



BOOK OF MORMON CENTRAL

<https://bookofmormoncentral.org/>

Type: Newsletter

Insights, Vol. 29, No. 3 (2009)

Editor(s): Maxwell Institute Staff

Published by: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship



The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) existed from 1979 until 2006, when it was formally incorporated into the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship. Archived by permission.

Book of Mormon Critical Text Project Completes Text Analysis

The Maxwell Institute and Brigham Young University are pleased to announce the publication of part 6 of volume 4 of the Book of Mormon Critical Text Project, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon*. Part 6 analyzes the text from 3 Nephi 19 through Moroni 10.

Royal Skousen, an internationally known professor of linguistics and English language at Brigham Young University, has been the editor of the Book of Mormon Critical Text Project since 1988.

This last part of volume 4 of the critical text of the Book of Mormon completes the basic textual analysis of the Book of Mormon. There is also an addenda section at the end of this part (comprised of almost 100 pages) that treats a number of additional conjectures to the text and, in a few cases, revises the analysis for several items already discussed in volume 4.

Now that part 6 is published, it is possible to reconstruct the “historical text of the Book of Mormon”—that is, the earliest text, including conjectural changes based on evidence from usage and scribal practice elsewhere in the text. Basically, the historical text is the original English-language text, to the extent that it can be determined by scholarly means.

Skousen’s work has garnered praise from scholars familiar with Book of Mormon studies. Grant Hardy, professor of history at the University of North Carolina at Asheville and editor of *The Book of Mormon: A Reader’s Edition*, describes Skousen and his project: “Skousen is a scholar’s scholar. He examines everything, his arguments are meticulously reasoned, he uses all the available resources of modern academia, he is generous (often giving credit to students who came up with possible readings), he always gives full consideration to alternative explanations and inconvenient evidence, and he seems willing to go wherever the evidence leads. . . . As a historian who has spent his professional life working with critical editions of ancient texts, my response to Skousen’s book is awe and humility.”¹

Terryl L. Givens, professor of literature and religion at the University of Richmond and author of *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion*, says of one analysis in Skousen’s work: “This strikes me as more than just careful editorial work. This is a brilliantly fashioned argument that is carefully reasoned, meticulously argued, and reliant upon the best kind of intellectual effort: because he gives both readings the full benefit of the doubt, conceives hypotheses that substantiate both readings, and scours the text for corroborating evidence. And he repeats this procedure hundreds of times.”²

Skousen is currently working on volumes 3 and 5 of the Book of Mormon Critical Text Project. Volume 3 will describe in detail the history of the text of the Book of Mormon, including the editing of the text into standard English, and will also provide a description of the original English-language text of the book. Volume 5 will feature a computerized collation of the two Book of Mormon manuscripts (the original manuscript and the printer’s manuscript) and 20 printed editions from 1830 to 1981. Volumes 3 and 5 are slated to appear in 2011 or 2012.

Part 6 of *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon* is available from the BYU Bookstore.

Notes

1. Grant Hardy, “Scholarship for the Ages,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 15/1 (2006): 48.
2. Terryl L. Givens, “The Book of Mormon Critical Text Project,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 15/1 (2006): 35.

• • •

Editor’s Note: The Maxwell Institute invited Professor Royal Skousen to describe part 6 of volume 4.

Changes in the Text

The most important part of the critical text project is to analyze the textual variation in the text of the Book of Mormon and to recover the original text, to the extent possible. Here are four of the more significant cases of textual variation that are discussed in part 6:

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Neal A. Maxwell
Institute for
Religious Scholarship
Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah 84602
(801) 422-9229
(800) 327-6715
maxwellinstitute.byu.edu

TO ORDER PUBLICATIONS

BYU Bookstore
Provo, Utah 84602
(800) 253-2578
byubookstore.com

Mormon 8:28

yea it shall come in a day
when the power of God shall be denied
and churches become defiled
and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts
yea even in a day
when leaders of churches and teachers
in the pride of their hearts
even to the envying of them
who belong to their churches

There seems to be a missing predicate here for the phrase “yea even in a day when leaders of churches and teachers in the pride of their hearts”. German Ellsworth, the Northern States Mission president at the turn of the last century, in his later editing (in 1907) of the 1905 LDS missionary edition, tried to deal with the apparent ellipsis here by supplying the words *shall rise*, thus “yea even in a day when leaders of churches and teachers **shall rise** in the pride of their hearts”. The current LDS text has maintained Ellsworth’s emendation. But internal evidence suggests that the missing words were *shall be lifted up*, thus “yea even in a day when leaders of churches and teachers **shall be lifted up** in the pride of their hearts”. Note, in particular, the preceding language in this verse: “and churches become defiled and **shall be lifted up** in the pride of their hearts”. The ellipted “shall be lifted up” is also supported by numerous occurrences of this phraseology elsewhere in the Book of Mormon text.

