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Joseph Smith: Still the World's Greatest Guesser (and Getting Better all the Time)

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In science, evidence supporting correct hypotheses accumulates over time as does evidence contradicting incorrect or incomplete hypotheses. The same pattern exists with respect to the authenticity of ancient documents. If the Book of Mormon is indeed an authentic ancient document, the facts supporting its authenticity, as reflected in Dr. Coe's books, should also grow over time. In the current article, we test this hypothesis by comparing the fact claims of the Book of Mormon with those of all nine editions of *The Maya*, published between 1966 and 2015. [2], [3], [4], [5], [6], [7], [8], [9], [10]

In our previous study, we found 131 positive correspondences between the Book of Mormon and the Ninth Edition of *The Maya*. Eighty-five of these correspondences also appear in the First Edition. Thus there are 46 new/additional correspondences between the Book of Mormon and the Ninth Edition of *The Maya* that do not appear in the First Edition.

Furthermore, we identified 30 correspondences found in both the First and the Ninth Editions that exhibit important new details in later editions. These new details enrich our understanding of the world of ancient Mesoamerica and agree well with details given in the Book of Mormon. Interestingly, in several instances Dr. Coe rejected a fact claim of the Book of Mormon in an earlier edition of *The Maya*, but either accepted or drew closer to that fact claim in later editions.

We also studied another, much longer, scholarly book *The Ancient Maya* (2006) by Robert J. Sharer and Loa P. Traxler. [11] Both *The Ancient Maya* and *The Maya* focus on the culture, politics, religion, military, technological, geographical and other characteristics of ancient Mesoamerica. Therefore, these books represent useful controls on each other. Approximately 90% of the correspondences with the Book of Mormon found in the Seventh Edition (2005) of Coe's book are also found in this much longer book published the following year.

Significantly, although *The Ancient Maya* is about three times longer than the Seventh Edition of *The Maya*, it displays a similar number of correspondences with the Book of Mormon. *The Ancient Maya* and *The Maya* (7th Ed.) exhibit, respectively, 110 and 118 correspondences with the Book of Mormon. These observations are consistent with our two hypotheses that: 1) evidence supporting the Book of Mormon accumulates over time and 2) that the Book of Mormon is an authentic ancient record. Both *The Maya* and *The Ancient Maya* have approximately the same number of correspondences with the Book of Mormon at about the same point in time.

These facts also argue against the idea that any potentially relevant piece of literature will generate correspondences simply by accumulating length of text. If so, then a work (*The Ancient Maya*) that is three times longer than another work (*The Maya*) and which deals with the same subject matter should

generate significantly more correspondences. But that is not what we observed. In fact, we observed fewer correspondences between the Book of Mormon and the longer work.

We also found eleven correspondences with the Book of Mormon that are unique to Coe's book and six correspondences with the Book of Mormon that are unique to the book by Sharer and Traxler. Thus, three different books give very similar, but not identical, pictures of a particular time, place and people. This is what we expect of fact-based documents, each covering the same general subject area but written by different authors with different interests and emphases.

As Hugh Nibley once observed: "Time Vindicates the Prophets". [12]

Professor Coe informs us that virtually nothing was known about ancient Mesoamerica in the early 1800s. [13] If Joseph Smith, writing in the late 1820s, correctly "guessed" so much about the culture, politics, religion, geography, technology, military and other characteristics of a specific time, place and people very much like ancient Mesoamerica, then he is undoubtedly the world's greatest guesser. Not only that but, as we show here, Joseph is becoming a better guesser all the time.

In this, as in so many other instances, time has vindicated Joseph the Prophet.

Evidence for correct scientific hypotheses and authentic ancient documents accumulates over time

In a 2006 paper entitled "Archaeological Trends and Book of Mormon Origins", Professor John E. Clark observed:

"If the Book of Mormon was part of the ancient world, more and more details ought to be confirmed as scholarship learns more about the past. Therefore, if the book is history, one would expect confirmations to increase as modern scholarship reveals more about the ancient world and the Book of Mormon's part of that world." [14]

The pattern described by Professor Clark, i.e., that supporting evidence accumulates with time, is found for both authentic ancient documents and for more complete scientific hypotheses. The converse is also true. Over time, the accumulation of evidence overthrows less complete scientific hypotheses and unmask forgeries of purported ancient documents.

We deliberately use the words "more complete" to describe scientific progress. Within the scientific method, there is always more knowledge to be gained and a more complete understanding to be obtained. Real science, including scientific archaeology, never claims to have found the "final answer". Appendix A provides four examples showing how supporting evidence accumulates over time for more complete scientific hypotheses and also for authentic ancient documents.

As Professor Clark has also observed, the descriptions given in the Book of Mormon are descriptions of *the past*. [15] Anyone can describe the future, preferably the very distant future. Such descriptions cannot be tested in the present (a great convenience and potential face-saver for those doing the predicting). It is quite another thing to correctly describe details of the past which were unknown at the time of writing, as the Book of Mormon does so well.

So, what does the evidence tell us? Do the correspondences between the Book of Mormon and the various editions of Dr. Coe's book increase over time or not?

In fact, they do. Evidence that the number of these correspondences increases over time is summarized in Tables B1 through B6 (Appendix B) for the six categories of correspondences that we dealt with in our previous paper. An analysis of that evidence follows.

Analysis of results: Increase in correspondences over time

In our previous paper we identified 131 correspondences between the Book of Mormon and the Ninth Edition of Dr. Coe's book. In the current analysis, the First Edition of Dr. Coe's book displays 85 correspondences with the Book of Mormon. Thus there is an increase of 46 correspondences in the 49 years between the First Edition and the Ninth Edition, roughly one additional correspondence per year over that time period, or more than a 50% increase overall during the nearly five decades between the First and the Ninth Editions of Dr. Coe's book. The number of positive correspondences found in the First through the Ninth editions is 85, 88, 94, 102, 110, 117, 118, 119 and 131, respectively. The number of positive correspondences between the Book of Mormon and *The Maya* increased with every edition of Coe's book.

Details of these 131 correspondences are given in Tables B.1 through B.6 (Appendix B) for all nine editions of Dr. Coe's book. The correspondences are grouped under one of six categories, namely: political, social/cultural, religious, military, physical/geographical and technological/miscellaneous. The individual cells of the tables refer to a specific correspondence and a specific edition of Coe's book. Each cell cites the page(s) in that edition where that particular correspondence is mentioned. In the bottom two rows of each of the six tables, the total number of correspondences in each edition and the total number of new correspondences since the first edition are provided for each category.

In our previous paper, we described how these 131 correspondences were identified and assigned their Bayesian likelihoods. The current paper is not focused on Bayesian likelihoods. However, as in our previous paper, what we require of a potential correspondence between *The Ancient Maya* and/or *The Maya* and the Book of Mormon is that that fact claim be specific. In other words, these books must clearly make the same statement of fact.

We statistically analyzed the rate of increase of the correspondences using a Bayesian regression. To avoid any effects due to the number of times an edition was read, we excluded the Ninth Edition from the statistical analysis (it was read about eight times) and used only the First through the Eighth editions, each of which was read exactly three times.

For each category of correspondences, we fit a linear model where the intercept was the number of correspondences in the First Edition and the slope was the number of new correspondences per edition. The overall average rate of increase in correspondences was 6.5% per edition, which was significantly larger than 0% ($p < 0.001$). In other words, there is less than one chance in a thousand that this trend of increasing correspondences with time is due to chance. The details are summarized in Table 1. A linear model was chosen for its simplicity and to avoid the risk of overfitting the data.

Note that the no-effect probabilities in Table 1, roughly speaking, are the probability that the given category's rate of increase is the same as the overall rate, where values less than 0.050 are considered to indicate a significant difference, i.e., the existence of an effect. These are similar to standard p-values

but are calculated from the Bayesian “probability of direction” which tests whether or not an effect exists. [16]

Values for the geographical and military categories were essentially the same ($p>0.050$) as the overall mean of about 6.5% per edition. Political and religious correspondences increased at a significantly ($p<0.050$) faster rate of 11.6% per edition and 12.4% per edition, respectively, while social and technological correspondences also increased, but at a slower rate of 3.7% per edition and 3.3% per edition, respectively.

Table 1: Rate of increase in correspondences (%/edition): First through the Eighth Editions

Category	Mean	95% HPD Interval		Probability No Effect
All	6.5	5.6	7.6	n/a
Geographical	4.8	1.1	8.3	0.287
Military	7.9	3.7	12.2	0.525
Political	11.6	9.4	13.9	<0.001
Religious	12.4	7.9	17.4	0.003
Social	3.7	2.4	5.0	<0.001
Technological	3.3	1.7	5.0	<0.001

Different categories of correspondences increase at distinctly different rates

The pattern of increased correspondences is revealing. The percentage increase in correspondences in each category is distinctly different. From the First Edition to the Eighth Edition, the percentage increase in correspondences for the six different categories was 83, 29, 211, 50, 44 and 28, respectively. The percentage increase is calculated as = ((Number of Correspondences in the Eighth Edition – Number of Correspondences in the First Edition)/Number of Correspondences in the First Edition) x 100.

Thus by far the largest percentage increase (211%) was observed for religious correspondences (Table B.3 in Appendix B) followed by political correspondences (Table B.1, an 83% increase). The smallest increases were 44% and 28% for physical/geographical and technological/miscellaneous correspondences, respectively. These values are lower than the average overall percentage increase of about 50%. However, all six categories of correspondences showed a statistically significant increase in the total number of correspondences.

