (see Bowen, "No More Be Confounded").

4. John A. Tvedtnes, "The Remnant of Joseph," *Insights* 20, no. 8 (2000): 2.

being sent to another land in order to be *preserved*."[5] In view of Tvedtnes's observation, we also recall the iterative use of the Hebraistic *yôsîp* — "do again" — idiom in Zenos's allegory to describe the "preservation" of the natural fruit.[6] Although Jacob 5 does not use the word "remnant," "the conjunction of Moroni₂'s Joseph/*yôsîp* wordplay with his allusion to a "preserving" a "posterity"/"remnant" (*šĕʾērît*) from Genesis 45:7 in Ether 13 becomes all the more striking.

Tvedtnes further notes that the preservation of a "remnant" idiom (Hebrew *šĕʾērît*/*šĕʾār*) conveys a similar notion of preservation in Alma 46 (see especially vv. 23–27).[7] In the following article I propose that another significant use of Joseph's biography that, like Ether 13, manifests a consciousness of the Genesis wordplay on Joseph occurs in Mormon's account of the lengthy war between the Nephites led by Moroni₁ (the namesake of Mormon's son, Moroni₂) and the Lamanites led by Amalickiah and later Ammoron his brother. In that account, Mormon preserves a covenant speech by Moroni₁ in which the latter uses the patriarch Joseph's "rent" coat as an antetype for his own "rent" coat, of his people's "rent" garments, and (citing the patriarch Jacob's lost prophetic words) of the preservation of "a remnant of the seed of Joseph" — a remnant of which the Nephites and Lamanites constituted a part. In later years, Mormon recognized that Joseph's coat having been "rent by his brethren" and Moroni₁'s prophecy regarding his people's garments being "rent by our brethren" (Alma 46:23) came to ironic fulfillment when he saw his own people being "rent" by their "brethren" (see, e.g., Mormon 6).[8]

Moreover, I attempt to show that, in addition to the important biblical wordplay on Joseph's name in terms of the verbs *ʾāsap* ("gather," "bring

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5. Ibid.

6. See the discussion in Matthew L. Bowen and Loren Blake Spendlove, "'Thou Art the Fruit of My Loins': The Interrelated Symbolism and Meanings of the Names Joseph and Ephraim in Ancient Scripture" *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 28 (2018): 294–96. See also Matthew L. Bowen, "'I Have Done According to My Will': Reading Jacob 5 as a Temple Text" in *The Temple: Ancient and Restored: Proceedings of the Interpreter Matthew B. Brown Memorial Conference,* ed. Stephen D. Ricks and Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books and Interpreter Foundation, 2016), 247–48.

7. Tvedtnes, "The Remnant of Joseph," 2.

8. Cf. especially Mormon 6:16, where Mormon describes his soul as being "rent with anguish," quoting Nephi, whose "soul" was "rent with anguish because of [his brethren]," 1 Nephi 17:47).

in," "receive," "withdraw," "take away")[9] and *yāsap* ("add," "continue to do", "do again, more"),[10] a third type of wordplay involving the rare and opaque Hebrew word *passîm* links Joseph to his unique coat, the "remnant" of which becomes a metonym[11] for his posterity. Traditionally, *passîm* has been interpreted "many colors" (in "coat of many colors") but perhaps suggesting "a garment reaching to the wrists or ankles"[12] (on the basis of Aramaic *pas* "palm of the hand or sole of the foot," cf. the Septuagint [hereafter LXX] reading *chitōn karpōtos* = Vulgate *talari tunica* [2 Samuel 13:18–19])[13] or, on the basis of Aramaic *pas*, "part, share, lot" — i.e., "piece"[14] — and Phoenician *ps*, "tablet, piece" rather "a garment made of pieces of material sewn together."[15]

On this paronomastic[16] basis, the "remnant" of Joseph's coat becomes a natural metonymy for the "remnant of the seed of Joseph"[17] or the "remnant of Joseph."[18] Moreover, when Moroni₁ fastens his own "rent" and overwritten coat on a "pole" — later called a "standard" (i.e., an "ensign") — he taps into the emotive *nēs*-imagery of Isaiah 11:11–12. The latter text describes the Lord's use of a *nēs*, "ensign" or "standard," as a means of assembling or "gathering" the "*remnant* of his people." Moroni, in fact, uses a "standard" or ensign to "gather" a "remnant of the seed of Joseph" for the existential preservation of the Nephite nation. Mormon recognized that this written-upon "standard" or "ensign" (Alma 46:12–28) constituted something of an antetype of his own abridged record which would be used as a kind of ensign to gather "a remnant of the seed of Joseph" (3 Nephi 5:21–26).

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9. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, NDL: Brill, 2001), 74. Hereafter cited as *HALOT*.

10. *HALOT*, 418.

11. A metonym is "a word, name, or expression used as a substitute for something else with which it is closely associated. For example, Washington is a metonym for the federal government of the US." *Lexico*, s.v. "Metonym," https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/metonym.

12. *HALOT*, 946.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., 1958.

15. Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 408. Cf. *HALOT*, 946.

16. Richard A. Lanham defines paronomasia as "punning; playing on the sounds and meanings of words." Richard A. Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, 2nd ed. (Berkley: University of California Press, 1991), 110.

17. Alma 46:23, 27; 3 Nephi 5:23; 10:17; Ether 13:6–7, 10.

18. Amos 5:15; Alma 46:24.

Joseph's *Kĕtōnet Passîm*

Understanding the name *Joseph* as a symbol of divine "gathering" and iterative or resumptive divine action begins in the Genesis pericope that describes the births of Jacob's sons (Genesis 29–30). That pericope offers a double etiology for the name Joseph in a chiastic structure:

> A And she conceived, and bare *a son* [*bēn*];
>> B and said, God hath <u>taken away</u> [*ʾāsap*, gathered up] my reproach:
>>> C and *she* called his name <u>Joseph</u> [*yôsēp*];
>> B′ and said, The Lord <u>shall add</u> [*yōsēp*; or, "may Yahweh add"] to me
> A′ another *son* [*bēn*; i.e., Benjamin].
> (Genesis 30:23–24; emphasis in all scriptural citations is added).

