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Abstract: *Robert Smith makes the case that "poetic art in the Book of Mormon is highly developed" — you just need to have the eye to recognize it. Though many readers are aware of the stunning examples of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon, thanks to the pioneering work by John W. Welch, fewer are acquainted with the other important forms of parallelism that pervade the text, often placed strategically to highlight the importance of a particular passage. Smith also shows why apocalpytic texts, sometimes thought to originate at a later period, can be found, for example, in the first chapter of the Book of Mormon.*

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See Robert F. Smith, "Poesy and Prosody in the Book of Mormon," in *"To Seek the Law of the Lord": Essays in Honor of John W. Welch,* ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson and Daniel C. Peterson (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation, 2017), 429–67. Further information at https://interpreterfoundation.org/books/to-seek-the-law-of-the-lord-essays-in-honor-of-john-w-welch-2/.]

It has often been said that there is no real poetry in the Book of Mormon—no real English poetry, that is.

Hugh W. Nibley[1]

Poetic art in the Book of Mormon is highly developed. We can see this clearly despite our having to read it in translation and despite the lack of poetic presentation in most published sources. Of course, not all the Book of Mormon is poetic. Most of it is prose narrative and much of it is oracular narrative, as is also true of major portions of the Bible.

A characteristic of Book of Mormon poesy, which it has in common with classical Hebrew poetry, is orality. It bears the marks of oral composition not only in the visions and declamations of Lehi (presumably written down for him then or later by Nephi, just as Baruch took dictation from Jeremiah)[2] but also in the formulaic, symmetrical, and sometimes lyric poetry found elsewhere in the Book of Mormon.

The writers and final editor of the Book of Mormon have sometimes chosen to use or place poetry strategically within the overall prose structure, inserting poetry at emotional or spiritual high points,[3] just in the way that a composer has a vocalist break into an aria at the appropriate moment in an opera.[4] Note, for example, how Nephi inserts poetic, parallel phrases at 1 Nephi 8:2 in order to introduce a narrative account of his father's dream-vision:

I have dreamed a dream;	חלמתי חלום*
or, in other words,	
I have seen a vision.	ראיתי חזון

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1   Hugh Nibley, "Lehi in the Desert," *Improvement Era* 57, (July 1950): 556 = *Lehi in the Desert/The World of the Jaredites/There Were Jaredites*, Collected Works of Hugh Nibley: Volume 5 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 91.

2   See Frank Moore Cross, "Toward a History of Hebrew Prosody," in *Fortunate the Eyes That See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Astrid Beck et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 303, on Jeremiah; he also compares 2 Kings 3:15, in which a prophet requests a minstrel before prophesying. Cf. Neum, the extra-biblical prophet quoted in 1 Ne. 19:10, which is identical with Hebrew *něʾūm* "visionary utterance, oracle; decree" (Gen. 22:16, Num. 24:3, 2 Sam. 23:1, Prov. 30:1, Ps. 36:2, Ezek. 36:23).

3   As demonstrated by S. Kent Brown, "The Prophetic Laments of Samuel the Lamanite," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1, no.1 (Fall 1992):163–80.

4   One thinks of musicals such as "*Les Parapluies de Cherbourg*" and "The Sound of Music," but the discriminating theater-goer or film buff can supply many other such examples.

This parallel pair is well-known in Hebrew from Joel 2:28 (MT 3:1),[5] and I have therefore applied the likely biblical Hebrew translation immediately opposite. Interestingly, at both Numbers 12:6 and Daniel 4:9, where the same root words appear, the Massoretic Hebrew text (MT) breaks into a brief poem, while the author of Acts (Luke) likewise inserts the same poetry of Joel into his prose narrative account (Acts 2:17–21). Nothing odd or unaccountable here, although it is also worth pointing out (following the late William F. Albright) that "the prophets were originally called *rōʾîm*, 'diviners' (1 Sam. 9:9)," from Hebrew *rōʾe*, a synonym of *ḥōzîm*, from Hebrew *ḥōzê*, both of which are normally translated "seers"[6] (cf. 2 Sam. 24:11), and both of which are likely the root words used by Father Lehi in the second line of his announcement of his dream-vision, which in hypothetical Hebrew **rāʾîtî ḥāzôn* means "I have seen a vision."[7]

The placement of that poetic announcement is strategic in that the allegorical visions of Lehi and Nephi (1 Ne. 8:1–15:36) are complementary and are the chiastic focus of the entire book of 1 Nephi.[8] Moreover, the first-person visions and narrative of the Small Plates of Nephi (no doubt true also for the lost Book of Lehi) are paralleled by the first-person narrative accounts of Mormon and Moroni at the conclusion of the Book of Mormon in an overall vision-fulfillment pattern. Both were used to frame the third-person narrative accounts of the books of

5   See also Gen. 37:5–10, 41:15; Judg. 7:13: Job 4:13, 7:14, 33:14–15: Jer. 23:25–32, Dan. 1:17, 2:3; Acts 2:17 (Joel 2:28); *Kirta Epic*, tablet 1, VI:31–32; Mitchell J. Dahood, "Ugaritic-Hebrew Parallel Pairs," in *Ras Shamra Parallels: The Texts from Ugarit and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Loren R. Fisher (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1972), 1:192. I disagree with Grant Hardy's analysis as presented in his *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 37, citing John Bright, *Jeremiah*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 153.