In other words, the increase in correspondences for those categories that depend largely on the ability to read the actual records of a society (e.g., its religious and political characteristics) increased most rapidly as more of those records could be read; a process which began to gather strength in the early 1980s and has since accelerated. Sharer and Traxler make this same point: if we wish to understand an ancient society, we must be able to read its records. [17]

Length of text is collinear with the edition number

There was almost perfect linear correlation ($R=0.989$) between edition number and the length of *The Maya* for that specific edition, meaning that approximately the same amount of material (new text) was

added to each new edition. Due to this multi-collinearity it is statistically impossible to distinguish between the effect of edition (time) and length of text. Therefore, all these statistical analyses described above can be interpreted equivalently either as an increase of correspondences with time or as an increase in the length of the text. Importantly, both interpretations support the claim that as new evidence emerged it continued to support the hypothesis that the Book of Mormon is not a work of fiction.

We preferentially interpret this accumulation of evidence as an accumulation over time, rather than length of text for two reasons.

First, Dr. Coe used the same publisher for the Second through the Ninth editions. There is no indication that Coe's publisher prevented him from expanding the length of the text with subsequent editions. On the contrary, Coe apparently expanded the length of his text as he felt necessary. So if the data were already known by the writing of the Second Edition and Dr. Coe thought these additional pieces of data were worth mentioning in the Ninth Edition, then why did he not mention them in the Second Edition? We believe it is because those particular correspondences were not known or not sufficiently well-established by evidence when the Second Edition was published.

Second, we have shown (see above) that the percentage increase in each category of correspondences with edition number (time) is distinctly different, as confirmed by statistical analysis. We attribute this to the increasing ability to read the records. Mere accumulation of pages of text with time would not preferentially favor one category of evidence over another. An alternative explanation seems more reasonable: different categories accumulate new correspondences over time at different rates because of different rates of progress in finding new evidence within particular categories.

As we noted, this is especially true as regards the ability to decipher the Maya language, which began to accelerate in the early 1980s (after the first two editions of Coe's book were published), and has grown rapidly ever since.

Dr. Coe changes his opinions with time

Hereafter in this article, all references denoted S&T refer to a particular page or pages of the *The Ancient Maya* (2006) authored by Sharer and Traxler. For example, a reference to pages 31 and 55 of this book is given as S&T(31,55). Likewise, all references to the various editions of *The Maya* by Dr. Coe are given as Edition Number followed by page numbers in parentheses. For example, a reference to the Second Edition, pages 13 and 15, is given as 2(13,15).

Dr. Coe has stated that "99% of the details in the Book of Mormon are false". [18] We have tested his assertion using the various editions of his book. If the evidence summarized in his own books is reliable, then Dr. Coe is much mistaken. We found many instances in which the Book of Mormon agrees very well with details from the various editions of Coe's book. In other words, the Book of Mormon describes a people, place and time very similar to ancient Mesoamerica as that people, place and time are described by Dr. Coe in his books.

In addition, we found several instances in which Dr. Coe's earlier opinions about ancient Mesoamerican societies changed in later editions and *as a result* aligned better with details from the Book of Mormon. We did not observe the opposite phenomenon. In no instance did Dr. Coe's opinions about ancient Mesoamerican societies ever change in such a way as to be less in conformity with the Book of Mormon.

Thus Dr. Coe changed his mind in the face of new evidence. We respect that fact. That is how good science and honest scholarship should work. It is unfortunate that Dr. Coe did not give the Book of Mormon more than one reading, decades ago. Perhaps he might have changed his opinions about the Book of Mormon.

Here are five examples showing how Dr. Coe's opinions changed over time and thereby came to more closely agree with the Book of Mormon.

1. Were there cities? In early editions, for example 2(91) and 3(41, 83), Coe is decidedly against the idea that the Maya had "anything we can call by that name" (i.e., cities). To emphasize this point, Coe puts quotes around the word "city" in the early editions. However, in later editions (e.g., 4(89), 5(91), 6(54, 103) and 7(111)), Coe removes the quotation marks and agrees that the Maya sites functioned as true cities. Sharer & Traxler (87) confirm that many Maya sites were once thought to be "empty ceremonial centers" but that this view is mistaken. The Maya had true cities. The Book of Mormon unambiguously states that the Lehites had cities.
2. Could the original settlers of the New World have arrived by sea? In early editions of *The Maya*, before discovery of additional evidence, Dr. Coe does not think that any of the first settlers of the New World could have arrived by sea. For example, see 2(27) where Coe states: "The initial colonization of the New World was made by Asiatic peoples crossing over the Bering Strait." However, after considering additional evidence, in 4(8) Coe writes that he has taken "a less negative view of the possibility of trans-Pacific contact." By 6(41), Coe states that some of the first settlers could "quite possibly" have been seafarers. By 7(41) and later editions, Coe concedes that "the first Americans may well have taken a maritime route."

There has been a dramatic intellectual turnabout on this specific issue. The fact is that as of 2017 "most archaeologists and other scholars now believe that the earliest Americans followed the Pacific Rim shoreline from northeast Asia to Beringia and the Americas" at least a thousand years before a viable ice-free land bridge opened up in Beringia. [19] The Book of Mormon also unambiguously states that at least three separate groups of early settlers (the Lehites, the Mulekites and Jaredites) arrived by way of the sea rather than by a land bridge.

3. What population densities could Mesoamerica have supported? Population estimates for Mesoamerica cited by Dr. Coe range from about 2 million (3(19)), to 8-10 million (4(20)) to "many millions" 9(176), as archaeological evidence accumulated over time. Coe's early estimates of Mesoamerican population density are inconsistent with numbers given in the Book of Mormon, both for Jaredite and Lehite civilizations, but his later estimates are consistent. The Book of Mormon clearly states that populations of the Lehite and Jaredite descendants were in the many millions. See Correspondence 6.1 in our earlier paper for a fuller discussion.
4. Endemic, internecine warfare destroyed whole nations In his First Edition, published in 1966, Coe states (page 86) that Peten sites were abandoned in the Early Classic because of what "might have been a fierce internecine warfare". ("Internecine" war means that it is highly destructive to both sides.) The Petén Basin is a geographical subregion of Mesoamerica, primarily located in northern Guatemala within the Department of El Petén, and into Campeche

state in southeastern Mexico. The Peten is geographically part of, but only part, of the Maya heartland. By later editions, Coe clearly states that “endemic, internecine warfare” played a major role in the destruction of Maya society. In other words, fierce warfare existed in Maya sites far beyond the Peten; it was endemic in Maya society.

Also, it was no longer the case that warfare “might have” been important (Coe’s words in the First Edition). Instead, according to Dr. Coe, warfare did play a major role in the destruction of the Maya world. Both the Jaredite and Nephite histories summarized in the Book of Mormon close the curtain on scenes of total war: endemic, internecine and all-consuming. After the destruction of the Nephites, the Lamanites continued to war among themselves “and the whole face of this land is one continual round of murder and bloodshed; and no one knoweth the end of the war.” (Mormon 8:8)

5. An arcane sacred or prestige language is used Dr. Coe first mentions Southern Classic Maya as a prestige literary language (see 6(38)) but the discussion he provides is quite brief. However, Coe adds more details about this language in later editions. For example, in 9(30-31), Coe notes that “. . . Ch’olti’an became a literary language of high prestige among scribes...[and like other prestige languages in other civilizations] continued to be the preferred written language(s) long after the spoken ones had died out or transformed into something else.” “Ch’olti’ . . . may well have served as a *lingua franca* among elites and surely evolved, as did Medieval Latin and Coptic, into an arcane sacred language used by few.” 9(270). Thus by the Ninth Edition, Coe specifically refers to this language as an “arcane sacred language used by few”...words he did not use up until that edition.

The Book of Mormon was clearly written in an arcane sacred language “used by few”. See Correspondence 2.27 in our previous paper for a fuller discussion of this point. (Note: we do not claim that Ch’ olti’ was the arcane, sacred language used by the the Nephites, only that both the Nephites and the Maya used an arcane, sacred language.)

New details emerge in later editions

In total we identified 30 correspondences for which significant new details are given in the Ninth Edition versus the First Edition. These new details agree well with details from the Book of Mormon. Again, we did not observe the opposite effect. For no correspondence were details found in earlier editions revised in such a way as to disagree with the Book of Mormon.

Here are five examples of correspondences for which significant new details emerged in later editions of Dr. Coe’s book.

1. Submerged cities existed In Editions 1-6, Coe states that Maya worshippers threw offerings into a site at Lake Amatitlan, Guatemala. In 7(94) he adds that the site is the Zarzal underwater site. At both Lake Amatitlan and Lake Atitlan, cities such as Zarzal were submerged by rapidly rising lake water levels. [20] These facts agree with a Book of Mormon statement (3 Nephi 9:7) that a rapid rise in water levels inundated some Lehte cities.

2. Dualism grows to include dualism in the context of the creation In 1(151) Coe refers to “the Mesoamerican philosophy of dualism, the unity of opposite principles.” In 3(132) and 6(204), Coe further defines “dualism” as the presence of matched and opposing principles. The need for “opposition in all things” and the doctrine of the two ways are clear, central themes in the Book of Mormon, agreeing with Coe’s later, expanded view of dualism. In the Ninth Edition, dualism is also expressed by Coe in the context of the creation, precisely as it is expressed in the Book of Mormon. See Correspondence 3.12 in our previous article for a fuller discussion of this important religious correspondence.