The central (C) element with the name Joseph divides the somewhat antonymic, dual etymologies in B and B′. The "another son" in A′ anticipates Benjamin, the last of Jacob's sons.[19]

Elements of both etiologies find expression throughout the Joseph Cycle (Genesis 37–50). Wordplay on Joseph in terms of *ʾāsap* recurs in the following passages:

- Genesis 42:17–18: "And he *put them all together* [*gathered them, wayyeʾĕsōp ʾōtām*] into ward three days. And *Joseph* [*yōsēp*] said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God."
- Genesis 49:29: "and [Jacob] said unto them [i.e., Joseph and his brothers], I am *to be gathered* [*neʾĕsāp*] unto my people."
- Genesis 49:33–50:1: "[Jacob] *gathered up* [*wayyeʾĕsōp*] his feet into the bed … *and was gathered* [*wayyēʾāsep*] unto his people [i.e., in the spirit world]. And *Joseph* [*yôsēp*] fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him."

These *ʾāsap* wordplays anticipate Moses's "gathering" of the elders of Israel in Exodus (see further Exodus 3:16; 4:29; cf. Isaiah 49:5).

In terms of the second etiology, wordplay on *yāsap* first resumes early in the Joseph cycle twice in Genesis 37:5, 8: "and they hated him <u>yet the more</u> [*wayyôsipû ʿôd*]"). The next recurrence in Genesis 44:23 (when Joseph

19. See Matthew L. Bowen, "Onomastic Wordplay on *Joseph* and *Benjamin* and *Gezera Shawa* in the Book of Mormon," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 18 (2016): 255–73.

says: "Except your youngest brother [i.e., Benjamin] come down with you, *ye shall* see my face *no more* [*lōʾ tōsipûn*]") recalls the second etiology for Joseph's name in Genesis 30:24 and its anticipation of Benjamin.

Moreover, the Joseph Cycle evidences a third dimension of wordplay on Joseph — a paronomasia involving *yôsēp* and *passîm* (consonantally, *ywsp* and *psym*). Moshe Garsiel writes, "The word here translated 'striped' [*passîm*, KJV "of many colours"], also constitutes a pun of some novelty upon 'Joseph' (*ywsp* - יוסף) of which it is nearly an anagram."[20] Although Garsiel's "anagram" relies entirely on the orthographic similarity between *ywsp* and *psym* rather than on any evident root relationship between the two words, the words nevertheless have three of four consonants in common in their written forms. In terms of their pronunciation, *yôsēp* and *passîm* share enough alliterative sound similarity to reasonably and cautiously posit a deliberate wordplay. Add to that the sheer rarity of the term *psym* (attested only five times and only in the Joseph and Tamar₂ stories)[21] seems to suggest its paronomastic relatability to *ywsp* constituted a primary consideration in its narrative inclusion by the ancient author/narrator.

This putative wordplay on Joseph in terms of *passîm* stands at the head of the paronomasia used throughout the Joseph cycle and leads into the subsequent wordplay on *yôsēp* in terms of *yāsap*:

> Now Israel loved <u>Joseph</u> [*yôsēp*] more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him *a coat* [*kĕtōnet*] *of <u>many colours</u>* [*passîm*]. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: *and they hated him <u>yet the more</u>* [*wayyôsipû ʿôd*]. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him <u>yet the more</u> [*wayyôsipû ʿôd*] for his dreams, and for his words. (Genesis 37:3–8)

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20. Moshe Garsiel, *Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns*, trans. Dr. Phyllis Hackett (Ramat Gan, ISR: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991), 173.

21. Genesis 37:3, 23, 32; 2 Samuel 13:18–19.

Here the ambiguous and virtually untranslatable word *passîm*, forming a paronomastic pun on *yôsēp*, makes the coat a symbol of Jacob's "preferential love for Joseph"[22] and for the latter's favored status, which becomes the source of the brothers' "adding" (*wayyôsipû ʿôd*) to hate Joseph. KJV's English language rendering of *passîm* as "of many colours" owes its precise phraseology to John Wycliffe, who rendered the Latin Vulgate's *tunicam polymitam* (i.e., a "tunic woven with multicolored threads") as "cote of many colours." William Tyndale was content to retain this phrase in his translation from the Hebrew, and later translations followed suit. The Vulgate owes its rendition to LXX, which in turn renders Hebrew *passîm* with the Greek adjective *poikilos*, which can mean "many-colored" or "variegated." LXX thus constitutes the source of our traditional reading, "coat of many colors." However, the adjective *poikilos* also "pert[ains] to existence in various kinds or modes" and thus can also mean "diversified, manifold."[23] In other words, another — and perhaps better — translation for *kĕtōnet passîm* might be: *coat of diverse pieces* or a *coat of manifold pieces.*

The idea that Joseph's *kĕtōnet passîm* was in fact a garment originally composed of "diverse" or "manifold" parts sewn or stitched together — finds interesting and perhaps significant support in Moroni's statement "Joseph, whose coat was rent by his brethren into *many* pieces" (Alma 46:23). While Ephraim A. Speiser favored "an ornamented tunic,"[24] the idea of a "wrap-around garment, the overlapping layers of which seem like 'tablets', cf. Pun[ic]) פס [= tablet],"[25] finds philological support at least as strong as the former. A derivation from Akkadian

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22. Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 173.

23. Frederick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (BDAG) (University of Chicago Press, 2000), 842.

24. Ephraim A. Speiser, *Genesis: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 287, 289–90. See also Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary, Volume 1: The Five Books of Moses* (New York: Norton, 2019), 139. Alter earlier wrote, "The only clue about the nature of the garment is offered by the one other mention of it in the Bible, in the story of the rape of Tamar (2 Samuel 13), in which, incidentally, there is a whole network of pointed allusions to the Joseph story. There we are told that the *ketonet pasim* was worn by virgin princesses. It is thus a unisex garment and a product of ancient *haute couture*." (Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* [New York: Norton, 1996], 209.)