6   William F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* (New York: Doubleday, 1968), 215.

7   The closely related terms dream and vision are typical of repetitive parallelism. Theodor H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 182–84. The form this might take in the Egyptian composition of the books of Lehi and Nephi is not addressed herewith.

8   John W. Welch, "A Study Relating Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon to Chiasmus in the Old Testament, Ugaritic Epics, Homer, and Selected Greek and Latin Authors," (Master's Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1970), 150–53; John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 10, no. 3 (Autumn 1969): 82, reprinted in Noel Reynolds, ed., *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1982), 33–52; John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis*, ed. John W. Welch (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981), 199–200.

Mosiah through 4 Nephi, thus forming a kind of triptych or overall ABA pattern.[9] This pattern is centered on the Atonement at Alma 34:12–13, which is the focus of the extraordinarily beautiful chiasm at Alma 34:8–17,[10] at the physical center of the book.

Poetry is also placed architectonically by the editor at 3 Nephi 9:20–28:18—a chiasm centering on the ascent of the Lord in 18:39–19:1, i.e., Isaiah 52:8–10 is used there as a flanking device (at 16:18 and 20:40), just as it was used in the book of Mosiah (chapters 12 and 15) to flank the center there.[11] David P. Wright commented on the direct parallel or inverse chiastic parallel structuring in the Book of Mormon and defined it as an integral part of the nature of the book.[12] Wright notes, "That the Book of Mormon has a style which involves parallelism and repetition is not [an] imposition upon the text. And [Wade Brown] does not go too far in trying to see these structures throughout the entire book. They really are there."[13] As we shall see, parallelism is only one aspect, even if the key aspect, of the poetic art employed within both the Bible and the Book of Mormon, along with a host of other rhetorical features woven into a grand tapestry by master editor(s).

Biblical Poetry

Adhering to the text on the Brass Plates of Laban, Nephi quotes directly from Isaiah 2:2–4 (2 Ne. 12:2–4; Micah 4:1–3). I have laid the Book of Mormon version out as poetry below and placed the Hebrew of the Massoretic Isaiah text in the right-hand column for comparison:

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9   Steven L. Olsen, "Prophecy and History: Structuring the Abridgment of the Nephite Records," *Journal of Book of Mormon Scripture* 15, no. 1 (2006):18–29, 70–71. Naturally, the book of Lehi likely fit the same pattern.

10   Gordon Thomasson (pers. comm.), but there are other suggestions. See also, Royal Skousen, "How Joseph Smith Translated the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7, no. 1 (1998): 31; Richard Rust, *Feasting on the Word: The Literary Testimony of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 219–49; Terryl L. Givens, "The Book of Mormon and Dialogic Revelation," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10, no. 2 (2001): 23–25.

11   See Welch, "A Study Relating Chiasmus," 150–51, 170 and "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," 82.

12   David P. Wright, "Review of *The God-Inspired Language of the Book of Mormon: Structuring and Commentary*," *FARMS Review of Books* 1, no. 1 (1989): 10–17.

13   Wright, "Review of *The God-Inspired Language of the Book of Mormon*," 10.

And it shall come to pass in the last days,   והיה באחרית הימים

When the mountain of the Lord's house   נכון יהיה הר בית־יהוה

Shall be established in the top of the mountains,   בראש ההרים

And shall be exalted above the hills,   ונשא מגבעות

And all nations shall flow unto it.   ונהרו אליו כל־הגוים:

And many people shall go and say,   והלכו עמים רבים ואמרו

"Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,   לכו ונעלה אל־הר־יהוה

To the house of the God of Jacob;   אל־בית אלהי יעקב

And he will teach us of his ways,   וירנו מדרכיו

And we will walk in his paths;   ונלכה בארחתיו

For out of Zion shall go forth the law,   כי מציון תצא תורה

And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."   ודבר־יהוה מירושלם:

And he shall judge among the nations,   ושפט בין הגוים

And shall rebuke many people;   והוכיח לעמים רבים

And they shall beat their swords into plow shares,   וכתתו חרבותם לאתים

And their spears into pruning hooks   וחניתותיהם למזמרות

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,   לא־ישא גוי אל־גוי חרב

Neither shall they learn war any more.   ולא־ילמדו עוד מלחמה:

The systematic use of parallel couplets or bicola (distichs) here is typical of Isaiah and Micah and many other biblical prophets. It is a classic example of what is known as *parallelismus membrorum* or "parallelism of members."[14] Grant Hardy found such parallel poetic structure useful in laying out and analyzing 3 Nephi 22:4 (= Isa. 54:4):

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14 Andreas Wagner, ed., *Parallelismus Membrorum*, OBO 224 (Fribourg and Göttingen: Academic Press and Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

'Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed; אל־תיראי כי־לא תבושי
   neither be thou confounded,   ואל־תכלמי

for thou shalt not be put to shame;   כי לא תחפירי
  for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, כי בשת עלומיך תשכחי

and shalt not remember the reproach of thy youth,

and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.'[15]

          וחרפת אלמנותיך לא תזכרי־עוד:

The line in italics, which is essential to the poetic balance, is not to be found in the Printer's Manuscript, the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon, nor in the Massoretic Text (MT) of Isaiah, which is much later than the Brass Plates of Laban, but was restored in the 1837 and subsequent editions of the Book of Mormon, perhaps on the basis of the Original Manuscript, which no longer exists for that section. Royal Skousen thinks that the line was mistakenly added by the 1837 typesetter through dittography.[15] The line may have been lost anciently from the Massoretic Text because of a simple mistake in scribal copying known as homoeoarcton in which errors are introduced because a line has the same beginning as a subsequent line and is inadvertently skipped. The same scribal error was possibly made by Oliver Cowdery for the Printer's Manuscript.