3. Foreign dynasties take over an existing polity In 1(109) Coe mentions Uxmal, the seat of the Xiu family, as “a johnny-come-lately lineage of Mexican origin which could not possibly have ever built the site.” This is the sole reference to foreign dynasties usurping the place of existing rulers in the First Edition. In the Ninth Edition Coe describes the takeover of Tikal by foreign rulers, perhaps from Teotihuacan, the “arrival” of the Founder of Copan from the west, deposing and then killing the existing ruler of Copan, and the establishment of the dynasty of Calakmul by a family from the east. The Book of Mormon also describes two occasions during which foreign dynasties took over an existing polity. See Correspondence 1.16 in our previous paper.

4. City administrative area In 1(92) Coe briefly describes Tikal as consisting of a dispersed population, with the dwellings of the aristocrats and bureaucrats closer to the heart of the site. This is his only reference to a city administrative area in the First Edition. In the Ninth Edition (see 9(126,128,151,182)), Coe describes: 1) the palaces at Tikal as the administrative centers of the city, 2) the likely house of the chief scribe of the city at Aguateca and 3) the House of the Governor as the administrative headquarters of Lord Chahk at Uxmal, thereby providing many more details, all of which are consistent with the Book of Mormon. Correspondence 1.17 in our previous paper more fully describes the evidence for administrative centers in Nephite cities.

5. Many merchants in the land In 1(81) Coe makes only one reference to merchants, “the far-ranging, armed *pochteca* merchants” from Mexico. In 9(154,178,179,225), Coe refers to a god of traders, to the Putun Maya taking over the *entrepot* of Xicallanco where Mexican and Maya traders met, to the privileged status of merchants, and most of all, to the presence of many merchants and traders throughout Mesoamerica. Sharer and Traxler devote numerous pages to Maya traders, the important trade routes and the goods traded. See, for example S&T(660-664) The Book of Mormon’s brief, but accurate summary is simply that “there were many merchants in the land” (3 Nephi 6:11).

Control book: “The Ancient Maya”

Coe wrote *The Maya* for a popular audience. A much longer academic work by Robert Sharer and Loa Traxler entitled *The Ancient Maya* was published in 2006. This scholarly book provides a useful control on Coe’s more popular book. It also supplies a separate set of facts to compare with the fact claims of the Book of Mormon and those of Dr. Coe.

The Ancient Maya differs from Coe’s book not only in length (784 pages of text, figures and appendices versus 255 pages of text, figures and appendices for the Seventh Edition (2005) of Coe’s book) but also

in its depth of treatment of various topics. For example, the work by Sharer and Traxler provides many details on epigraphy not provided by Coe, discusses many more Maya archaeological sites in considerable detail and gives long accounts of dynastic succession for various Maya polities.

Thus, we compared *The Ancient Maya* (published in 2006) with the Seventh and Eighth Editions of Coe's book published in 2005 and 2011, respectively. These comparisons are summarized in Appendix C (Tables C1-C6). As before, comparisons are based on the six categories of correspondences given in our previous paper.

Some interesting patterns emerge from these comparisons. Here are five patterns that seem most noteworthy.

First, we observe a very strong overlap between Coe and Sharer & Traxler on the correspondences. In total, 118 correspondences between Coe's book *The Maya* and the Book of Mormon existed in about 2005. Of these 118 correspondences, there are 105 correspondences with the Book of Mormon (almost 90% of the total) that *The Maya* and *The Ancient Maya* have in common. In other words, these two scholarly works demonstrate very strong agreement between themselves and with the Book of Mormon regarding mutually asserted facts.

Therefore, all editions of Dr. Coe's book *The Maya* and, in addition, the book by Sharer & Traxler strongly support the proposition that the Book of Mormon is an authentic, factual record. Furthermore, the Book of Mormon accurately describes a people, place and time very much like that described by Coe and by Sharer & Traxler: ancient Mesoamerica and its peoples.

However, there are also interesting differences between *The Maya* and *The Ancient Maya*. Eleven correspondences with the Book of Mormon are unique to *The Maya* while six are unique to *The Ancient Maya*. (Note: For a few correspondences (e.g. 1.3 and 5.2), an earlier edition of Coe's book mentions that correspondence, then does not mention it in several subsequent editions, only to mention it again in the Ninth Edition.)

Second, we find that Coe and Sharer & Traxler disagree on a few points in their interpretation of the facts surrounding what was known in about 2005-2006 regarding the world of the Maya. This is the ordinary state of affairs in science; experts disagree on some or many points.

Here are two examples. Early on (see 1(47)), Coe was strongly inclined to accept the Olmec as the source of all subsequent civilization in ancient Mesoamerica. In contrast, Sharer and Traxler emphasize cultural sharing in ancient Mesoamerica. In his later works (see 9(14)), Coe accepts widespread cultural sharing. Likewise, Coe believes Tula to be a mythical place, while Sharer and Traxler think that Tula really existed, and that perhaps it represented several different ancient cities.

Third, although Sharer and Traxler's 2006 book is about three times longer than Coe's Seventh Edition (2005), it actually has fewer correspondences with the Book of Mormon (110 versus 118 for Coe's Seventh Edition). Thus, the length of the control text(s) does not seem, in and of itself, to produce more correspondences with the Book of Mormon. This fact lends support for describing the accumulation of correspondences between the Book of Mormon and *The Maya* as an increase over time rather than an increase with page length.

Fourth, as might be expected from the greater length of *The Ancient Maya*, there are about 50% more mentions in the text for each shared correspondence compared with *The Maya (8th Edition)*, i.e., 340 total mentions for shared correspondences versus 225, respectively.

Fifth, Sharer and Traxler's 2006 book provides a number of additional correspondences with the Book of Mormon that are not given in Coe's Seventh Edition (2005) nor in his Ninth Edition (2015). In total, we have identified six "new" correspondences with the Book of Mormon that are not given by Coe. These six additional correspondences are summarized below.

Additional correspondences with the Book of Mormon provided by Sharer & Traxler (2006)

1. The Tree of Life symbol (representing the resurrected Maize God for the Maya) played a central role in the religion of both the Maya and the Nephites. See S&T(42, 723, 731, 928). In the Book of Mormon see, for example, 1 Nephi 15:21-22, 28, 36; Alma 12:21, 23, 26 and Alma 42:2-6. (Dr. Coe refers to the identical symbol as the World Tree.) The ceiba tree is the physical representation of this important religious symbol, the Tree of Life/World Tree, in both *The Ancient Maya* and *The Maya*. In the Book of Mormon, the tree of life symbol represents Jesus Christ, the resurrected God of the faithful descendants of Lehi.
2. Fasting was practiced as a religious duty. See S&T(748, 749). In the Book of Mormon see, for example, Helaman 3:35; Alma 6:6 and Alma 45:1,17.
3. The Maya had principal markets located along a causeway at their capital polities, and smaller markets in smaller towns (S&T(1, 83)). Helaman 7:10 speaks of a highway that led to the "chief market" in the capital city of Zarahemla, a perfect fit with the description given by Sharer & Traxler.
4. The Maya had specific areas for public assembly to hear addresses from their rulers. See S&T (73, 677, 684). In the Book of Mormon see Mosiah 1:18, 2:1.
5. The Maya believed that each person had a spirit essence or soul that survived death. See S&T (733). In the Book of Mormon see, among many others, Alma 40:11-13, 15.
6. New Maya kings were inaugurated on scaffolds. See S&T(425,427,747). In the Book of Mormon, see Mosiah 2:7,30.

New correspondences revealed by our further study

Preparing this article required multiple readings of all nine editions of Dr. Coe's book. In the process, we identified nineteen additional correspondences between the Book of Mormon and ancient Mesoamerica as described by Dr. Coe. These additional correspondences were not included in the 131 correspondences summarized in our previous paper.

These additional correspondences are provided in Appendix D to further support the hypothesis that the Book of Mormon is an authentic, factual record. These additional correspondences also demonstrate that the more thoroughly the Book of Mormon is examined, the stronger it gets.

Joseph Smith gets better at guessing all the time.

Our previous article identified 131 correspondences between *The Maya* and the Book of Mormon. In preparing this article we have identified another nineteen correspondences between *The Maya* and the Book of Mormon. Including the six additional points of evidence found in *The Ancient Maya* but not in Coe's books, we have thus identified a total of 156 individual points of evidence or correspondences between the Book of Mormon and two separate science-based works dealing with a particular people, place and time, namely ancient Mesoamerica.

In Appendix E we briefly revisit our previous Bayesian analysis by including these additional points of evidence and also by applying a much more severe assumption regarding the independence of correspondences. We recalculate the likelihood that the Book of Mormon is a work of fiction with this more severe assumption and find that the upper limit on the probability that the Book of Mormon is a work of fiction is still vanishingly small, roughly 1 in a billion, billion, billion, billion, billion.

For a sense of scale, this upper bound (i.e., greatest likelihood that the Book of Mormon is a work of fiction) of 1 in a billion, billion, billion, billion, billion is roughly the ratio of the power consumption of a single computer chip in "sleep" mode versus the total power output generated by all the stars in the Milky Way galaxy.

Summary

Evidence supporting the authenticity of ancient documents accumulates over time. In our previous paper, we found 131 positive correspondences between the Book of Mormon and the Ninth Edition of *The Maya*. Eighty-five of these correspondences also appear in the First Edition. Thus there are 46 new/additional correspondences between the Book of Mormon and the Ninth Edition of *The Maya* that do not appear in the First Edition.