Ether 1:11–12

and Seth was the son of **Shiblon**
and **Shiblon** was the son of Com

This is the only name listed in the genealogy at the beginning of the book of Ether that takes a different form later on in that book; namely, in Ether 11 the form of the name is *Shiblom* rather than *Shiblon*. Scribal evidence suggests that *Shiblon* was probably the original name of the Jaredite king in the book of Ether; it was written correctly in Ether 1, but later on in Ether 11 was incorrectly written as *Shiblom*. The probable source of the error was a tendency to produce a labial *m* after pronouncing the labial *b*. In the original manuscript for Alma 38:5, when Oliver Cowdery wrote down the name for the son

of Alma, he initially wrote *Shiblom*, then erased the final *m* and wrote *n*. This scribal error provides support for an error tendency towards *Shiblom*.

Ether 1:41

go to and gather together thy flocks
— both male and female — of every kind
and also of the seed of the earth of every kind
and thy **family**
and also Jared thy brother and his **family**
and also thy friends and their **families**
and the friends of Jared and their **families**

In this verse, the printer’s manuscript has the singular *family* when the reference is to an individual (thus the brother of Jared and his family as well as Jared and his family), but the plural *families* when the text refers to the brother of Jared’s friends and to Jared’s friends. In other words, each individual has one family. Unfortunately, the 1830 typesetter accidentally set *families* when referring to the family of the brother of Jared, probably because his eye caught the plural *families* in the next manuscript line (“& also thy friends & their **families**”). There is clearly no intent in the original text to assign more than one family to the brother of Jared; the singular reading of the original text should be restored here, even though the plural reading has caused some controversy, especially during the early 1900s.

Moroni 10:33

then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God
through the shedding of the blood of Christ
which is in the covenant of the Father
unto the remission of your sins
that ye become **holy without spot**

The printer’s manuscript here reads “holy without spot”. All editions have kept the spelling *holy*, but one wonders if Joseph Smith didn’t actually dictate *wholly*. There would have been no difference in pronunciation, nor much motivation for the scribe to have asked which word was intended. In other words, we have two possible readings here:

. . . that ye become **holy**, without spot

. . . that ye become **wholly** without spot

This possible emendation of *wholly* in place of *holy* was first suggested in 1991 by one of my students, Kevin Quinn. Later, in 1994 a thorough analysis of this passage was made by another student, Brent Johnson. The committee for the 1920 LDS edition, apparently aware of the potential problem here in Moroni 10:33, decided to place a comma after *holy*, thus guaranteeing the first reading. In his analysis, Johnson suggested a third reading, one that involves inserting an *and*:

... that ye become **holy and** without spot

Ultimately, usage in the New Testament argues that in Moroni 10:33 the word *holy* is correct: “but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:27). It should be noted, however, that this biblical passage supports the third possibility of having an *and* between *holy* and *without spot*.

Vocabulary from Early Modern English

One of the important findings of the critical text project has been the use in the original text of vocabulary from the 1500s and 1600s — and not just vocabulary that can be found in the King James Bible. Here are a couple of examples of archaic vocabulary that are discussed in part 6 of volume 4:

3 Nephi 26:3

even until the elements should melt
with fervent heat
and the earth should be **wrapped** together
as a scroll
and the heavens and the earth should pass away

Usage elsewhere in Book of Mormon suggests that the verb here could be *rolled* rather than *wrapped*, as in Mormon 5:23 (“and at his great command the earth shall be **rolled** together as a scroll”) and in Mormon 9:2 (“yea even that great day when the earth shall be rolled together as a scroll”). Yet the Oxford English Dictionary (under definition 9 for the verb *wrap*) indicates that one meaning for the verb *wrap* is ‘to wind or fold up or together . . . to roll or gather up’; thus the phrase “wrap together” in 3 Nephi 26:3 can be considered equivalent to “roll together”. In fact, the OED cites the following biblical passage in support of this usage (here given in the King James version): “and Elijah took

his mantle and wrapped *it* together and smote the waters” (2 Kings 2:8). The OED also provides a citation that refers to both heaven and earth as being wrapped up (here cited with modern spelling):

William Watreman (1555)

the beginner of things visible wrapped up
both heaven and earth . . . together in one pattern

Thus the reference in the Book of Mormon to the earth being wrapped up as a scroll is fully acceptable.