Another poetically meaningful restoration (which Hugh Nibley saw as a "way of clarifying" the text[16]), presented below in italics, was made by Joseph in the 1840 edition of the Book of Mormon at 1 Nephi 20:1 (Isa. 48:1),

Hearken and hear this, O house of Jacob,   בית־יעקב
              שמעו־זאת

15 Grant Hardy, ed., *The Book of Mormon: A Reader's Edition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 535, 671.

15 Royal Skousen, *The Critical Text of the Book of Mormon*, vol. 4: *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, parts 1–6* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2004–09), 6:3484.

16 Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, Collected Works of Hugh Nibley: Volume 7 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book), 6.

Which are called by the name of Israel,	בשם ישראל הנקראים
And are come forth out of the waters of Judah.	יהודה יצאו וממי
Or out of the waters of baptism,	
Which swear by the name of the Lord,	בשם יהוה הנשבעים
And make mention of the God of Israel,	ישראל יזכירו ובאלהי
Yet they swear not in truth,	לא באמת
Nor in righteousness.	ולא בצדקה
Nevertheless, they call themselves of the holy city,	מעיר הקדש נקראו כי־
But they do not stay themselves upon the God of Israel,	ישראל נסמכו ועל־אלהי
Which is the Lord of Hosts,	
Yea, the Lord of Hosts is his name.	צבאות שמו יהוה

Italics here indicate the English cola (stichs) which are absent from the Massoretic Hebrew text. A variety of explanations might be given for this, but at the very least balance is here restored to two sets of bicola. For as the late William F. Albright pointed out many times, losses are more common than glosses.[17] Moreover, in the first instance, a similar phrase related to baptism occurs in Testament of Levi 18:7,

> And the glory of the Most High shall burst forth upon him,
> And the spirit of understanding and sanctification
>   shall rest upon him [in the water ἐν τῷ ὕδατι].[18]

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17   Jack Lundbom, *Jeremiah: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1975), 47 cites the example of the loss of two cola from Jer. 20:17–18; Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, 23, citing William F. Albright and David N. Freedman, "The Continuing Revolution in Biblical Research," *Journal of Bible and Religion* 31 (1963): 112.

18   R. H. Charles, *The Greek Versions of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), 63; see note in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Old*

Parallelismus Membrorum

The systematic use of repetitive parallelism of members (with stylistic variation) in ancient Hebrew, Canaanite, and Egyptian poetry is well-known and long studied,[19] and is clearly a major feature of the Book of Mormon. Unfortunately, since the Book of Mormon has generally been printed in double-column pages with a focus on citation of chapter and verse, the power of poetic scansion has been lost on most readers. The fact of parallelism therein is most readily seen in specialized, scholarly publications on the Book of Mormon.[20] Thus, only those who diligently search frequently find isolated parallels embedded in prose narrative biblical text,[21] as well as at Jarom 3 in the Book of Mormon,

> the hardness of their hearts,
> and the deafness of their ears,
> and the blindness of their minds,
> and the stiffness of their necks.

Testament Pseudepigrapha, 2 vols. (Doubleday, 1985), 1:795, based on Isa. 11:2, Matt. 3:16, Mark 1:9–10, and John 1:31–33.

19   See, for example, the late Mitchell Dahood's important coverage of "repetitive parallelism" in his *Psalms 1–50*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1966), *passim*; Mitchell J. Dahood, "Introduction," in Ras Shamra Parallels, 3:i.; Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1957), 24c; Margaret Murray, *Egyptian Religious Poetry* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 50; James Henry Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), 96–97; Adolf Erman, *Literature of the Ancient Egyptians: Poems, Narratives, and Manuals of Instruction, from the Third and Second Millennia B.C.*, trans. Aylward M. Blackman (London: Methuen, 1927), lviii–lxi; Samuel R. Levin, Linguistic Structures in Poetry (The Hague, 1964), 30–34; Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 1:11–12, 163; Waldemar Golénischeff, "Parallélisme symétrique en ancien égyptien," in *Studies Presented to F. Ll. Griffith*, ed. S. R. K. Glanville (London: Egypt Exploration Society/ Oxford Univ. Press, 1932), 86–96; cf. Charles F. Pfeiffer, *Ras Shamra and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962), 64; Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Handbook* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1947), 1, 62, and nn. 3–4; stylistic variation is also widely used in Arabic, e.g,, *1,001 Nights*. We are not speaking here of the types of English parallel words and phrases which are tightly controlled by coordinating and correlative conjunctions (Bruce Bawer, *The Contemporary Stylist* [New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987], 225–33).

20   As, for example, in *Book of Mormon Critical Text*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1986–87); Wright, "Review of *The God-Inspired Language of the Book of Mormon*," 10–17; Donald W. Parry, *Poetic Parallelisms in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2007); Hardy, *The Book of Mormon*; Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

21   Adele Berlin, "Parallelism," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:155.

Or at Jacob 3:1,

> Look unto God with firmness of mind,
> And pray unto Him with exceeding faith.