We also identified 30 correspondences with the Book of Mormon found in both the First and the Ninth Editions that exhibit important new details in later editions of Coe's book. In several instances, Dr. Coe rejected a fact claim of the Book of Mormon in an earlier edition of *The Maya*, but accepted it in whole or in part in later editions of *The Maya*. The opposite trend did not occur.

We statistically analyzed the increase in correspondences with each edition of Dr. Coe's book. The overall average rate of increase in correspondences was 6.5% per edition, which was significantly larger than 0% ($p < 0.001$). That is, there is less than one chance in a thousand that the increase in correspondences is due to chance. Importantly, evidence within the different categories of evidence increased at statistically different rates.

We also carefully studied another, much longer, scholarly book, *The Ancient Maya* (2006). Approximately 90% of the correspondences with the Book of Mormon found in the Seventh Edition (2005) of Coe's book are also found in this much longer book. The number of correspondences that both *The Maya* (7th Edition) and *The Ancient Maya* have in common with the Book of Mormon at a particular point in time (about 2005-2006) is nearly the same, namely 118 and 110, respectively. Interestingly, we found eleven correspondences with the Book of Mormon that are unique to Coe's book and six correspondences with the Book of Mormon that are unique to the book by Sharer and Traxler.

Also, in spite of the fact that *The Ancient Maya* is more than three times longer than Coe's Seventh Edition, there are actually fewer correspondences with the Book of Mormon in this much longer text.

This fact suggests that it is not the length of the text that produces the additional correspondences, but rather the accumulation of new evidence over time, as we postulate in this article.

Thus for mutually-asserted facts, three different books give very similar pictures of a particular time, place and people, while each focuses on and emphasizes unique parts of the evidence. This result is exactly what we expect of authentic, fact-based documents. Our analysis therefore places the Book of Mormon in a setting very much like that of ancient Mesoamerica as described by both Dr. Coe and also by Drs. Sharer and Traxler.

In this paper and in our previous paper, we present strong evidence that the Book of Mormon is an authentic ancient document. Both Bayesian analysis of likelihoods and the accumulation of supporting evidence with time strongly support the authenticity and historicity of the Book of Mormon.

Time vindicates the Prophet Joseph and the preeminent evidence of his prophetic calling, the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ.

Acknowledgements and an Several Invitations

Kirk Magleby of Book of Mormon Central suggested the time sequence comparison between the Book of Mormon and all nine editions of Dr. Coe's work. Any errors in our execution of his suggestion are ours alone.

As noted, the information we have considered here places the Book of Mormon in a time and place very much like that of ancient Mesoamerica. However, the time(s) and place(s) in which the events described in the Book of Mormon is not the question we have considered in this paper and in our previous paper. We have not attempted to compare a possible ancient Mesoamerican setting for the Book of Mormon with other potential times and places, for example, with the Heartland Model, to see which is a better fit with the observed facts.

We realize that additional bodies of evidence and alternative evidence-weighting schemes to test the authenticity of the Book of Mormon are both possible and desirable. We respectfully invite others, both those who believe the Book of Mormon to be an authentic ancient document and those who do not, to prepare, present and defend their own analyses considering and weighting evidence both for and against the ancient origin of the Book of Mormon.

Finally, we believe that critics of the Book of Mormon, whether they realize it or not, are engaging in unsupported, unstated and frankly irrational probability analysis as they evaluate the Book of Mormon. In Appendix F, we invite such critics to do better and offer some specific ways in which they might improve their critiques of the Book of Mormon.

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Appendix A: Supporting Evidence Increases over Time for More Complete Scientific Hypotheses and Authentic Ancient Documents

Here are four examples, two each from science and from the scholarship of ancient documents, showing how supporting evidence accumulates over time.

Plate tectonics in geology

As far back as the 1600s, mapmakers and early explorers noticed how well the coastlines of Africa and South America fit together, suggesting that both continents were once joined physically. In 1915 the idea of “continental drift” was proposed by Alfred Wegener to account for evidence he observed, for example, evidence that the Appalachian Mountains of the eastern United States were geologically-related to the Caledonian Mountains of Scotland. Wegener postulated that continents that are now separated were previously joined. Wegener thought that the continents plowed through the crust of ocean basins, but he could not explain the massive forces required to move continents around on the surface of the planet.

Following World War II, paleomagnetic studies showed that the lithosphere itself was in motion, and then evidence from seismometers demonstrated that earthquakes and volcanoes are generally aligned along distinct belts around the world. These belts are the edges of the tectonic plates that move around on the earth’s surface, driven by magma convection currents circulating in the Earth’s aesthenosphere. By the 1960s, plate tectonics had become widely accepted as the overarching mechanism for many geological processes. [1]

Nebular hypothesis/origin of the solar system in astronomy

In 1734, the Swedish scientist and theologian Emanuel Swedenborg first proposed that the solar system originated from a cloud of dust and gas (a “nebula”). Immanuel Kant (1755) and Pierre-Simon Laplace (1796) further developed the nebular theory by postulating that a hot “protostar cloud” cooled and contracted, throwing off material that condensed to form the planets. This model was widely accepted during the 19th century. However, the Kant/Laplace model could not explain the angular momentum distribution between the sun and the planets.

By the early 20th century the Laplacian model was considered inadequate and new theories were sought. In the 1970s Victor Safronov proposed the solar nebular disk model (SNDM), which largely solves the problem of the origin of terrestrial planets. But issues remain, including the problem of tilted planetary axes, which the SNDM cannot explain. [2] As noted above, in science there is always more knowledge to be gained.

Avesta (holy books of Zoroastrianism translated in Western languages)

Abraham Anquetil-Duperron discovered these sacred texts among Indian Zoroastrian communities in about 1755, and published a set of French translations in 1771. These translations were first dismissed as a poor forgery in Sanskrit. However, over the next century, scholars learned more and more about Persian and Sanskrit languages, cultures and religion (which share a common source). Eventually scholars came to see that the Avesta was ancient and authentic. [3] In fact, the Avesta is almost our only source on the religion of ancient Persia between about 600 BC and 600 AD.

Grolier Codex (Codice Maya de Mexico)

The Maya Codex of Mexico (MCM), previously known as the Grolier Codex, was first exhibited at the Grolier Club in New York in 1971. Its authenticity was vigorously disputed at the time, but it has now been conclusively demonstrated to be authentic. [4] Most Mesoamerican scholars initially judged the MCM to be a fake without giving it much scrutiny. To his credit, Dr. Michael Coe was the principal advocate in favor of the authenticity of the MCM, and famed Mayanist Sir J.E.S. Thompson was the principal critic. Coe pointed out that Thompson simply ignored the radiocarbon dating and other evidence that supported the authenticity of the MCM.

Sorenson and Welch noted that “those who judged the Grolier Codex a hoax made at least five mistakes, also commonly made by people critical of the Book of Mormon.” One of these mistakes is to use epithets “to avoid the drudgery of doing the serious investigation that ought to precede a judgement about the authenticity of any potentially ancient text.” [5] Book of Mormon critics often use derogatory labels and epithets to dismiss the Book of Mormon without doing the tedious work of actually learning what the Book of Mormon has to say.

In other words, they offer their opinions without examining the evidence. This approach to evidence is called “prejudice”—the Book of Mormon is prejudged to be a fake without serious examination of the evidence.

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B1. Political Correspondences Reported in Various Editions of <i>The Maya</i>- pages cited										
Edition Number	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth	Ninth	
<i>Year Published</i>	(1966)	(1980)	(1984)	(1987)	(1993)	(1999)	(2005)	(2011)	(2015)	
1.1 City-state is basic political unit				89,104	7,91,98	151,226	125,161,238	117,246	85,174,274	
1.2 One polity/city dominates others	100	95	72,95,167	97,184,185	37,79,98	118,121,125	49,90,118	50,124,135	51,85,137	
1.3 City-states shift allegiance				187	108				116,150	
1.4 State institutions	54,92	41	41	46	47	58	60	62	63	
1.5 Many cities/sites exist	22,28,54,91	15,83,93	170	17,22,89	15,104	16,125	9,17,112	16,117	17,124	
1.6 City of Laman (Lamanai)			170	63,149	65,67,128	76,152,187	80,162,199	83,207	85,86,175	
1.7 Parts of land densely settled									124	
1.8 Large-scale public works	54,81	41,67	41,67	46,74	47	58,86	60,94	62,96	63	
1.9 Some rulers live in luxury	64	50	50	54	55	66	72	73	74	
1.10 Elaborate thrones	124	126	126	135	146	173	184	192	206	
1.11 Nobles, palaces & courts	146	148	121,148	46,93,97	47,70,93	114	113,148,163	62,93,119	7,93,128	
1.12 Political marriages		167	167	185	196	226	90,238	94,245	97,103,274	
1.13 Feasting for political ends						114	113	246	97,128	
1.14 Political gifts to king						226	238	166,246	97,275	
1.15 Factions around elite persons									97	
1.16 Foreign dynasties take over	109	63,106,140	63, 67, 106	67,70,114	74,131,162	7	90,105,130	94,100,102	108,118,276	
1.17 City administrative area	92	84,136	84,136	91	133	104,113	112,130	118,119,137	126,128,151	
1.18 Reigns of kings recorded	170,171	165,166	165,166	128,179,183	128,191,195	153,218,224	163,229,236	89,177,244	118,177,272	
1.19 Hegemonic "empires"	123	67,95,125	88,125	73,135	76,146	169	89,184	93,131,192	100,144,206	
1.20 Tribute required	130,146	67,136	67,136,148	74,144,160	76,156	86,114,189	94,113,194	98,119,202	128,216,225	
1.21 Important patrilineages	145	147	147	152,159	163,170	190,196,197	202,208,209	209,210,216	225,226,234	
1.22 Kings and "king elect"				104,153,160	163,171	97,98,190	138,202	36,146,210	160,226,278	
1.23 Captains serve kings				153	163	190	202	210	226	
1.24 Family dynasties exercise power	144	147	147,148	7,115,159	7,163,170	130,196	96,105,138	102,136,175	108,118,234	
1.25 Kings rule subordinate rulers	129	135	135,167	144	155,197	181	130,193,237	94,136,201	100,216,275	
1.26 "Seating" for political power			172	185	69-70,197	79,225	85,238	89,246	91,274	
1.27 Separate civil/religious authority	153	61,154	61,154	67,170	71,182,184	81,210	87,221	91,229	243	
1.28 Nobility aspires to power					99	121	118	124	93,137	
1.29 Royal courts imitate enemies									95	
1.30 Courts function as "great household"									97	
1.31 Officials have hidden knowledge	146	148	148	160	171	197	209	217	96,236,252	
1.32 Abrupt breaks in dynasties				144,146	79,87	181	95,96	100	109,116,120	
1.33 Subservient peoples "possess" land						226	238	246	276	
<i>Total Correspondences</i>	17	18	20	25	27	29	29	29	33	
Total New Correspondences vs. First Edition	na	1	3	8	10	12	12	12	16	