Moroni 10:26

and woe unto them
which shall **do these things away** and die
for they die in their sins
and they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God

The phrase “do these things away” seems very odd to modern readers, but in Early Modern English this phrase meant ‘to put away, dismiss’. This meaning is listed under definition 44 for the verb *do* in the Oxford English Dictionary. The last quotation cited in the OED with this meaning comes from Edmund Spenser in 1596: “Do fear away and tell”. Earlier in verse 24, Moroni once more uses this phraseology: “if the day cometh that the power and gifts of God shall be **done away** among you / it shall be because of unbelief”.

Statistical Summary for Part 6

Part 6 has 630 pages of text and covers the last 16 percent of the Book of Mormon text. Out of 806 cases of variation (or potential variation) that are analyzed, there are 304 differences between the critical text and the standard text. Moreover, 52 readings have never appeared in any standard printed edition: one is in the original manuscript only, another in both the original manuscript and the printer’s manuscript, 27 in the printer’s manuscript only (in these cases the original manuscript is not extant), and 23 are conjectured readings. In addition, 47 readings make a difference that would show up in any translation, 18 make the Book of Mormon text more consistent in phraseology or usage, and four restore a unique phrase or word choice to the text.

Rising Scholars Mentored through Summer Seminar

A select group of graduate and advanced undergraduate students participated in a seminar on Mormon thought at BYU this past May and June. The participants' papers presented at a public symposium on June 25 will be published in the near future.

Under the auspices of the Maxwell Institute, the seminar was conducted by Terryl Givens, professor of literature and religion at the University of Richmond, and Matthew Grow, assistant professor of history at the University of Southern Indiana. Richard Bushman, Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies in the School of Religion at Claremont Graduate University, oversaw the seminar.

The purpose of the seminar was to investigate the influence of Parley and Orson Pratt on 19th-century Mormon thought. The Pratts were two of the most important figures in developing, systematizing, and promulgating the doctrines of early Mormonism. The eight graduate students in the seminar explored the theological, intellectual, and cultural contexts behind the Pratts' work and weighed its influence on Mormonism today. The seminar continued the tradition of the series of seminars on Joseph Smith begun by Bushman in the summer of 1997.

The fellows selected in this year's competition came from universities in the United States, Brazil, and Scotland. The Maxwell Institute mentors young scholars who are advancing in fields related to the

work and mission of the Institute. The summer seminar gives the next generation of scholars the benefit of mentoring by leading Mormon scholars who publish in the field of Mormon studies, such as Givens, Grow, and Bushman.

Recent events such as Mitt Romney's campaign for president of the United States and the PBS special "The Mormons," as well as the publication of Bushman's *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, have focused national and international attention on Joseph Smith and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Preceding the publication of *Rough Stone Rolling*, and contributing to it, were six summer seminars funded privately by a small group of individuals sympathetic to scholarly ventures. The seminars involved 40 advanced undergraduate and graduate students who, under Bushman's direction, built the Archive of Restoration Culture (*BYU Studies* 45/4 contains an article by Bushman describing the archive project).

To support such programs, the Mormon Scholars Foundation was established in 2007. The foundation, directed by Bushman, Givens, and Andrew Skinner (professor of ancient scripture at BYU and former executive director of the Maxwell Institute), organizes and funds conferences and seminars in collaboration with other organizations such as the Maxwell Institute. Past topics for the summer seminars have included "Joseph Smith and His Critics," in 2008, and "Mormon Thinkers, 1890–1930," in 2007. Information about future summer seminars will be made available through the Maxwell Institute.



From Elder Neal A. Maxwell

We need to make allowance for the role of irony in our individual lives and as a people. For instance, those chosen for service

by the Lord would appear to be improbable selections. The same God who had his Only Begotten Son born in a manger and reared in despised Nazareth as the least appreciated but most beneficial individual in human history, also improbably

chose Moses, who was not eloquent but "slow of speech, and of a slow tongue," to lead one of the greatest migrations in history. God also chose shepherds and fishermen, sent a mere boy to face Goliath, chose Paul (a persecutor of Christians) as an apostle, and selected an obscure boy to receive the remarkable divine manifestations at Palmyra. (*A Time to Choose* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975], 43–44, as quoted in *The Neal A. Maxwell Quote Book*, ed. Cory H. Maxwell [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 172.)