25. *HALOT*, 946.

pasāmu/*pussumu* (verb to "veil", adjective "veiled") seems unlikely,[26] and Ugaritic *psm* offers no help, since its meaning remains uncertain.[27]

The subsequent twofold repetition of the idiom *wayyôsipû ʿôd* builds on the *yôsēp/passîm* wordplay and reemphasizes the connection between the name Joseph and his coat even as it hints at Joseph's imminent suffering at his brothers' hands. Later in the pericope, the *yôsēp/passîm* resurfaces when the brothers act on their "added" or redoubled hatred: "And it came to pass, when *Joseph* [*yôsēp*] was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph [*yôsēp*] out of his coat, his *coat* [*kĕtōnet*] *of many colours* [*passîm*] that was on him. And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it" (Genesis 37:23–24). The removal of the coat symbolizes Joseph's forced loss of status and in a real sense the loss of his former identity. As Joseph was sold into slavery into a foreign country, Josephites of later generations, including Lehi and Nephi and their family, would have appreciated this particular moment in light of their own experiences and circumstances: going into exile into foreign countries. Near the end of his life, Jacob described the Nephites in autobiographic terms and in terms of the fraternal hatred in the Joseph story[28] as "a lonesome and a solemn people, wanderers cast out from Jerusalem, born in tribulation in a wilderness, and *hated of our brethren*, which caused wars and contentions; wherefore we did mourn out our days" (Jacob 7:26).[29]

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26. Jeremy Black, Andrew George, and Nicholas Postgate, eds., *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, 2nd corrected printing (Wiesbaden, DEU: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000), 268, 279.

27. Gregorio del Olmo Lete and Joaquín Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*, 3rd rev. ed., ed. and trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson (Leiden, NDL: Brill, 2015), 2:675.

28. There may be a further echo of the fraternal enmity between the patriarch Jacob and Esau in the Jacob cycle as there is in 2 Nephi 4–5: "And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob" (Genesis 27:41). The Book of Mormon prophet/priest Jacob's son Enos unquestionably sees the Nephite-Lamanite relationship in terms of Jacob and Esau. See John A. Tvedtnes, "Jacob and Enos: Wrestling before God," *Insights* 21, no. 5 (2001): 2–3; Matthew L. Bowen "'And There Wrestled a Man with Him' (Genesis 32:24): Enos's Adaptations of the Onomastic Wordplay of Genesis," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 10 (2014): 151–60.

29. Even after long generations in the New World, the Nephites still viewed themselves in this light. As Alma stated to the apostate Nephites of Ammonihah, "And they are made known unto us in plain terms, that we may understand, that we cannot err; and this because of our being *wanderers in a strange land*" (Alma 13:23).

The final instance of wordplay on *yôsēp* and *passîm* occurs with the brothers' deceptive presentation of Joseph's coat to his father as ostensible evidence of the former's death:

> And they took *Joseph's coat* [*kĕtōnet yôsēp*], and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood; and they sent *the coat of many colours* [*kĕtōnet happassîm*], and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no. And he knew it, and said, *It is my son's coat* [*kĕtōnet bĕnî*] an evil beast hath devoured him; *Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces* [*ṭārōp ṭōrap yôsēp*]. And Jacob rent [*wayyiqraʿ*] his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. (Genesis 37:31–33)

The parallel syntax in at the beginning of v. 31 ("And they took *Joseph's coat* [*kĕtōnet yôsēp*]") and v. 32 ("and they sent *the coat of many colours* [*kĕtōnet happassîm*]") strengthens the case for a deliberate paronomastic connection between the name Joseph and the description of his coat. Joseph's coat as a metonymy of Joseph himself is further established by the exclamations *kĕtōnet bĕnî* and *ṭārōp ṭōrap yôsēp*. Thus Joseph's father "rending" his clothes seemingly amounts to more than an act of mourning: he reenacts what he believes to have befallen his son.

The "Coat" and the "Remnant" of Joseph

At first glance, Moroni's tearing of his coat appears to constitute something of an ad hoc means of rallying his people:

> And it came to pass that when he had poured out his soul to God, he gave all the land which was south of the land Desolation — yea, and in fine, all the land, both on the north and on the south — a chosen land, and the land of liberty. And he saith: Surely God shall not suffer that we who are despised because *we take upon us the name of Christ* shall be trodden down and destroyed until we bring it upon us by

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Around this same time Ammon exclaimed: "Yea, blessed is the name of my God, who has been mindful of this people, who are a branch of the tree of Israel, and has been lost from its body in a strange land; yea, I say, blessed be the name of my God, who has been mindful of us, *wanderers in a strange land*" (Alma 26:36). These statements also echo the Gershom etiologies from Exodus: "And [Zipporah] bare him a son, and he called his name *Gershom* [*gēršōm*]: for he said, I have been *a stranger* [*gēr*] in *a strange* [*nokriyyâ*] land" (Exodus 2:22); "And her two sons; of which the name of the one was *Gershom* [*gēršōm*]; for he said, I have been *an alien* [*gēr*] in a strange [*nokriyyâ*] land" (Exodus 18:3).

our own transgressions. And when Moroni had said these words, he went forth among the people, *waving the rent of his garment in the air, that all might see the writing which he had wrote upon the rent*, and crying with a loud voice, saying: Behold, whosoever will maintain this title upon the land, let them come forth in the strength of the Lord, and enter into a covenant that they will maintain their rights, and their religion, that the Lord God may bless them. And it came to pass that when Moroni had proclaimed these words, behold, *the people came running together with their armors girded about their loins, rending their garments in token, or as a covenant, that they would not forsake the Lord their God. Or, in other words, if they should transgress the commandments of God — or fall into transgression — and be ashamed to take upon them the name of Christ, the Lord should rend them, even as they had rent their garments.* Now this was the covenant which they made; and they cast their garments at the feet of Moroni, saying: *We covenant with our God that we shall be destroyed, even as our brethren in the land northward, if we shall fall into transgression. Yea, he may cast us at the feet of our enemies, even as we have cast our garments at thy feet, to be trodden under foot, if we shall fall into transgression.* (Alma 46:17–22)