Some examples of more sustained poetic use of parallelism in the Book of Mormon can be excerpted from the *Psalm of Nephi,* found in 2 Nephi:

4:17c	My heart sorroweth because of mine flesh My soul grieveth because of mine iniquities
4:20	He hath led me through mine afflictions in the wilderness And he hath preserved me upon the waters of the great deep
4:26b	Why should my heart weep And my soul linger in the valley of sorrow And my flesh waste away And my strength slacken because of mine afflictions?
4:27a	And why should I yield to sin because of my flesh? Yea why should I give way to temptations?

4:28	Awake my soul
	   No longer droop in sin
	Rejoice O my heart
	   And give place no more for the enemy of my soul

4:32a	…my heart is broken And my spirit is contrite

Similarly at Alma 5:40,

> Whatsoever is good cometh from God,
> And whatsoever is evil cometh from the Devil.[22]

And 1 Nephi 4:3,

> The Lord is able to deliver us,
>   even as our fathers,
> And to destroy Laban,
>   even as the Egyptians.

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22 Hardy, *The Book of Mormon*, discusses parallelism in his Appendix 5.

Parallelism is also used in larger units, as with the tricolon at 1 Nephi 19:9,

> They scourge him,
>   and he suffereth it,
> And they smite him,
>   and he suffereth it,
> Yea, they spit upon him,
>   and he suffereth it,

Since the "chief characteristic of Hebrew poetry in the Bible is balance or symmetry, commonly called parallelism,"[23] the consistent appearance of parallelism as the controlling feature of Book of Mormon poetry is not at all remarkable. Indeed, some of the above examples are actually part of even more complex and magnificent poetic structures typical of the Bible (which we discuss below), and frequently partake of the same parallel word pairs common to Hebrew (and Ugaritic) poetry,[24] e.g., in light of 2 Nephi 4:32a (above), note Psalm 34:18,

> The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a *broken heart*;
> And saveth such as be of a *contrite spirit*.

and the chiastic parallel in hymnal epic dialect in Job 28:2,

Iron from ore is taken,	ברזל מעפר יקח
	(*barzel mēʾāpār yuqqāḥ*)
and from smelted rock, *bronze.*	ואבן יצוק נחושה[26]
	(*wĕʾeben yāṣûq nĕḥûšâ*)

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23   James Limburg, "Psalms, Book of," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 5:528; so also David Noel Freedman, "Archaic Forms in Early Hebrew Poetry," in *Divine Commitment and Human Obligation: Selected Writings of David Noel Freedman*, ed. John R. Huddlestun, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 2:5, "balance or symmetry is a principal characteristic of early Hebrew poetic structure"; cf. Berlin, "Parallelism," 5:155, "Parallelism is the most prominent rhetorical feature in ancient Near Eastern poetry."

24   Berlin, "Parallelism," 5:157; Kevin L. Barney, "Poetic Diction and Parallel Word Pairs in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4, no. 2 (1995):15–81.

Numerical Sequences

In other cases, the word pairs may be formulaic or progressive numerical sequences,[25] as in 1 Nephi 4:1, which alludes to the David and Goliath topos in 1 Samuel 18:7, 29:5,[26]

> Then why not mightier than Laban and his fifty,
> Yea, or even than his tens of thousands?

Compare similar progression at Mosiah 11:19, Alma 3:26, 60:22; compare Ugaritic *Aqhat* tablet 3 (*CAT* 1.19), 1:42–44, "Seven years is Baal absent, |Eight, the Rider of Clouds," or in *The Epic of Baal* tablet 1 (*CAT* 1.1 III), IV:2–3, "From a thousand acres, |ten thou[sand hectares,]" or in tablet 3 (*CAT* 1.3), V:24, "Across a thousand acres, |a myriad of hectares," or as in Psalm 91:7, "A thousand shall fall at thy side, |and ten thousand at thy right hand" (1 Sam. 18:6–7); or Psalm 84:10, "How much better is one day in your Court, than a thousand in the Cemetery!"[27] "Commanders of thousands, |and commanders of hundreds" (1 Sam. 22:7; 1 Macc. 3:55); cf. also "Five…hundred" |"hundred…ten thousand" (Lev. 26:8).[28] The same sequential phenomenon occurs in ancient Egyptian, as in *Book of the Dead* spell 125, "in the second hour of the night, in the third of the day."[29]

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25   The x | x+1 or similar progression in the Hebrew Bible (Wolfgang M. W. Roth, "The Numerical Sequence x/x+1 in the Old Testament," *Vetus Testamentum* 12 [1962]: 300–11; Menahem Haran, "Biblical Studies," *Tarbiz* 39, no. 2 [1969]: 109–36 [Hebrew]; Andrew E. Steinmann, "The Graded Numerical Saying in Job," in *Fortunate the Eyes That See*, 288–97; discussed by Parry, *Poetic Parallelisms*, xxix–xxxi; Robert O'Connell, "Telescoping N + 1 Patterns in the Book of Amos," *Vetus Testamentum* 46 [1996]: 56–73).

26   Cf. Brant Gardner, *Traditions of the Fathers: The Book of Mormon as History* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2015), 86–87.

27   See Dahood, *Psalms*, 2:321, for this translation; cf. Ps. 45:6, 90:4; and Kirta, tablet 1, 1:7–9, an Ugaritic tricolon which I present below. William F. Albright noted the frequent appearance of tricola in both Ugaritic and Hebrew in his "The Furniture of El in Canaanite Mythology," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 91 (Oct. 1943): 43; and "The Old Testament and Canaanite Language and Literature," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (January 1945): 21; see also John T. Willis, "The Juxtaposition of Synonymous and Chiastic Parallelism in Tricola in Old Testament Hebrew Psalm Poetry," *Vetus Testamentum* 29, no. 4 (October 1979): 465–80.