B3. Religious Correspondences Reported in Various Editions of <i>The Maya</i>-pages cited									
<i>Edition Number</i>	<u>First</u>	<u>Second</u>	<u>Third</u>	<u>Fourth</u>	<u>Fifth</u>	<u>Sixth</u>	<u>Seventh</u>	<u>Eighth</u>	<u>Ninth</u>
<i>Year Published</i>	<i>(1966)</i>	<i>(1980)</i>	<i>(1984)</i>	<i>(1987)</i>	<i>(1993)</i>	<i>(1999)</i>	<i>(2005)</i>	<i>(2011)</i>	<i>(2015)</i>
3.1 Central role of temples	29,45,64	22,34,47	34,37,41	40,46,51	43,47,52	58,63,113	60,67,112	54,99	59,63,69
3.2 Strong Christian elements							66,207	68,215,254	71,289
3.3 Change in popular cults	70	57,66	57,66	61	76	73,86	77,92	80	81
3.4 Temples and sacred hills					206	234	118,166	174,256	136,162,180
3.5 Seers and seer stones					210,211	238	248,251	256,258,259	107,243,296
3.6 Bloodletting in rituals			96,156,172	67,103,173	7,12,182	13,114,161	13,113,170	13,86,133	13,129,146
3.7 Belief in resurrection				167,168	179	202	66,83,173	68,86,181	71,88,195
3.8 Baptismal rite present	143	146	146	158	169	195	207	215	233
3.9 Ritual walking in straight roads									242
3.10 Covenants with God exist									242
3.11 Hereditary priests, chief priests	153	154	154	169,170	170,182	209	221	229	243
3.12 Opposites in creation/dualism	151	152	152	165	176	204	216	224	251
3.13 Pantheistic religion and idols	18,151,153	11,37,136	37,136,152	13,146,165	12,40,156	13,182,204	13,194,217	13,202,225	168,171,252
3.14 Sorcery, magic, witchcraft	118	122,136	122,136	132,146	142,156,211	167,239	179,194,252	187,202,259	210,218,256
3.15 Community renewal ritual					208	182,236	249	257	295
3.16 Combined priestly/political									248
3.17 Prophecy and divination	136,148	154	121,141,154	131,161,170	141,173,182	209,234	177,202,221	185,210,229	199,226,239
3.18 Priests keep calendars	55	44,154	44,154	47	182	59	62	64,231,254	237,243,292
3.19 Virtuous persons confess									242
<i>Total Correspondences</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>19</i>
Total New Correspondences vs. First Edition	na	0	1	2	5	5	6	6	10

B4. Military Correspondences Reported in Various Editions of <i>The Maya</i> (pages cited)									
<i>Edition Number</i>	<u>First</u>	<u>Second</u>	<u>Third</u>	<u>Fourth</u>	<u>Fifth</u>	<u>Sixth</u>	<u>Seventh</u>	<u>Eighth</u>	<u>Ninth</u>
<i>Year Published</i>	(1966)	(1980)	(1984)	(1987)	(1993)	(1999)	(2005)	(2011)	(2015)
4.1 Extreme cruelty to captives	96,101	85,95	61,85,95	67,93,102	71,94,104	114	87,114,126	91,120,136	96,99,150
4.2 Unusual defensive earthworks					89	100	108	113	122,151,216
4.3 Walled cities for defense	129,133	136,138	136,138	144,147	156	103	111,130,162	117,137,170	126,194,203
4.4 Thick clothing for armor	120,147	122,148	122,148	132,160	142,171	167,197	179,209	187,217	201,236
4.5 Fighting with darts	140,147	2,122,148	73,122,148	78,132,160	142,171	83,167	89,162,179	22,93,187	99,175,201
4.6 Endemic internecine warfare	86	61,76,148	61,76,148	67,83	87	152	102,162	109,170	116,175
4.7 Ambushes and traps	136,147	142,148	142,148	153	165,171	190,197	202,209	210,217	227,236
4.8 Raids to take captives		148	148	160	171	196	209	217	236
4.9 Dressing to inspire fear						83	89	93	100
4.10 Stones and slings used	147	148	148	160	171	197	209	217	236
4.11 Cannibalism on captives				152	163	189	202	209	225
4.12 Monuments destroyed	86	76,119	76,119	59,80	60,87	39	32,75,102	51,109,172	54,175
<i>Total Correspondences</i>	8	9	9	10	11	12	12	12	12
Total New Correspondences vs. First Edit	na	1	1	2	3	4	4	4	4

B5. Physical-Geographical Correspondences Reported in Various Editions of <i>The Maya</i>- pages cited									
<i>Edition Number</i>	<u>First</u>	<u>Second</u>	<u>Third</u>	<u>Fourth</u>	<u>Fifth</u>	<u>Sixth</u>	<u>Seventh</u>	<u>Eighth</u>	<u>Ninth</u>
<i>(Year Published)</i>	<i>(1966)</i>	<i>(1980)</i>	<i>(1984)</i>	<i>(1987)</i>	<i>(1993)</i>	<i>(1999)</i>	<i>(2005)</i>	<i>(2011)</i>	<i>(2015)</i>
5.1 Highlands/lowlands exist	19	13	13	13,14	13,38	14,58	13	14	14
5.2 Volcanic eruption described			171					99	107
5.3 Terrible droughts and famines	23,127,140	18,144	15,18,144	17,18,139	16,17,210	25,39	13,32,82	16,18,32	17,32,107
5.4 Aggressive venomous snakes									19
5.5 Very thick wilderness	98,131,134	90,136	90,136	98,147	99,158	122	122,196	128,204	139
5.6 Ancient culture in highlands	47,69	50,56	50,56,63	60,69	40,74	50,66,72	52,70,76	72,79	73,80,103
5.7 Earthquakes important	115,149	118,151	118,151	126	174,206	151	66,72,161	68,72,221	71,244,293
5.8 Deforestation of large areas					128	152	163	171	176
5.9 Areas for forest regrowth								171	176
5.10 Precious stones	80,114	115,117,130	68,115,117	123,126,140	75,126,151	176	148, 188,206	156,196	83,171,212
5.11 Submerged cities	81-82	67	67	74	76	88	94		103
5.12 Perishable writing materials	18,148	11,149	11,149	128,161	126,173	150,200	152,211	160,219	141,173,239
5.13 Refined gold present	127	123,124	123	133,134	143,145,154	68,171	173,180,183	181,188	194,202,219
<i>Total Correspondences by Edition</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>
Total New Correspondences vs. First Edition	na	0	1	1	2	2	2	3	4