However, Moroni's words and actions quickly emerge as much more than a mere attempt to rally the troops. Moroni's "g[i]v[ing]" the land "a chosen land and the land of liberty" recalls at least three distinct scenes from earlier Nephite history. In a speech to his sons before his death, Lehi had declared the land would "be a land of liberty" to all those whom the Lord would bring and would "serve him according to the commandments which he hath given" (2 Nephi 1:7). It also recalls a later speech by Jacob after Lehi's death and the separation of the Lamanites from the Nephites in which Jacob states, "And this land shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles [Hebrew *gôyîm* = 'nations'], and there shall be no kings upon the land who shall raise up unto the Gentiles [nations]" (2 Nephi 10:11). These sermons were important in light of the "others" — i.e., the non-Israelites — whom Lehi and his descendants must have

encountered in the New World[30] but also because of the "remnant of the seed of Joseph" who would exist among the "gentiles" in the latter-day.

Some time ago Mark J. Morrise noted the simile curses Moroni uses in Alma 46:21–22 with the people symbolically "rending their garments"[31] in token of what would happen to them if they failed to keep the covenant which they had made. In the text that follows, Moroni₁ makes the story of Joseph's coat a kind of "historical prologue"[32] to the simile-curse covenant under which his people subsequently bind themselves. Moroni declares to his soldiers and followers that they "are a remnant of the seed of Joseph" and proceeds to tell a part of that story that has been lost from the extant canonical version of the Joseph story (Genesis 37–50):

> Moroni said unto them: Behold, *we are a remnant of the seed of Jacob.* Yea, we are *a remnant of the seed of <u>Joseph</u>, whose coat was rent by his brethren into many pieces.* Yea, and now behold, let us remember to keep the commandments of God, or our garments shall be rent by our brethren, and we be cast into prison, or be sold, or be slain. Yea, let us preserve our liberty as a *remnant of <u>Joseph</u>.*[33] Yea, let us remember the words of Jacob, before his death. For behold, he saw that a part of *the remnant of the <u>coat of Joseph</u>* [*kĕtōnet yôsēp*, Genesis 37:31] was preserved and had not decayed. And he saith: Even as *this remnant of garment of my son's* hath been preserved, so shall *a remnant of the seed of my son be preserved* by the hand of God and be taken unto himself, while *the remainder of the seed of <u>Joseph</u> shall perish, even as the remnant of his garment.* Now behold, this giveth my soul sorrow. Nevertheless, my soul hath joy in my son because of *that part of his seed which shall be taken unto God.* Now behold, this was the language

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30. John Gee and Matthew Roper, "'I Did Liken All Scriptures unto Us': Early Nephite Understandings of Isaiah and Implications for 'Others' in the Land," in *Fullness of the Gospel: Foundational Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, ed. Camille Fronk Olson, Brian M. Hauglid, Patty Smith, and Thomas A. Wayment (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2003), 51–65.

31. Mark J. Morrise, "Simile Curses in the Ancient Near East, Old Testament, and Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2, no. 1 (January 1993): 134.

32. Ibid.

33. The only other scriptural attestation of the collocation "remnant of Joseph" occurs in Amos 5:15: "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto *the remnant of Joseph* [*šĕʾērît yôsēp*]." Cf. "house of Joseph" (*bêt yôsēp*) in Amos 5:6.

of Jacob. And now, who knoweth but what *the remnant of the seed of <u>Joseph</u>* which shall perish as his garment are those who have dissented from us? (Alma 46:23–27)

Understanding Joseph's coat and its "rents" or rent pieces as having a tribal or gentilic reference finds an excellent analogue in the rending of the cloak in 1 Kings 11:29–31 and the prophet Ahijah's rending of Jeroboam's new garment: "And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he [ambiguous, but probably Jeroboam] had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, *and rent* [*wayyiqrāʿehā*] *it* in twelve *pieces* [*qĕrāʿîm*, literally twelve "rents"[34]]: And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten *pieces* [*qĕrāʿîm*]: for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, *I will rend* [*hinĕnî qōrēaʿ*] *the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee.*"

Consistent with his understanding of the symbolism of the Joseph story as a whole and Jacob's prophecy in particular, Moroni₁ offers a description of the "tearing" or "rending" of Joseph's coat, which he implicitly understands as a metaphor of what will happen to the body of Joseph's descendants: "Joseph, whose coat was *rent* [*niqraʿ*] by his brethren into many *pieces* [*qĕrāʿîm*]" (Alma 46:23). Moroni₁ knew all too well that the Nephites of his time risked being "torn by our brethren" in a manner similar to Joseph's *kĕtōnet passîm* because of covenant infidelity. The Nephites of Moroni₁'s time were then a part of the "remnant of Joseph" or the "remainder of the seed of Joseph" that had yet to "perish" — which may mean to experience "exile" in the sense of losing the knowledge of one's historical identity, as the Lamanites and the Nephites who survive among them do later.[35] For Mormon, compiling the record hundreds of years later, Moroni₁'s emotive image of descendants of Joseph being "torn" by their "brethren" had become prophecy fulfilled before his own eyes.[36]

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34. Cf. John A. Tvedtnes, "Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon: A Preliminary Survey," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 1 (1970): 50. See also Book of Mormon Central, "Why Did Moroni Quote the Patriarch Joseph about a Piece of Joseph's Coat?", https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/why-did-moroni-quote-the-patriarch-jacob-about-a-piece-of-joseph%E2%80%99s-coat.

35. See, e.g., 1 Nephi 13:30; Alma 45:13–14; Moroni 1:1–3; 9:24 (cf. also Moroni 9:17).

36. See, e.g., Mormon 2:15: "I saw thousands of them hewn down in open rebellion against their God and heaped up as dung upon the face of the land"

In Moroni's words, "our garments shall be rent by our brethren, and we be cast into prison, or sold or be slain," there seems to be a tacit recognition that Joseph the patriarch had *unjustly* suffered the consequences of covenant violation that his descendants would *justly* suffer if they failed to faithfully keep to the covenant that they had made with God — i.e., as Joseph had remained faithful. Joseph's biography and the story of his coat thus becomes part of the "simile curse" in the covenant: to be "rent by … brethren," "cast into prison," or be "sold," if not "slain" (Alma 46:23).