28   Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27, The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 2297.

29   A. De Buck, *Egyptian Readingbook* (Leiden: Nederlandsch Archaeologisch-Philologisch Instituut, 1948), 120:1, *m wnnt ṯwy snw(y)t nt grh* | *ḥmtw nt hrw*; so also in *Kmyt*, §VIII, cited in H. J. Polotsky, "Egyptian Tenses," *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 2 (Jerusalem: Central Press, 1968), 83 n. 22.

Climactic Tricola, Tetracola, and Beyond

Ordinary tricola (tristichs) can be found, as displayed above from 1 Nephi 19:9 (as laid out by Grant Hardy in his 2003 *Reader's Edition of the Book of Mormon*). There are likewise extraordinary, beautiful, chiastic tricola in the Hebrew Bible, such as the one at Genesis 1:27, which has a well-balanced 4:4:4 Hebrew stress accent metric pattern:

And God created man in his image,	ויברא אלהים את־האדם בצלמו
In the image of God created he him,	בצלם אלהים ברא אתו
Male and female created he them.[32]	זכר ונקבה ברא אתם

However, the climactic forms are even more interesting. In Ugaritic epic,[30] in ancient Egyptian,[31] and in the Hebrew Bible,[32] we frequently find climactic tricola,[33] tetracola, etc. Note the following examples of climactic tricola in Egyptian from the Tomb of King Intef (*Papyrus Harris* 500), as translated by Miriam Lichtheim:[34]

vi,5–6   Those   who   built   tombs,
            Their   places   are   gone,
            What has become of them?

vi,7   Their   walls   have   crumbled,
            Their   places   are   gone,
            As though they had never been!

An example from Psalm 106:21–22 is instructive (NRSV), following an offset introductory line (in which the proposed etymology of the name *Mosiah* is to be found):

They forgot God, their Savior	(מושיעם "their Savior"; *Môšîʿām*)
Who had done great things in Egypt	(מצרים "Egypt"; *Miṣrāyîm*)

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30   See Ugaritic Text 137:36b–37a (abc:abc:b2a) in John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in Ugaritic," *Ugarit-Forschungen* VI (1974): 430; Frank M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 114, n. 9.

31   Waldemar Golénischeff presents us with a chiastic climactic tricolon in *Pyramid Text* §1302bc (abc:abc:bca), in Golénischeff, "Parallélisme symétrique en ancien égyptien," 88–89 (6).

32   See also the two climactic tricola at Isa. 29:20–21 and 2 Ne. 27:31–32.

33   Richard Abbot, "Forked Parallelism in Egyptian, Ugaritic and Hebrew Poetry," *Tyndale Bulletin* 62, no. 1 (2011): 41–64.

34   Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 1:196.

Wondrous works in the land of Ham   (חם "Ham"; *Ḥām*)

And awesome deeds by the Red Sea   (ים־סוף "Red Sea"; *Yam-Sûf*)

Thus, it should be no surprise that we find the same phenomenon in the Book of Mormon. In 2 Nephi 26:15, for example, in the midst of midrashic exposition on Isaiah 29:3–12,[35] we find a nice climactic tricolon:

The words of the righteous shall be written,
And the prayers of the faithful shall be heard,
And all those who have dwindled in unbelief shall not be forgotten!

The first two cola here provide direct parallel statements, while the final, climactic colon (the one with the highest apparent syllable count) is antithetically parallel. We can find another example of a climactic tricolon at 3 Nephi 8:13 (cf. Isa. 40:4), as laid out by Donald Parry:

And the highways were broken up,
And the level roads were spoiled,
And many smooth places became rough!

Another climactic tricolon (which Donald Parry terms a "progression") appears embedded in a larger poem, at 1 Nephi 2:20bc:[36]

And shall be led to a land of promise;
    Yea, even a land which I have prepared for you;
       Yea, a land which is choice above all other lands!

A set of twin climactic tricola again *à la* Donald Parry (united by antithetical parallelism) is to be found in Alma 9:28, and can be laid out as follows:

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35   On *midrashic* exposition in the Book of Mormon, see Blake T. Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 66–123; Grant Hardy, "2 Nephi 26 and 27 as Midrash," *Insights* 24, no. 5 (2004): 2–3; Hardy, *The Book of Mormon*, xii; Robert A. Rees, "The Midrashic Imagination and the Book of Mormon," *Dialogue* 44, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 44–66. For the broader view (based on the primary example of Jesus' paranetic discourse of Mark 13 as a *midrash* on Daniel), see Lars Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted: The Formation of Some Jewish Apocalyptic Texts and of the Eschatological Discourse Mark 13 Par.* (Lund: Gleerup, 1966).

36   Richard Rust does not distinguish it from within the larger poem in his "Poetry in the Book of Mormon," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, ed. John L. Sorenson & Melvin J. Thorne (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991), 106.

> If they have been righteous,
>> they shall reap the salvation of their souls,
>>> according to the power and deliverance of Jesus Christ;

> And if they have been evil,
>> they shall reap the damnation of their souls,
>>> according to the power and captivation of the Devil![37]

At Jacob 3:11, another couple of climactic tricola follow a call to repentance:

> O my brethren, hearken unto my word:

> Arouse the faculties of your souls,
> Shake yourselves that ye may awake from the slumber of death,
> And loose yourselves from the pains of Hell!