Of Scorpions, Vipers, and the Assassin's Drug

Twelfth-century Cairo was a vibrant place. The legendary Saladin, who had recaptured Jerusalem from the Crusaders in 1187, had established himself there and was actively transforming it from a royal resort into a cosmopolitan center of power, commerce, learning, and culture. A pious Muslim, Saladin chose for his physician at court a Jew, Moses Maimonides, who had been twice exiled—first from his hometown of Cordoba, Spain (Andalusia), and then again from Fez, Morocco (al-Maghreb)—by the fanatical Almohad regime of Northwest Africa.

Under the patronage of the famous sultan, Maimonides, in addition to practicing medicine at court and among his own clientele, led a Jewish congregation as their rabbi and wrote and taught on a variety of subjects. His philosophical and religious treatises, including his interpretation of the Torah and his famous *Guide for the Perplexed*, are classics that are widely read and studied to this day. Lesser known are the medical treatises he wrote; but these too hold an interest for those today seeking glimpses into the past.

The medical works of Maimonides are a window into the world of premodern medicine,

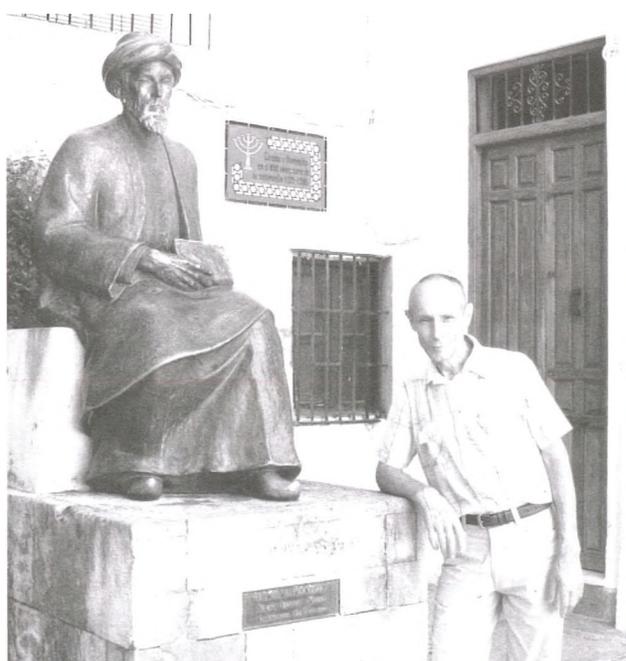
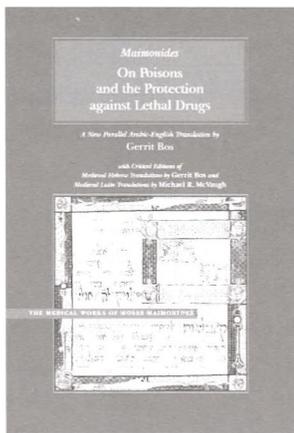
describing the physical ailments not only of kings and rulers but also of common folk from every walk of life. The various diagnoses, remedies, and procedures Maimonides details connect him to a medical tradition that reaches as far back as the Greek physician Galen (d. 216) and continues right into the early modern period—centuries during

which the basic models and methods of medicine changed very little. These were the days of humors black, white, red, and yellow; of vapors and elixirs; of leeching and bloodletting; of methods variously benign and barbaric. Some of what Maimonides prescribed seems little different from the herbal or therapeutic remedies used by many today; others, thankfully, have long since been abandoned.

When the sultan's counselor, al-Fāqil, requested a summary from Maimonides of preventatives and remedies that laypersons could consult in order to overcome the effects of various toxins without having to resort to (and wait on) a physician, Maimonides obliged with a treatise he subtitled *On Poisons and the Protection against Lethal Drugs*. Writing in Arabic, the language of learning in his day, Maimonides divided his work into two parts: the first deals with the treatment of various animal bites, including scorpions, bees and wasps, serpents, and mad dogs and domesticated ones; the second deals with the treatment of ingested poisons, with particular interest in poisons used by assassins. It might not come as a surprise that the ruling elites were interested in such matters, but why would they be concerned to make such information available to the public at large? An earthy excerpt from the second part of the book seems laden with inference on this question. Maimonides writes:

We find that some men are assassinated by [their] women by means of the food [they take] and die after one day or some days, or suffer from what is far worse than death, namely suppurating elephantiasis, which results in the limbs falling off.