A verb translated "preserve" occurs four times in Alma 46:24 as part of Moroni₁'s use of the preservation of "a remnant of Joseph" and the "remnant of the coat of Joseph" as a simile for the preservation of the Nephites' liberty as part of the "remnant of Joseph." A verb translated "preserve" occurs twenty times[37] throughout the allegory in Jacob 5, expressive of the Lord of the vineyard's intent to preserve the fruit and trees in his vineyard. There is an interesting and potentially significant connection to be drawn here between Moroni's intent to "preserve" the Nephites and their liberty as part of the preserved "remnant of Joseph" (symbolized by the metaphor of the "remnant of the coat of Joseph" and the Lord of the vineyard's intent to "preserve" the "good fruit"; cf. Nephi < Eg. *nfr* = "good"[38]), oft-stated in the allegory in terms of

(Mormon 2:15); Mormon 4:11: "And it is impossible for the tongue to describe — or for man to write a perfect description of the horrible scene of the blood and carnage which was among the people, both of the Nephites and of the Lamanites. And every heart was hardened, so that they delighted in the shedding of blood continually."

37. Jacob 5:8, 11 (2 x), 13, 20, 23, 33, 36–37, 46, 53–54 (3 x), 60 (3 x), 74–75 (3 x), 77.

38. On Nephi as an Egyptian name derived from the lexeme *nfr*, see John Gee, "A Note on the Name *Nephi*," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1, no. 1 (July 1992): 189–91; Gee, "Four Suggestions on the Origin of the Name Nephi," in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon: The FARMS Updates of the 1990s*, ed. John W. Welch and Melvin J. Thorne (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999), 1–5. On the wordplay on Nephi evident in numerous Book of Mormon passages, see Matthew L. Bowen, "Internal Textual Evidence for the Egyptian Origin of Nephi's Name," *Insights* 21, no. 11 (2001): 2; Bowen, "'O Ye Fair Ones': An Additional Note on the Meaning of the Name Nephi," *Insights* 23, no. 6 (2003): 2; Bowen, "Nephi's Good Inclusio," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 17 (2016): 181–95; Bowen, "'O Ye Fair Ones' — Revisited," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 20 (2016): 315–44. See most recently, Matthew L. Bowen, "Laman and Nephi as Key-Words: An Etymological, Narratological, and Rhetorical Approach to Understanding Lamanites and Nephites as Religious, Political, and Cultural

the *yôsîp*-idiom[39] ("to do [something] again"). In two verses, these ideas closely converge: The Lord of the vineyard asks his servant: "What shall we do unto the tree *that I may* preserve *again* good fruit thereof unto mine own self?" (Jacob 5:33). Later he declares: "And because that *I have preserved* the natural branches and the roots thereof, and that *I have grafted in the natural branches again* into their mother tree and *have preserved* the roots of their mother tree, that perhaps, the trees of my vineyard *may* bring forth *again good* fruit, and *that I may* have joy *again* in the fruit of my vineyard, and perhaps that I may rejoice exceedingly that *I have preserved* the roots and the branches of the first fruit" (Jacob 5:60). The allegory concludes with the report that as a result of the efforts of the servants the Lord of the vineyard "had *preserved* unto himself that the trees *had* become *again* the natural fruit" (Jacob 5:74). The Lord of the vineyard subsequently declares, "and thou beholdest that I have done according to my will; *and I have preserved* the natural fruit, *that it is good* even like as it was in the beginning. And blessed art thou, for because that ye have been diligent in laboring with me in my vineyard, and have kept my commandments — and *it hath* brought unto me *again* the natural fruit, that my vineyard is no more corrupted and the bad is cast away — behold, ye shall have joy with me" (Jacob 5:74–75).

Moroni's use of the "remnant of the coat of Joseph" as a symbol of divine preservation and Zenos's allegory as related by Jacob share another significant link. Jacob frames Zenos's allegory in terms of Isaiah 11:11–12 and the gathering of Israel: "And in the day that *he shall set* his hand *again* [*yôsîp*] the second time to recover his people [quoting Isaiah 11:11] is the day — yea, even the last time — that the servants of the Lord shall go forth in his power to nourish and prune his vineyard; and after that the end soon cometh" (Jacob 6:2). Moroni uses his coat (as a parallel to the coat of Joseph) hoisted atop a "pole," "standard," or "ensign" — i.e., the Hebrew *nēs* that we meet in Isaiah 11:12 — as the means of "gathering" and "assembling" the "remnant" of Judah-Israel.

The "Gathering" Standard or "Ensign to the Nations": Moroni's Use of Isaiah 11:11–12

The etiological association between the name "Joseph" and "gathering" (*ʾāsap*) occurs in Mormon's account of Captain Moroni and the "title of liberty" in several subtle instances. The entire pericope revolves around

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Descriptors," FairMormon Conference, Provo, UT, August 2019, https://www. fairmormon.org/conference/august-2019/laman-and-nephi-as-key-words.

  39. The *yôsîp*-idiom potentially occurs in Jacob 5:29, 33, 58, 60–62, 68, 73–75.

the account of Joseph's coat. It begins with Mormon stating that members of the church rebelled against Helaman's authority: "And it came to pass that as many as would not hearken to the words of Helaman and his brethren *were gathered together against their brethren*." Although the Nephites at this period of time also included the Judahite descendants of Muloch (Mulek),[40] and were probably also descended in part from "others,"[41] the Nephites primarily identified themselves as descendants of Joseph in Egypt.[42] Mormon's use of "gather" begins to frame what follows as a Josephite versus Josephite conflict.

Kerry Hull has shown at length that Moroni's use of the "title of liberty" (or "standard of liberty," see below) fits well within a Mesoamerican context in which "war banners" enjoyed widespread use and that the title or standard functioned as such.[43] Nevertheless, just as Moroni$_1$ invokes a scriptural precedent in the covenant use of his rent coat, he also appears to have scriptural precedents in mind in his use of what is rendered in translation as a "pole" or "standard."