> That ye may not become angels to the Devil,
> To be cast into that lake of fire and brimstone,
> Which is the second death!

Such climactic tricola are regularly encountered in ancient Ugaritic narrative poetry, as at the beginning of the *Epic of Kirta* tablet 1 (*CAT* 1.14), I:7–9, which also contains a numerical progression:[38]

> 7 bt / [m]lk.itbd   The house of a king has perished:

> 8 dšbʿ / [a]ḫm.lh. A house with seven brothers,

> 9 ṯmnt.bn um /   Even eight mother's sons!

Another Ugaritic example is from the obverse of *The Birth of the Gracious Gods* tablet (*CAT* 1.23):[39]

> 9 yzbrnn.zbrm.gpn   May vine-pruners prune him,

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37   Another good example (synonymous) is at Alma 26:36, as laid out by Grant Hardy in his Appendix on "Book of Mormon Poetry," *The Book of Mormon*, 660; cf. Donald Parry, "Antithetical Parallelism in the Book of Mormon," in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 168.

38   Following the translation of Edward L. Greenstein in Simon Parker, ed., *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (Society of Biblical Literature/Scholars Press, 1997), 12; see other Ugaritic climactic tricola in *Kirta*, tablet 1, II:47–50, III:52–54 = IV:26–28; tablet 2 (CAT 1.15), II:18–20, 21–23, III:13–15, 17–19; tablet 3 (CAT 1.16), I:53–55, II:40–42, III:13–16, IV:3–4, 6–8, 10–12, V:25–28, VI:27–29, 54–57; and passim.

39   Theodore Lewis trans., Simon B. Parker, ed., *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, 208; cf. KTU 1.161 obverse.

10 yṣmdnn.ṣmdm.gpn.	May vine-binders bind him,
11 yšql.šdmth / km gpn	May they trim his tendrils like a vine.

Not only are these basic parallel features characteristic of ancient Hebrew[40] and Canaanite poetry but also they are expanded there and in the Book of Mormon into climactic tetracola, as for example in 2 Nephi 33:6:

I glory in plainness;	אני מתהלל בפתי
I glory in truth;	אני מתהלל באמת
I glory in my Jesus,	אני מתהלל בישועתי
For he hath redeemed my soul from Hell!	כי גאל נפשי משאול

I have placed my own hypothetical Hebrew translation opposite so as to display the stable syllable-count (8-8-9-8) and accentual count (3-3-3-3) used in a hypothetical original form.[41] In this case, I have not used the prosaic particle *'et* את־ (object indicator) nor the pronoun "he" הוא—though the tetracolon would remain climactic simply based on obvious intensification of meaning.

As Wilfred Watson has pointed out, the Bible features a climactic pentacolon at Proverbs 1:26–27:[42]

> I also at *your calamity* will laugh,
> I will mock when *panic strikes you*,

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40 Watson even found a tetracolon in Prov. 1:26–27 inside a climactic pentacolon. See Watson, "Chiastic Patterns in Biblical Hebrew Poetry," 128.

41 A more economical Hebrew translation might well be selected (and with a syllable count of 8:8:9:9, or accentual count of 3:3:3:3). I have preferred the Hebrew in a tetracolon contemporary with Lehi and Nephi found in Jer. 9:23–24 (MT 22–23) *mithallel* "boast" (so Bright, *Jeremiah*); cf. Isa. 25:9, Ps. 20:6, 35:9, 38:23 *bišuʿati* "in my *yešuʿa* (Salvation = the etymology of the name of Jesus)," as clearly understood soteriologically in Matt. 1:21, and Luke 1:69, 2:11, 21, 30–31, 3:6 (Isa. 52:10 *yešuʿat 'Elohenu* ישועת אלהינו "the salvation of our God"); cf. Exod. 15:2, 2 Sam. 22:3 (= Luke 1:69), 47, Isa. 12:2–3 (2 Ne. 22:2–3), Mic. 7:7, Hab. 3:18, Ps. 25:5, 56:14 ("For thou hast delivered my soul from death" כי הצלת נפשי ממות), 86:2, 11, 13, 15–16, 116:6, 13, 118:14–15; Mosiah 3:8–9. Other nice tetracola occur at 1 Sam. 2:1, and Jer. 9:4–5.

42 Watson, "Chiastic Patterns in Biblical Hebrew Poetry," 128, and R. Weiss, "On Chiasmus in Scripture," *Beth-Mikra* 13 (1962): 50 (Hebrew), both noting that the first four cola constitute a chiastic tetracolon.

> When like a storm *panic strikes you*,
> And *your calamity* like a whirlwind will come,
> When comes upon you *distress and anguish*!

And we can find another climactic pentacolon, this time in Middle Egyptian, again in the Tomb of King Intef, as translated by Miriam Lichtheim:[43]

vi,7–9	None	comes	from	there,
	To	tell	of	their	state,
	To	tell	of	their	needs,
	To	calm	our	hearts,
	Until we go where they have gone!			