C1. Political Correspondences in Editions 7 and 8 of <i>The Maya and The Ancient Maya</i> (pages cited)			
Edition Number	<u>Coe-Seventh</u>	<u><i>The Ancient Maya</i></u>	<u>Coe-Eighth</u>
<i>Year Published</i>	<i>(2005)</i>	<i>(2006)</i>	<i>(2011)</i>
1.1 City-state is basic political unit	125,161,238	1,705	117,246
1.2 One polity/city dominates others	49,90,118	93,186,218,279	50,124,135
1.3 City-states shift allegiance		361,502,701,712	
1.4 State institutions	60	89-90,91	62
1.5 Many cities/sites exist	9,17,112	vii-ix	16,117
1.6 City of Laman (Lamanai)	80,162,199	279,520,705	83,207
1.7 Parts of land densely settled		452,550,689	
1.8 Large-scale public works	60,94	55,85,710	62,96
1.9 Some rulers live in luxury	72	697	73
1.10 Elaborate thrones	184	171,565	192
1.11 Nobles, palaces & courts	113,148,163	296,713,734	62,93,119
1.12 Political marriages	90,238	387,425,472	94,245
1.13 Feasting for political ends	113	87,180,632	246
1.14 Political gifts to king	238	179,632,657	166,246
1.15 Factions around elite persons			
1.16 Foreign dynasties take over	90,105,130	310,322,622	94,100,102
1.17 City administrative area	112,130	298,536,595	118,119,137
1.18 Reigns of kings recorded	163,229,236	139,424,554	89,177,244
1.19 Hegemonic "empires"	89,184	301,403,496	93,131,192
1.20 Tribute required	94,113,194	180,182,296,406,697	98,119,202
1.21 Important patrilineages	202,208,209	601	209,210,216
1.22 Kings and "king elect"	138,202	150,442,453	36,146,210
1.23 Captains serve kings	202	434,471,698	210
1.24 Family dynasties exercise power	96,105,138	146,298,400	102,136,175
1.25 Kings rule subordinate rulers	130,193,237	299,338,700	94,136,201
1.26 "Seating" for political power	85,238	139,262	89,246
1.27 Separate civil/religious authority	87,221	155,221,499,558,569,581-586	91,229
1.28 Nobility aspires to power	118	515,702,715	124
1.29 Royal courts imitate enemies			
1.30 Courts function as "great household"			
1.31 Officials have hidden knowledge	209		217
1.32 Abrupt breaks in dynasties	95,96	327,458,699	100
1.33 Subservient peoples "possess" land	238		246
<i>Correspondences Common to Coe 7th Ed. and Sharer & Traxler</i>		26	
<i>Correspondences Unique to Coe 7th Edition</i>		2	
<i>Correspondences Unique to Sharer & Traxler</i>		2	

C2. Social Correspondences in Editions 7 and 8 of The Maya and The Ancient Maya			
<i>Edition Number</i>	<u>Coe-Seventh</u>	<u>The Ancient Maya</u>	<u>Coe-Eighth</u>
<i>Year Published</i>	<i>(2005)</i>	<i>(2006)</i>	<i>(2011)</i>
2.1 Ancient origin of cultures	13	28,29,239	14
2.2 Interchange of ideas/things	13	292	14
2.3 Foreign brides for elites		487	
2.4 Slavery practiced	202,206,209	623,658,711	18,217
2.5 Pockets of different languages	31,174	25,202	29-30,184
2.6 Great flood in creation stories	41,65	728	41,221
2.7 Settlement by seafarers	41	7,153	41
2.8 Ancient culture disappears	50,59	164	51
2.9 Strong class distinctions	129,201,208	93,296,717	136,209,216
2.10 Child sacrifice	74,91,98	248,250,426,723,751-753	75,94,230
2.11 Links with Egypt	62,72,138	90,126,302-303,615,715,731,755	64,145,226
2.12 Mobile populations	161	97,202,225,585	169
2.13 Extreme inequality	209	86,717	217
2.14 Marketplaces exist	13,205	10,304,657-659	13,132,214
2.15 Wanderers seek new homes	193	598,616	201,202
2.16 Architectural extravagance	162		170
2.17 Large northward migrations	46,164	503,534,585	21,46,172
2.18 Constant migrations	161	97,239,559	26-27
2.19 Cities named after founder	173		180
2.20 Ancestors came from west	200,209	29,620	208,217
2.21 Sacred writing has repetition	202,203	1,124,177	210,211
2.22 Corn first among grains	13,44,118	173,203,601	67,124,212
2.23 Rich have multiple wives	207	436,440,676	215
2.24 Trace genealogies important	208,221,239	148,274,602,694-695	216,237,246
2.25 Priests keep genealogies	221	96,126	229
2.26 Homosexuality practiced	220		228
2.27 Arcane sacred language	30,234	132	30,242
2.28 Repopulate old cities	193	519	201
2.29 Four quarters of world	13,215,247	104,167,263,704,726,727,739	13,223,255
2.30 Maya fascinated by Olmec		28,29,239	
2.31 Lineage histories dominate	163,236	298,329,424-425	171,244
Correspondences Common to Coe's 7th Ed. and Sharer & Traxler		25	
Correspondences Unique to Coe's 7th Edition		3	
Correspondences Unique to Sharer & Traxler		2	

C3. Religious Correspondences in Seventh and Eighth Editions of <i>The Maya</i> and Sixth Edition of <i>The Ancient Maya</i> (pages cited)			
<i>Edition Number</i>	<u>Coe-Seventh</u>	<u><i>The Ancient Maya</i></u>	<u>Coe-Eighth</u>
<i>Year Published</i>	<i>(2005)</i>	<i>(2006)</i>	<i>(2011)</i>
3.1 Central role of temples	60,67,112	89,186,273	54,99
3.2 Strong Christian elements	66,207	723	68,215,254
3.3 Change in popular cults	77,92	161,288,568-569	80
3.4 Temples and sacred hills	118,166	272,362,454	174,256
3.5 Seers and seer stones	248,251	750	256,258,259
3.6 Bloodletting in rituals	13,113,170	257,722,746	13,86,133
3.7 Belief in resurrection	66,83,173	729-731	68,86,181
3.8 Baptismal rite present	207		215
3.9 Ritual walking in straight roads			
3.10 Covenants with God exist			
3.11 Hereditary priests, chief priests	221	698	229
3.12 Opposites in creation/dualism	216	730	224
3.13 Pantheistic religion and idols	13,194,217	91,735-744,754-755	13,202,225
3.14 Sorcery, magic, witchcraft	179,194,252	673	187,202,259
3.15 Community renewal ritual	249	107,109	257
3.16 Combined or separate priestly/political power	221	89,93,709,717,721,722	227
3.17 Prophecy and divination	177,202,221	589,710,721	185,210,229
3.18 Priests keep calendars	62	717,722,726	64,231,254
3.19 Virtuous persons confess			
<i>Correspondences Common to Coe 7th Ed. and Sharer & Traxler</i>		15	
<i>Correspondences Unique to Coe's 7th Edition</i>		1	
<i>Correspondences Unique to Sharer & Traxler</i>		0	

C4. Military Correspondences in the Seventh and Eight Editions of The Maya and in the Sixth Edition of <i>The Ancient Maya</i> (pages cited)			
<i>Edition Number</i>	<u>Coe-<i>Seventh</i></u>	<u><i>The Ancient Maya</i></u>	<u>Coe-<i>Eighth</i></u>
<i>Year Published</i>	<i>(2005)</i>		<i>(2011)</i>
4.1 Extreme cruelty to captives	87,114,126	171,249,388,450	91,120,136
4.2 Unusual defensive earthworks	108	375,555,618	113
4.3 Walled cities for defense	111,130,162	1,92,358	117,137,170
4.4 Thick clothing for armor	179,209		187,217
4.5 Fighting with darts	89,162,179	329,545	22,93,187
4.6 Endemic internecine warfare	102,162	502,510,514,702	109,170
4.7 Ambushes and traps	202,209		210,217
4.8 Raids to take captives	209	219,299,440,723	217
4.9 Dressing to inspire fear	89	767	93
4.10 Stones and slings used	209		217
4.11 Cannibalism on captives	202	752	209
4.12 Monuments destroyed	32,75,102	300,301,423,428	51,109,172
<i>Correspondences Common to Coe 7th Ed. And Sharer & Traxler</i>		9	
<i>Correspondences Unique to Coe 7th Ed.</i>		3	
<i>Correspondences Unique to Sharer & Traxler</i>		0	

C5. Physical-Geographical Correspondences in the Seventh and Eighth Editions of The Maya and the Sixth Edition of The Ancient Maya (pages cited)				
<i>Edition Number</i>	<u>Coe-Seventh</u>	<u>The Ancient Maya</u>	<u>Coe-Eighth</u>	
<i>(Year Published)</i>	<i>(2005)</i>	<i>(2006)</i>	<i>(2011)</i>	
5.1 Highlands/lowlands exist	13	29,157,177	14	
5.2 Volcanic eruption described		37	99	
5.3 Terrible droughts and famines	13,32,82	500,512-513,629	16,18,32	
5.4 Aggressive venomous snakes				
5.5 Very thick wilderness	122,196	762,775	128,204	
5.6 Ancient culture in highlands	52,70,76	35,194-195	72,79	
5.7 Earthquakes important	66,72,161	34-35,37,516	68,72,221	
5.8 Deforestation of large areas	163	54,201,502	171	
5.9 Areas for forest regrowth			171	
5.10 Precious stones	148, 188,206	63,303,658,753	156,196	
5.11 Submerged cities	94			
5.12 Perishable writing materials	152,211	126,129,224	160,219	
5.13 Refined gold present	173,180,183	576,663,754	181,188	
<i>Correspondences Common to Coe 7th Ed. and Sharer & Traxler</i>		9		
<i>Correspondences Unique to Coe 7th Ed.</i>		1		
<i>Correspondences Unique to Sharer & Traxler</i>		1		