One of the most prominent motifs in the Book of Isaiah is the image of "ensign" (Isaiah 5:26; 11:10, 12; 18:3; 30:17; 31:9), "standard" (Isaiah 49:22; 59:19; 62:10), or "banner" (Isaiah 13:2) — all expressions of the Hebrew noun *nēs* in English translation. In addition to "ensign," "standard," or "banner," another way of rendering Hebrew *nēs* is "pole" as the KJV translators opted to translate it in the bronze serpent pericope of Numbers 21: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and *set it upon a pole* [*nēs*, i.e., a "standard"]: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and *put it upon a pole* [*nēs*], and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived" (Numbers 21:8–9).

The first instances of the *nēs*-theme in the Book of Isaiah all involve a *nēs* being lifted up to the *gôyim* ("nations"/"gentiles"):

- "And he will lift up *an ensign* [*nēs*] *to the nations* [*laggôyim*] from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly"

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40. On the original spelling of Mulek as Muloch, see Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part Three: Mosiah 17–Alma 20* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2006), 1464–70.

41. Gee and Roper, "'Liken All Scriptures,'" 51–65.

42. See, e.g., 1 Nephi 5:14–16; 6:2; 2 Nephi 3:4; Alma 10:3.

43. Kerry Hull, "War Banners: A Mesoamerican Context for the Title of Liberty," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 24 (2015): 84–118.

(Isaiah 5:26; this passage is usually understood to have reference to the destruction of Israel and Judah while the following have reference to Israel and Judah's gathering);

- "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, *which shall stand for an ensign* [*nēs*] *of the people; to it shall the Gentiles* [*gôyim*] *seek* … " (Isaiah 11:10–11)

- "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall *set* his hand *again* [*yôsîp*] the second time to recover the remnant of his people. … And he shall set up *an ensign* [*nēs*] *for the nations* [*laggôyim*], *and shall assemble* [*wĕʾāsap*] *the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah* from the four corners of the earth."

The strongest evidence that Nephi considered these Isaiah *nēs*-passages related to the bronze serpent and the *nēs* upon which it was raised is his use of the expression "the nations" (Hebrew *gôyim*), which occurs in 2 Nephi 25:20: "And as the Lord God liveth that brought Israel up out of the land of Egypt and gave unto Moses power that he should *heal the nations* [Hebrew *haggôyim*] after that they had been bitten by the poisonous serpents, if they would cast their eyes unto *the serpent which he did raise up before them*" (2 Nephi 25:20). Nephi had quoted Isaiah 11:11 and 29:14 together in 2 Nephi 25:17 and would describe the fulfillment of these prophecies as fulfilling the promises made to Joseph in 2 Nephi 25:21. In 2 Nephi 25:20, however, the expression "the nations" clearly has reference to the tribes of Israel rather than simply non-Israelites. There exists at least one possible precedent for this use of *gôyim* in the Isaianic corpus itself: Isaiah 9:1 [MT 8:23] (2 Nephi 19:1) describes Galilee as "Galilee of the nations" (*gĕlîl haggôyim*).

The bronze serpent on the *nēs* ("pole") in Numbers 21 and the Isaianic *nēs*-theme provides the conceptual framework for Mormon's account of Moroni₁'s creation of the "pole" or "standard" (*nēs*) in response to Amalickiah and the Lamanite threat:

And it came to pass that *he rent his coat; and he took a piece thereof* and wrote upon it: In memory of our God, our religion and freedom, and our peace, our wives and our children. And *he fastened it upon the end of a pole* [Hebrew *nēs*] thereof. And he fastened on his head-plate and his breastplate and his shields and girded on his armor about his loins. And *he took the pole* [*nēs*] which had on the end thereof his rent coat, and he called it the title of liberty. And he bowed himself to the earth, and he prayed mightily unto his God for the blessings of

liberty to rest upon his brethren so long as there should a band of Christians *remain* to possess the land. (Alma 46:12–13)

The idea that Joseph's *kĕtōnet passîm* was a kind of "wrap-around garment, the overlapping layers of which seem like 'tablets', cf. Pun[ic]) פס [= tablet]"[44] — or at least the idea of the stitched pieces as (writing) "tablets" — may have suggested to Moroni₁ the written-on banner function in which he used his coat. But Moroni₁ appears to have also received inspiration from Isaiah 11:10–12 and perhaps the other Isaiah *nēs*-texts (Isaiah 5:26, 49:22, etc.).

Mormon initially reports that Moroni₁ called this "pole" with its ad hoc banner "the title of liberty" (Alma 46:13). However, at least twice the language used to describe it shifts to the expression "standard of liberty." The first occurs as Moroni disseminates his initial "title of liberty" in the form of many duplicates: "And it came to pass also that he caused the title of liberty to be hoisted upon every tower which was in all the land, which was possessed by the Nephites. And thus Moroni planted *the standard of liberty* among the Nephites" (Alma 46:36). The second occurs in Alma 62:4–6 (see below).

Moroni₁'s "Gathering" of the "Remnant of the Seed of Joseph"

On one level, what follows Moroni's rendition of an otherwise unknown part of the biblical narrative[45] regarding Joseph's coat clearly represents an ad hoc interpretation and application of that story:

> And now, who knoweth but what *the remnant of the seed of Joseph* [*yôsēp*] *which shall perish as his garment are those who have dissented from us*; yea, and even *it shall be us if we do not stand fast in the faith of Christ.* And now it came to pass that when Moroni had said these words, he went forth, and also sent forth, in all the parts of the land where there were dissensions and *gathered together* [cf. Hebrew *wĕʾāsap*] all *the people* who were desirous to maintain their liberty, to stand against Amalickiah and those who had dissented, who were called Amalickiahites. (Alma 46:27–28)

44. *HALOT*, 946.

45. Mormon elsewhere indicates that this fuller narrative existed on the plates of brass: "Behold, our father Jacob also testified concerning a remnant of the seed of Joseph. And behold, are not we a remnant of the seed of Joseph? And these things which testify of us, are they not written upon the plates of brass which our father Lehi brought out of Jerusalem?" (3 Nephi 10:17).