We also find remarkably well-balanced twin climactic tricola at the center of an inclusion at Psalm 93:2–5 (as translated by the late Mitchell Dahood):[44]

verse 3

The floods have lifted up, O Lord,	נשאו נהרות יהוה
The floods have lifted up their voice,	נשאו נהרות קולם
The floods lift up their roaring!	ישאו נהרות דכים

verse 4

More (majestic) than the thunders of mighty waters,	מקלות מים רבים
More majestic than the waves of the sea,	אדירים משברי־ים
Majestic on high is the Lord!	אדיר במרום יהוה

Such intensification can also be seen in the climactic tricolon at Psalm 18:9 (KJV 18:8 = 2 Sam. 22:9), following Adele Berlin's translation:[45]

| Smoke went up from his nostrils; | עלה עשן באפו |
| From his mouth came devouring fire; | ואש־מפיו תאכל |

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43   Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 1:196.

44   Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1968), 339–40; cf. Pierre Auffret, "YHWH règne: Étude structurelle du Ps 93," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 103 (1991): 101–09, on the structure of the tricola at 3a–4c; cf. other climactic parallels at 1 Sam. 2:1, Jer. 9:4–5,22–24, 2 Ne. 12:11, and some crescendoing parallels at Mosiah 2:20–21, and 36–39.

45   Berlin, "Parallelism," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 5:155–56.

Live coals blazed forth from him!   גחלים בערו ממנו

More ambitious still is the complex chiastic and climactic format in Psalm 137:5–6 (New Jerusalem Bible translation),

If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand wither!

May my tongue remain stuck to my palate *if I do not keep you in mind,*

if I do not count Jerusalem the greatest of my joys.

We find a similar, parallelistic phenomenon in Classical Arabic. Several examples are noted by Michael Sells, as in the long one at *Qur'án* sura 89:1–6 — the climax is the destruction of the people of ʿAd who failed to heed the words of the Prophet Hud:

wa l-fajr	By the dawn
wa layalin ʿašr	By the nights ten
wa š-šafʿi wa l-watr	By the odd and the even
wa l-layli ida yasr	By the night as it eases away
hal fi dalika qasamun li di hijr	Is there not in that an oath for the thoughtful mind?
a lam tara kayfa faʿala rabbuka biʿad?	Don't you see what your lord did with ʿAd?

Early Meccan suras frequently swear an oath by the signs of creation, as here.[46]

Paired Tricola

Jeff Lindsay has called attention to a possible case of a double-duty colon[47] in the midst of paired tricola at 2 Nephi 4:34:

46   Michael Sells, *Approaching the Qur'án: The Early Revelations* (Ashland, OR: White Cloud Press, 1999), 201, 205; cf. Sells, *Approaching the Qur'án*, 201, citing A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Quran: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (1946), 2:1784–88, on oaths; cf. suras 82:1–6 (Sells, *Approaching the Qur'án,* 18), 91:1–10.

47   Jeff Lindsay, "2 Nephi 12 and the Septuagint: Evidence for Fraud or Authenticity in the Book of Mormon?" Part Two, "Paired Tricola," LDSFAQ (Mormon Answers) series, online at www.jefflindsay.com/LDSFAQ/2Nephi12.shtml#paired.

> O Lord, I have trusted in thee,
> And I will trust in thee forever.
> *I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh*;
> For I know that cursed is he that putteth his
>   trust in the arm of flesh.
> Yea cursed is he that putteth his trust in man
>   or maketh flesh his arm.

Other of Lindsay's examples are unconvincing. However, he does correctly point out that paired tricola are a known feature of biblical Hebrew poetry.[48]

Chiasmus – Distant Parallelism

Another type of repetitive parallelism common in the Bible is chiasmus, which is characterized by inverse or mirror imagery, sometimes at a distance. We have already seen several instances, *inter alia*, above. Such inverse parallelism can be employed on a relatively small scale, as at 1 Nephi 22:2:

> They were made manifest unto the prophet,
>   By the voice of the Spirit:
>   For by the Spirit
> Are all things made known unto the prophets,

And at Alma 50:14, with geographical significance:

> And they also began a foundation for a city
>   Between the city of Moroni
>   And the city of Aaron,
>   Joining the borders of Aaron
>   And Moroni;
> And they called the name of the city, or the land, Nephihah.

2 Nephi 1:5–7 provides a compact example of this rhetorical figure at the next level:

> 5 A Notwithstanding our ***afflictions***
>   B we have obtained *a land of promise*
>   *a land which is choice* above all other lands
>   a land which the Lord God hath **covenanted** with me
>   should be a land for the inheritance of my seed

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48   Citing H. W. M. van Grol, "Paired Tricola in the Psalms, Isaiah and Jeremiah," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 25 (1983): 55–73.

   C yea the Lord hath **consecrated**[49] **this land unto**
    me and to my children forever
    D and also all they which
     should be <u>led out of other countries by the</u>
     <u>hand of the Lord</u>

6   E Wherefore I Lehi prophesy according to
      the workings of the Spirit which is in me
    D that there shall be none <u>come into this land</u>
     save they *should be brought* <u>by the hand of the</u>
     <u>Lord</u>

7   C wherefore **this land is consecrated unto** him
    whom he shall bring
    B and if it so be that they shall serve him according
    to the **commandments** which he hath given it
    shall be *a land of liberty* unto them
   A wherefore they shall never be brought down into
   captivity

  Much larger concentric or ring structuring (chiasm) can be applied at the literary narrative level, as for the ABA triptych of the entire book of Mosiah, in which the Benjamin section (A) is contrasted with the Noah section (B) and reinforced by the Abinadi section (A').[50]

  Used on both a large and small scale,[51] chiasmus has been so widely discussed by proponents and detractors of the Book of Mormon[52] that some fail to realize that it is merely one rhetorical figure among many which can be found in both Bible and Book of Mormon. However, when properly analyzed, chiasmus can exhibit quite a distinctive and useful structure in disclosing the meaning and intent of the section or pericope

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49 *consecrated* Original MS; *covenanted* Printer's MS, 1830–1981, RLDS 1908 editions.