C6. Technological/Miscellaneous Correspondences in Seventh and Eighth Editions of The Maya and the Sixth Edition of The Ancient Maya (pages cited)				
<i>Edition Number</i>	<u>Coe-Seventh</u>	<u>The Ancient Maya</u>	<u>Coe-Eighth</u>	
<i>Year Published</i>	<i>(2005)</i>	<i>(2006)</i>	<i>(2011)</i>	
6.1 Millions of inhabitants	22,163	56,508,514	21	
6.2 Calendar by day, month, year	13,60,221	102,342,780-784	25,91,229	
6.3 Multiple calendars kept	61,63,224	102-115	63-64,230	
6.4 Beekeeping and honey	205,206,222	599,602,604	18,213,230	
6.5 Various arts practiced	26,60,65	9,262,450	7,96,136	
6.6 Movements of planets known	13,171,228	1,88,117,720	13,38,223	
6.7 Writing present	13,60	1,4,16	13	
6.8 Writing on stone	26,75,87	129-130,172,179	26	
6.9 Many books, book repositories	13,125,152	8,129,722	13,160,219	
6.10 Trading in different goods	87,206	84,631,633	22,200,214	
6.11 Many merchants	92,164,201	528,559,662	96,132,173	
6.12 Roads and causeways present	81,110,112	210,605,705	83,116,132	
6.13 Houses with attached gardens	23	594,645,673	213	
6.14 Foreigners impose language	164-165	522	172	
6.15 Writing changed over time	59,75	125,137,185	61,76,87	
6.16 Buildings of cement	77,85,166	215,533,556	80,88,174	
6.17 Great skill in working cement	77,106,131	458,Plates 5b, 6a	80,180	
6.18 Excellent workmanship	74,124,142	430,466,486	58,75,103	
6.19 Goods traded by sea	206	511,528,604	214	
6.20 Books stored in stone boxes				
6.21 Tall towers built	130	455,456,760	139	
6.22 Multiple village entrances	251		259	
6.23 Fine fabrics, elaborate clothes	152	51	96,213	
Correspondences Common to Coe 7th Ed. and Sharer & Traxler		21		
Correspondences Unique to Coe 7th Ed.		1		
Correspondences Unique to Sharer & Traxler		0		

Appendix D: Nineteen Additional Correspondences between *The Maya* and the Book of Mormon

In no particular order of relative importance, here are nineteen additional correspondences from various editions of Coe's book and the relevant citations from the Book of Mormon. For some of these additional correspondences, we also cite *The Ancient Maya*.

1. People dwelt in "houses" In Coe's books (for example, 3(136), 4(89,91,144), 5(93,156), 6(103, 104,152), 7(111,112,162), 8(137,170) and 9(124,126) the individual Maya family dwellings are called "houses". Sharer & Traxler substantiate this point on pages 4 and 161. In other words, the civilized, urbanized Maya dwelt in permanent houses, not in portable dwellings or tipis. In the Book of Mormon, the Nephites and at least some of the Lamanites also dwelt in "houses". See Helaman 3:7-9; Mosiah 6:3; Alma 8:21; Alma 26: 28-29, to name just a few.
2. High literacy rates among at least some parts of the population. For example, see Coe 1(67,73), 2(55), 3(55), 4(59), 5(60), 7(74), 8(76,87) and 9(77). Likewise high literacy rates are strongly implied in several places in the Book of Mormon, for example Alma 14:1 and Alma 63:12.
3. Pearls used as adornments See Coe 1(80), 2(64), 3(64), 4(72), 5(76), 6(86), 7(92), 8(96) and 9(106). In the Book of Mormon see 4 Nephi 1:24. It was once believed that pearls were not used as adornments in ancient Mesoamerica. Thus the mention of pearls as adornments in 4 Nephi 1:24 was considered a point of evidence against the Book of Mormon, something Book of Mormon critics have seemingly forgotten now that it is no longer a valid criticism. Pearls were indeed used as adornments in ancient Mesoamerica, just as the Book of Mormon states.
4. The Maya had prophets There are many references to prophets and prophecies in various editions of Coe's book. See for example, 3(121,141,149,155). It is obvious that the Book of Mormon is focused on the ministry of prophets, both in the Old World and in the New World, starting with the prophet Lehi leaving Jerusalem and ending with the prophet Moroni sealing up the thoroughly prophetic Nephite record.
5. Popular revolt against established leaders See Coe 3(136), 5(87,156), 7(193), 8(202), 9(216,219). In the Book of Mormon, see Alma 24:1-2 and Alma 27:1-6.
6. Some written records kept on organic (combustible or otherwise degradable) materials See, for example, Coe 3(149), 4(13, 46), 5(173), 6(13, 200), 7(13,125,211), 8(13,219) and 9(13). In the Book of Mormon see Jacob 4:2; Alma 14:8.
7. Elite concealed some records and rituals from the public See Coe 3(172), 4(93), 5(93), 7(112), 9(128). Also see Sharer & Traxler pages 263-265, 267 and 269. In the Book of Mormon see Helaman 6:25-26, 30; Alma 63:12.
8. Warriors fought using swords, shields and armor See Coe 1(24,120), 2(122) 3(122), 4(17,78,93,97,132), 5(17,121) 6(26,83,92), 7(18,89, illustration #51), 8(18,93,187), 9(19,99,106,113,115). In the Book of Mormon see Alma 43:19-21; Alma 46:113; Ether 15:15, among others.
9. Royal dead were buried in sepulchers In Coe see 4(60,108), 5(112), 7(76,95,134,208), 8(142,216) and 9(36,111,156). In the Book of Mormon see Alma 19:1,5.
10. Several rapid population increases/high population levels observed during the Middle and Late Preclassic periods (prior to AD 250) The timing of ancient Mesoamerican population swings as summarized in these two books of scientific archaeology agrees remarkably well with the Book of Mormon. For example, in Coe see 4(20,38,64,67) "just prior to the beginning of the Christian era", 7(21,50,87); 9(61,124) and also S&T(223). In the Book of Mormon see Mosiah 9:9 (about

200-187 B.C.), Mosiah 2:2 (about 124 B.C.), Alma 50:18 (about 72-67 B.C.); Alma 62:48 (about 62-57 B.C.), Helaman 3:8 (about 49-39 B.C.), Helaman 11:20 (about 20-6 B.C.), 4 Nephi 10:1,23 (35-321 A.D.)

11. Prophecy, religion, history and genealogy intertwined. In Coe see 4(131,161,187), 5(199), 7(240), 8(248) and 9(199). In Sharer and Traxler see pg. 589. In the Book of Mormon note especially the intertwining of prophecy, religion, history and genealogy found in 1 Nephi Chapters 4-15.
12. Hereditary elite sometimes act in the role of priests. In Coe see 4(172). In the Book of Mormon see, among others Jacob 1:18, Alma 4:4, Mosiah 6:3, Mosiah 11:5
13. High degree of cultural development by 400 BC to AD 250. Coe states that “the Late Preclassic really is a kind of “proto-Classic” 7(59). This fact is confirmed by S&T(223) who put the dates for “full emergence of complex societies” as 400 BC to AD 100. The Late Preclassic is the period in which much of Nephite history unfolds. In the Book of Mormon, Nephite civilization exhibits the advanced cultural traits of writing, calendars, cities, political confederations and so forth.
14. Maya thought in terms of cycles of creation and destruction. See Coe 5(174), 7(211,213), 8(219,221), 9(70). Also see S&T(100, 509). The allegory of the tame and wild olive trees in Jacob 5 is perhaps the best example of this kind of cyclical creation and destruction thinking in the Book of Mormon.
15. Some Maya lords collaborate with or do not resist invaders to benefit their own political authority. See Coe 8(210,211), 9(227). In the Book of Mormon, see Moroni’s extended conflict with Amalickiah and the Nephite “king-men” (Alma Chapters 51-62) while he is resisting Lamanite invasions led by Amalickiah and later by Amalickiah’s brother.
16. There were “keepers of the holy books” In Coe see 8(231), 9(243). The Book of Mormon starts with two keepers of the holy books (Lehi and Nephi) and ends with two more such keepers (Mormon and Moroni). Throughout the Book of Mormon there are many other designated keepers of sacred records.
17. Maya kings controlled relatively limited geographical areas and strove to subjugate new lands See Coe 9(274-276) and also S&T(78,79). Sharer & Traxler specifically note that the expansion and contraction of individual polities continued up until the Spanish Conquest. In the Book of Mormon, most wars between the Nephites and Lamanites were fought to subject the Nephites and Nephite lands to Lamanite rule.
18. Mesoamericans had villages, towns and cities—settlements of different sizes See Coe 9(51,99,175). Sharer & Traxler are explicit about this point of the varying sizes of Maya settlements, see pages 4 and 161. The Book of Mormon is likewise explicit on this point. See Alma 8:7, Mormon 4:22 and 5:5.
19. Waging of war and religion (including divination and prophecy) are strongly linked See Coe 9(93,100,142,156,236 among others) and also S&T(89,90,191,723,751 among others). In the Book of Mormon we have, for example, Jacob 1:10, Jarom 1:7, Words of Mormon 1:13-14, Mosiah 10:10-11, Alma 2:16-18, Alma 46:20 and Alma 60:16, among many others. Obviously, the editor of the Book of Mormon is both a great war leader and a prophet.

Appendix E: Revisiting our Previous Bayesian Analysis

In our previous paper, we did not deal with the issue of independence of correspondences. By “independence” we mean that the probability of identifying one correspondence does not alter the probability of finding any other correspondence(s). In the previous paper we assumed that all of the correspondences identified were statistically independent, so that the Bayesian likelihood assigned to the total set of those 131 correspondences was simply the product of the individual likelihoods.

With regard to the independence of correspondences, this is the least restrictive approach that can be taken. In other words, this approach over-weights the evidence and changes our Bayesian skeptical prior belief more than is probably warranted by the evidence.

In contrast with our previous paper, we take here a much more restrictive approach with respect to independence of correspondences. Here we assume that if one or more correspondences can be reasonably linked to another correspondence, then these correspondences will be regarded as a completely dependent set, meaning that finding one of these correspondences guarantees finding all of the others.