In every city I passed through I have seen some men suffer from [this illness]. And what I and others have heard about it is too much to be summed up [here]. Those senior physicians whom I met told me in their own name and that of their teachers that they had looked into this matter thoroughly and carefully until they learned from those adulterous women



Gerrit Bos near the statue of Maimonides in Cordoba, Spain. Photograph by D. Morgan Davis.

themselves what [substance] they had used to assassinate so-and-so, and their stories are well known. (*On Poisons* 2.4.83–84)

Such details collapse the centuries that separate us from Maimonides and allow us a glimpse, however mean, into the lives of the common people of his time. It seems that marriage could be a fraught enterprise in the Middle Ages, too!

Maimonides: On Poisons and the Protection against Lethal Drugs is the latest title to be released in *The Medical Works of Moses Maimonides*, a series of primary texts and translations prepared by Gerrit Bos at the University of Cologne and published under the auspices of the Maxwell Institute's Middle Eastern Texts Initiative. This volume also

Preview of Forthcoming *FARMS Review*

Readers awaiting the *FARMS Review* will be rewarded with a promised peek at Terry Givens's in-press volume from Oxford University Press, *The Book of Mormon: A Very Short Introduction*. Chapter 2, "Themes," will be featured in its entirety—from the 152-page work that will fill an important gap in Oxford's popular Very Short Introduction series. Other Book of Mormon-related fare include: a literary interpretation of the death of Laban; a debunking of myths about the printing of the 1830 edition; a look at the record's literary sophistication; and reviews of the seminal works *The Legal Cases in the Book of Mormon*, by John W. Welch, and the six-volume *Second Witness: Analytical and Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, by Brant A. Gardner.

In the area of biblical studies are two responses to Margaret Barker's recent book *Temple Themes in Christian Worship*. Like her previous studies, this one is attracting the attention of Latter-day Saints who have found much of importance to consider in her exploration of Christian origins and her reconstruction of a "temple theology" traceable to Solomon's temple. Rounding out the *Review* are an assessment of Hugh Nibley's economic views related to the law of consecration, a reprinting of eminent historian Martin E.

features the scholarly work of Michael R. McVaugh of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, who has edited the Latin translations of *On Poisons* that were made in the centuries after Maimonides by Europeans seeking to preserve his knowledge for their own time. Angela Barrionuevo oversaw the production editing of this volume at the Maxwell Institute. The book will carry the Brigham Young University Press imprint and will be distributed by the University of Chicago Press.

By D. Morgan Davis
Director, Middle Eastern Texts Initiative

Marty's 1989 lecture at Westminster College on the usefulness of the religious past, an editor's introduction by Daniel C. Peterson, and other assorted offerings now taking shape for publication later this summer.

INSIGHTS

Paul Y. Hoskisson, D. Morgan Davis, *General Editors*
Paula W. Hicken, *Editor*
A Publication of

NEAL A. MAXWELL INSTITUTE
FOR RELIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

M. Gerald Bradford, *Executive Director*

Academic Council

M. Gerald Bradford, D. Morgan Davis, John Gee,
Carl Griffin, Kristian Heal, Paul Y. Hoskisson, Daniel C. Peterson

Publications Department

Alison V. P. Coutts, *Director*
Donald L. Brugger, Paula W. Hicken,
Shirley S. Ricks, Sandra A. Thorne

The Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship encourages and supports research on the Book of Mormon, the Book of Abraham, the Bible, other ancient scripture, and related subjects. The Maxwell Institute publishes and distributes titles in these areas for the benefit of scholars and interested Latter-day Saint readers.

Primary research interests at the Maxwell Institute include the history, language, literature, culture, geography, politics, and law relevant to ancient scripture. Although such subjects are of secondary importance when compared with the spiritual and eternal messages of scripture, solid research and academic perspectives can supply certain kinds of useful information, even if only tentatively, concerning many significant and interesting questions about scripture.

The Maxwell Institute makes reports about this research available widely, promptly, and economically. These publications are peer-reviewed to ensure that scholarly standards are met. The proceeds from the sale of these materials are used to support further research and publications.