On another level Mormon's inclusion of Moroni₁'s statement looks forward on the end of Nephite civilization when the Nephite remnant of Joseph did *not* stand fast in the faith of Christ and became the part of Joseph's garment that perished in that story. At this point Mormon notes that Moroni₁ attempted to "gather together" all those who wished to be counted among the faithful "remnant of the seed of Joseph" vis-à-vis the dissenting unfaithful. The emphasis on "gathering together" here echoes the name Joseph and the initial literary etiologizing of that name in terms of the verb ʾāsap ("take away," "gather"). Mormon also emphasizes that those willing to "gather" bound themselves together by a covenant: "Moroni thought it was expedient that he should take his armies, which had *gathered themselves together* and armed themselves and entered into a covenant to keep the peace. And it came to pass that he took his army and marched out with his tents into the wilderness to cut off the course of Amalickiah in the wilderness" (Alma 46:31).

Moroni₁'s Second "Gathering" of "a Remnant of the Seed of Joseph" to the "Standard of Liberty"

Moroni proliferates the "gathering" by replicating the "title of liberty" and causing it "to be hoisted upon every tower" (Alma 46:36). Mormon then alters the appellation "title of liberty" in a way that links it firmly to the nēs-texts of Isaiah: "And thus Moroni *planted the standard of liberty* among the Nephites" (Alma 46:36). Years later, near the end of the war, Mormon reports that Moroni continued to pursue a policy of replicating the "standard of liberty" — again, using a deliberate wording change from "title of liberty" — and thus continued to promote the "gathering" of a remnant of the seed of Joseph:

Alma 62:4–6	Isaiah 5:26 and 11:11–12 (2 Nephi 21:11–12)
	And he will *lift up an ensign* to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly. (Isaiah 5:26)
And he did raise the standard of liberty in whatsoever place he did enter, *and gained* [*wayyiqen*] whatsoever force he could in all his march towards the land of Gideon. And it came to pass that *thousands did flock unto his standard* [i.e., of the "remnant of the seed of Joseph"] and did take up their swords in the defence of their freedom, that they might not come into bondage. And thus when Moroni had <u>*gathered together*</u> whatsoever men he could in all his march, he came to the land of Gideon.	And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall <u>set</u> his hand <u>*again*</u> [*yôsîp*] the second time *to recover* [*liqnôt*, literally "to gain," or "[re-]acquire"] *the remnant of his people … And he shall set up* [*wĕnāśāʾ*, *raise up*, lift up] *an ensign* [*nēs*, standard, as in Isaiah 49:22] for the nations [cf. "a standard unto my people," 2 Nephi 29:2], <u>*and shall assemble*</u> [*wĕʾāsap*, *and shall gather in*] *the outcasts of Israel, and <u>gather together</u>* the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. (Isaiah 11:11–12 (2 Nephi 21:11–12)

In detailing Moroni₁'s use of the "standard of liberty," Mormon seems aware of the similarities or parallels between Moroni₁'s actions and Isaiah's description of the Lord's use of the ensign or standard (Hebrew *nēs*) in Isaiah 5:26 and 11:11–12. Moroni's "rais[ing] the standard" corresponds to the Lord "lift[ing] the ensign" or "set[ting] up an ensign." Moroni's using the *nēs* to "gain" (*wayyiqen*, "and [he] gained") his force, composed of "a remnant of the seed of Joseph," corresponds to the Lord using the *nēs* to "recover" — *liqnôt*, literally "to gain" or "acquire" the "remnant of his people." The response to Moroni's "raising" a *nēs* was that "thousands did flock to unto his standard," matching the (non-Israelite) martial response to the Lord's lifted-up "ensign" in Isaiah 5:26: "they shall come with speed swiftly" (i.e., the martial response of Israel's enemies). The result of Moroni's *nēs* activity here in Alma 62, as earlier in Alma 46, was that Moroni successfully "gathered together" a faithful

"remnant of the seed of Joseph" just as the Lord would one day "set his hand again [*yôsîp*]" and "assemble" [*wĕʾāsap*] and "gather together" the "remnant of his people" — i.e., "the outcasts of Israel" and the "dispersed of Judah."

"A Remnant of the Seed of Joseph" Preserved:
The Legacy of Joseph's Coat and Moroni's use of Isaiah 11:11–12

Mormon recognized that Moroni₁'s use of the brass plates account of Joseph's coat had implications not only for the Lehites of the latter's time but also prophetic implications for the Lehites of later generations. As far as we know, Moroni was first to use the collocation "remnant of the seed of Jacob" (see below),[46] and he derives the collocation "a remnant of the seed of Joseph" from Alma 46:23 ("we are a remnant of the seed of Jacob. Yea, we are a remnant of the seed of Joseph, whose coat was rent by his brethren into many pieces"; cf. Alma 46:27).

The "preservation" of Joseph's "remnant" constitutes one of the most important prophetic implications of the story of Joseph's coat: "Even as this remnant of garment of my son's hath been preserved, *so shall a remnant of the seed of my son be preserved by the hand of God* and be taken unto himself, while the remainder of the seed of Joseph shall perish, even as the remnant of his garment" (Alma 46:24).[47]

Mormon's use of the collocations "a remnant of the seed of Jacob" and "a remnant of the seed of Joseph" harks back to Moroni₁'s recounting of the narrative of Joseph's coat and the "title"/"standard of liberty." Here, too, the echoes of Isaiah 11:11–12 are strong:

> Surely he hath blessed the house of Jacob and hath been merciful unto *the seed of Joseph* [*yôsēp*]. And insomuch as the children of Lehi have kept his commandments, he hath blessed them and prospered them according to his word. Yea, and surely *shall he again* [cf. Hebrew *yôsîp*] bring *a remnant of the seed of Joseph* [*yôsēp*] to the knowledge of the Lord their God. And as surely as the Lord liveth *will he gather in* [cf. Hebrew *wĕʾāsap/yēʾāsēp*][48] from the four quarters of the earth *all the*

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46. In addition to Moroni's use of it in Alma 46:23, this collocation recurs in Mormon's writings in 3 Nephi 5:24, Mormon 5:24, and Mormon 7:10.