Therefore all plausibly-linked correspondences will be regarded as a single (one) independent correspondence with a maximum Bayesian value of 0.02, or a 1 in 50 likelihood that Joseph Smith correctly guessed all these correspondences as an entire group. This approach deliberately under-weights the evidence and changes our Bayesian skeptical prior beliefs less than is probably warranted by the evidence.

In contrast, the probability in our previous paper was estimated by overweighting the evidence and is therefore a likely lower bound on the actual probability that the Book of Mormon is a work of fiction. In both this paper and the previous paper, we also deliberately overweight the evidence against the Book of Mormon in our calculation of the probabilities.

For this analysis, we use all 156 correspondences identified between the Book of Mormon and Coe’s Ninth Edition of *The Maya* plus *The Ancient Maya* by Sharer and Traxler. The 131 correspondences identified in our previous paper are referred to here by their assigned number in Appendix A of that paper. The nineteen additional correspondences from Coe’s books are described in Appendix D and are designated D1-D19. The six new correspondences found in Sharer and Traxler and briefly described in this article are designated as S&T1-6. Thus 131 plus 19 plus 6 equals 156 total correspondences.

Using this approach, ten larger independent correspondences comprised of multiple, plausible dependent correspondences (or “sub-correspondences”) are identified as follows:

1. *People were civilized and urbanized*: 1.4, 1.7, 1.8, 2.14, 3.18, 6.2, 6.5, 6.7, 6.8, 6.9, 6.10, 6.11, 6.12, 6.15, 6.18, 6.22, 6.23, A1, A18 and S&T3. (20 sub-correspondences)
2. *People were organized politically in bureaucratic city states*: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.17, 1.18, 5.12 and A6 (8 sub-correspondences)
3. *People were ruled by kings in a society with strong class distinctions*: 1.9, 1.10, 1.13, 1.14, 1.20, 1.22, 1.23, 1.25, 2.4, 2.9, 2.13, 2.16, 2.23, A5, A12, A17 and S&T4. (17 sub-correspondences)
4. *Family dynasties were the basis of kingly rule*: 1.11, 1.12, 1.16, 1.24, 1.28, 1.32, 2.24, 2.25 and 2.31. (9 sub-correspondences)

5. *Religion was central to their way of life*: 2.10, 3.1, 3.4, 3.6, 3.11, 3.13, 3.14, 3.16, 3.17, 4.11 and A4. (11 sub-correspondences)
6. *Strong elements of the Christian religion existed in the Maya religion*: 3.2, 3.7, 3.8, 3.19, A9, A16, S&T2 and S&T5. (8 sub-correspondences)
7. *People were highly warlike and skilled in war*: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 6.21, A8 and A15. (12 sub-correspondences)
8. *Many migrations occurred*: 2.12, 2.15, 2.17, 2.18 and 2.28. (5 sub-correspondences)
9. *Pattern of deforestation followed by deliberate reforestation*: 5.8 and 5.9. (2 sub-correspondences)
10. *Region was seismically active*: 5.2 and 5.7 (2 sub-correspondences)

There are also many correspondences that, in our opinion, do not have any plausible connection with any other correspondence(s). These independent correspondences include (see Appendix A in our previous paper):

- 1) Category 1: 1.6, 1.15, 1.19, 1.21, 1.26, 1.27, 1.29, 1.30, 1.31, 1.33
- 2) Category 2: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.11, 2.19, 2.20, 2.21, 2.22, 2.26, 2.27, 2.29, 2.30
- 3) Category 3: 3.3, 3.5, 3.9, 3.10, 3.12, 3.15
- 4) Category 4: 4.6, 4.12
- 5) Category 5: 5.1, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.10, 5.11, 5.13
- 6) Category 6: 6.1, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6, 6.13, 6.14, 6.16, 6.17, 6.19, 6.20

Plus D2, D3, D7, D10, D11, D13, D14, D19, S&T1 and S&T6: a total of 62 independent correspondences.

Thus there are a total of 10 overarching independent correspondences composed of 94 different sub-correspondences. In effect, we have removed 84 correspondences (and their associated Bayesian likelihoods) from the evaluation by combining them with other correspondences.

There are also 62 independent correspondences for which we do not identify plausible overlaps with other correspondences, for a total of 72 independent correspondences. We assign Bayesian likelihoods to these correspondences as follows.

Each of the ten overarching correspondences noted above is assigned a likelihood of 0.02 (specific, detailed and unusual). In addition, ten new correspondences were identified in Coe and Sharer & Traxler that are not subsumed within the ten overarching correspondences listed above. We think that some of these are probably Bayesian “strong” evidence (specific, detailed and unusual), for example D7, D10, S&T1 and S&T6. However, in this paper we do not attempt to justify any likelihood for the new correspondences beyond 0.5 (specific), the lowest strength of evidence. These correspondences include: D2, D3, D7, D10, D11, D13, D14, D19, S&T1 and S&T6—also a total of ten correspondences.

The remaining independent correspondences are:

- 1) Category 1: 1.6, 1.15, 1.19, 1.21, 1.26, 1.27, 1.29, 1.30, 1.31, 1.33
- 2) Category 2: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.11, 2.19, 2.20, 2.21, 2.22, 2.26, 2.27, 2.29, 2.30
- 3) Category 3: 3.3, 3.5, 3.9, 3.10, 3.12, 3.15
- 4) Category 4: 4.6, 4.12
- 5) Category 5: 5.1, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.10, 5.11, 5.13
- 6) Category 6: 6.1, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6, 6.13, 6.14, 6.16, 6.17, 6.19, 6.20

These retain the Bayesian likelihoods that were justified in our previous paper and include seven specific (likelihood 0.5), twenty-one positive (likelihood 0.1) and twenty-four strong (likelihood 0.02) correspondences.

Thus taking a much more restrictive approach to the independence of correspondences than we took in our previous paper, we have now a total of seventeen (17) specific correspondences, twenty-one (21) positive and thirty-four (34) strong correspondences. The overall probability that these correspondences are the result of a long series of lucky guesses by Joseph Smith can be estimated as $(0.5)^{17} \times (0.1)^{21} \times (0.02)^{34} = 1.31 \times 10^{-84}$.

As before, our skeptical prior hypothesis was that the Book of Mormon is a work of fiction with odds of a billion to one that this statement is true. Also, as in our previous paper, we admit all 18 of the facts counted against the Book of Mormon at their maximum evidentiary value of 50. This is a very generous assumption against the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, recalling the fact that some points of evidence (eg, pearls used as adornment or trans-oceanic migrations to the Americas) previously considered as weighing against the Book of Mormon have later become points of evidence in its favor.

In other words, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Lack of current evidence for metallurgy or horses or cattle in the ancient New World does not mean that such evidence does not exist.

Using this information, we compute posterior odds that the Book of Mormon is a work of fiction as $1.31 \times 10^{-84} \times 10^9 \times (50)^{18} = 4.98 \times 10^{-45}$, approximately 1 in a billion, billion, billion, billion, billion. For a sense of scale, this is roughly the ratio of the power output of a single computer chip in “sleep” mode to the power output of all the stars in the Milky Way galaxy.

Appendix F: Unstated and Unsupported Probability Analysis

Whether critics of the Book of Mormon realize it or not, they are engaging in probability analysis as they examine correspondences between the Book of Mormon and the world of the Maya as described by Dr. Coe. But their probability analysis is unstated and unsupported instead of being clearly stated and supported with evidence and reasoning.

So what do we mean by “unstated and unsupported” probability analysis?

We mean this: what the author of the hypothesized “fictional” Book of Mormon might have known about ancient Mesoamericans, their politics, geography, culture, technologies, religion and so on, and what he actually knew are two very different things. We cannot reasonably conclude that because a person might have known something, he actually did know it.

Both of us are professional teachers and have taught thousands of students over the years. We know that just because someone might know a given fact (because we know we taught that particular fact to them in class) is no guarantee that they actually do know it.

In our experience, Book of Mormon critics always assume that because (they think) Joseph Smith might have known something, he actually did know it. Although spending every spare dollar on a secret research library would help explain the Smith family’s persistent near-poverty, no evidence of this wonderful Smith family research library has ever surfaced.

Without exception (to our knowledge), critics of the Book of Mormon are performing an unstated and unsupported probability analysis. Knowingly or not, they are making two very important but unsupported and unstated assumptions.

First, they are assuming that because Joseph Smith might have known a given fact, he actually did know it... with 100% probability. Second, they are assuming that because Joseph did know a particular fact, that he would also know when, where and if to correctly include that fact in the Book of Mormon... again with 100% probability. Both elements are necessary: Joseph would have to know the particular fact and he would have to know when, where and if to include that particular fact in the Book of Mormon.

What genius would have known all these facts many decades, even centuries, before the archaeological evidence was discovered, no mistakes, and also would have known when and where to include these facts in his “fictional” story (the Book of Mormon), no mistakes? Such a person simply does not exist.

Critics of the Book of Mormon are thus performing an unstated, unsupported probability analysis. They are assuming two related likelihoods, each rated at 100% probability, multiplied by each other to give 100% probability overall for all the many points of evidence supporting the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon. These points of evidence include, but are not limited to, the 156 points of evidence summarized here, which is a small subset of the overall evidence supporting the hypothesis that the Book of Mormon is an authentic ancient document.

Thus the critics are taking a wildly irrational approach to analyzing evidence concerning the Book of Mormon...to put it in the most charitable possible terms.