47. Cf. Genesis 45:5.

48. If the verb that Mormon has in view here is *ʾāsap/yēʾāsēp* (rather than *qibbēṣ/yĕqabbēṣ*, the paronomastic sound play on *Joseph* is even richer. In either case, the wordplay appears to exploit Joseph's name in terms of the first of the biblical etiologies offered for it (see the *ʾāsap* etiology).

remnant of the seed of Jacob, which are scattered abroad upon all the face of the earth. And as he hath covenanted with all the house of Jacob, even so shall the covenant wherewith he hath covenanted with the house of Jacob be fulfilled in his own due time, unto the restoring all the house of Jacob unto the knowledge of the covenant that he hath covenanted with them. And then shall they know their Redeemer, which is Jesus Christ, the Son of God; and then *shall they be gathered in* [cf. Hebrew *yēʾāsēpû(n)*] from the four quarters of the earth unto their own lands, from whence they have been dispersed. Yea, as the Lord liveth, so shall it be. Amen. (3 Nephi 5:21–26)

Indeed, footnote *a* to 3 Nephi 5:23 in the 1981 and 2013 Latter-day Saint editions of the Book of Mormon direct the reader back to Moroni's use of the phrase "a remnant of the seed of Joseph." In Alma 46:23, Mormon's linking of "the children of Lehi" to that remnant here suggests that his view of the "remnant of the seed of Joseph" already extends beyond his own people, the Nephites, and includes the Lamanites. Moreover, Mormon echoes the gathering language of Isaiah 11:11–12, where the prophet describes the "ensign" or "standard" (*nēs*) as signal to gather.

Mormon explicitly returns to the brass plates account of Joseph's coat as part of his narrative bridge from the cataclysmic events of 3 Nephi 8–10 to the ministry of the resurrected Christ to the Nephites and Lamanites in 3 Nephi 11–26. He states: "Behold, our father Jacob also testified concerning *a remnant of the seed of Joseph*. And behold, are not we *a remnant of the seed of Joseph*? And these things which testifies of us, are they not written upon the plates of brass which our father Lehi brought out of Jerusalem?" (3 Nephi 10:27). Mormon's placement of this statement at this point in his narrative is significant, especially in view of Jesus's recorded description of the Lamanites and Nephites who survived the cataclysmic events of 3 Nephi 8–10 as "remnant of the house of Joseph" (3 Nephi 15:12), but also in view of the tragic state of the Nephites and Lamanites when Mormon is writing and compiling his account (see, e.g., Mormon 5:8–20). Up to a point, Mormon had held out hope that the Nephites, "would *again* [cf. Hebrew *yôsîpû*] become a righteous people" (Mormon 2:12). Instead they became the perishing part of Joseph's seed, as symbolized by the perishing part of Joseph's coat while the Lamanites (and dissenting Nephites) would be preserved so "that they shall *again* [cf. Hebrew *yôsîpû*] be brought to the true knowledge, which is the knowledge of their Redeemer … and be numbered among his sheep" (Helaman 15:13; see also Helaman 15:11, 15–16).

Conclusion

The paronomasia between Joseph's torn *kĕtōnet passîm* and the name *yôsēp*, together with Jacob's prophecy regarding the preservation of "a part of the remnant of the coat of Joseph"[49] as a type of "remnant of the seed of Joseph," appears to have suggested to Moroni₁ his covenant use of a torn part ("rent") of his own coat as symbol of his people as that "remnant." Isaiah's prophecy of the Lord "*set*[ting] his hand *again* [*yôsîp*] to recover the remnant of his people" using martial imagery including that of a battle "ensign"/"standard" (*nēs*) to "assemble [*wĕʾāsap*]" or "gather" that remnant provided a scriptural paradigm for Moroni hoisting his rent coat on a "standard" in a Nephite martial context.

Moreover, Mormon recognized in Moroni₁'s use of the "standard" or "ensign" to "gather"[50] a "remnant of the seed of Joseph" a type or foreshadowing of the Latter-day gathering of the descendants of Joseph. Moroni₁ uses a *nēs* as a covenant means of gathering and thus preserving a "remnant of the of seed of Joseph" (Alma 46:23, 27), most of which would ironically perish centuries later at the hands of the Lamanites, who also constituted a "remnant of the seed of Joseph."[51] Mormon, who had named his beloved son after this military leader (whom he clearly admired)[52] and who had watched his nation perish during his own time, would not have missed this irony. At his death, Mormon left it to his son Moroni₂ to complete the written record that would itself become the figurative, written "standard"[53] or "ensign" to gather the Lamanite "remnant of the seed of Joseph" in the Lord's "own due time."[54] As Isaiah and Mormon knew, the Lord would "*set* his hand *again* [*yôsîp*] the second time" to gather the "remnant of his people" Israel (Isaiah 11:11–12; 2 Nephi 25:17; 29:1) and that "surely *shall he again* [cf. *yôsîp*] bring a remnant of the seed of *Joseph* to the knowledge of the Lord their God" (3 Nephi 5:23).

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49. Alma 46:24.

50. Alma 46:28, 31; 62:6.

51. 3 Nephi 5:23; 10:17.

52. See especially Alma 48:16–18: "And this was the faith of Moroni. And his heart did glory in it — not in the shedding of blood, but in doing good, in preserving his people, yea, in keeping the commandments of God, yea, and resisting iniquity. Yea, verily, verily I say unto you: *if all men had been and were and ever would be like unto Moroni, behold, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever. Yea, the devil would never have no power over the hearts of the children of men.* Behold, he was a man like unto Ammon the son of Mosiah, yea, and even the other sons of Mosiah, yea, and also Alma and his sons, for *they were all men of God*."

53. Cf. D&C 45:9.

54. 2 Nephi 27:10 (cf. v. 21); 3 Nephi 5:25; 3 Nephi 20:29; Mormon 5:12.

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