50 Susan B. Taber, "Parallelism and Contrast: Mormon's Literary Technique," paper presented at the May 14, 1983, meeting of the Association of Mormon Letters (AML) and published in the *Association for Mormon Letters* 4 (1984): 117–25. Taber attributes this structure to master editor (redactor) Mormon, and also finds that he created a diptych in Alma.

51 Cf. short chiasms at 1 Ne. 7:3–4 (abba), 2 Ne. 4:18 (abccab), 19:13–14 (abcdcba), Alma 50:14 (abccba).

52 Welch, *Chiasmus in Antiquity, passim*; Dan Vogel, "The Use and Abuse of Chiasmus in Book of Mormon Studies," paper delivered at August 2001 Sunstone Symposium.

involved, and this is well-understood by most biblical scholars—and by most scholars of the ancient Near East in general.[53]

Progressions

Donald Parry calls attention to several very interesting parallelistic progressions, stair steps, or gradations in both Bible and Book of Mormon—some ascending or descending, and some climactic. They share common methods of anadiploid chaining which cleverly lead from one related item to the next, often with allegorical meaning, as in Isaiah 51:10–11a, 63:1–6; Hosea 12:3–6; Psalms 19:7–9, 121:1b–2a; 3 Nephi 9:31–38, 29:12; Mormon 9:12–13; and Moroni 8:25–26, 10:21–23.[54] For example, here is Joel 1:4:

> That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten;
> And that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten;
> And that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar
>   eaten.

Lyric Poetry: Song

As we have already seen above, the *Psalm of Nephi* (2 Ne. 4:15–35) makes full use of parallel cola. It is also the best example of the lyric form in the Book of Mormon.[55] The ABAB tetracolon in verses 21–22 (following Donald Parry) is characteristic:

> He hath filled me with his love,
>   even unto the consuming of my flesh.
> He hath confounded mine enemies,
>   unto the causing of them to quake before me.

53   Yehuda T. Radday, "Chiasmus in the Old Testament," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 51; Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, *Inu Anum ṣīrum: Literary Structures in the Non-Juridical Sections of Codex Hammurabi* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1994), 58 n. 67, "it may now be considered a well established and wide spread fact of literary style."

54   Parry, *Poetic Parallelisms*, xxiv–xxix, mentions several of these.

55   Steven Sondrup, "The Psalm of Nephi: A Lyric Reading," *BYU Studies* 21, no. 3 (1981): 357–72. Fragments of lyric poetry can be found at 1 Ne. 2:9–10 (laid out below), and Alma 26:8,16. A lyric form typical of both ancient Egyptian and Hebrew is love poetry (Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 2:181–93; David P. Silverman, ed., *Ancient Egypt* [London: Duncan Baird, 1997], 239), good examples of which would be the Song of Songs and the very archaic Lament of David. Cf. William F. Albright, "A Catalogue of Early Hebrew Lyric Poems (Psalm LXVIII)," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 23 (1950–51):1–39; Hermann Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel*, trans. James D. Nogalski (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998).

The next bicolon (verse 23) could be added for intensification, as noted by Richard Rust:[56]

> Behold, he hath heard my cry by day,
>> and he hath given me knowledge by visions in the nighttime.

Classical Arabic poetry exhibits a similar structure, as in the following rhyming tetracolon by Ibn Malek Ibn e'Rakaa of Damascus (8th century AD):

If before she herself wept, love for Sada had caused my tears to flow,
> I should have lightened my heart before repentance (choked it);
But she wept first, her tears excited mine,
> The merit, I cried, belongs to the predecessor.[57]

The Lyric-Elegiac *Qaṣida*-Introduction

Very quickly, following the opening scenes of the Book of Mormon in Jerusalem, we find the clan of Lehi-ben-Manasseh in a completely different, ancient Arabic environment—which Hugh Nibley threw into such stark relief with his *Lehi in the Desert* over a half-century ago.[58] Among the myriad Arabic components of this environment, which Nibley used to interpret the strange actions of the members of that clan, there was the *naṣib*, the pastoral and paradisiacal archetype of the pre-Islamic ode, or *qaṣida*[59]—which later took on such importance in Classical Arabic poetry and literature (including the *Thousand Nights and a Night*).[60] Here is an example mourning the loss of Valencia, excerpted from a poem by Ibn ʿUmayrah al-Makhzumi of 13th century al-Andalus, Spain:

> 4 O mountain of water-sated verdure, like none I knew,
>> How time's ill turns of fortune slighted your spring.
> 5 And O you people that I love—but events now exact
>> That I stand alone, apart from those who merit love[61]

56 Rust, "Poetry in the Book of Mormon," 102.

57 From Hariri, *Makamat*, "Introduction," quoted and translated in John Lewis Burckhardt, *Arabic Proverbs* (London: John Murray, 1830/ reprint Mineola, NY: Dover, 2004), 172.

58 Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*.

59 Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*, 89–92.

60 Jaroslav Stetkevych, *The Zephyrs of Najd: The Poetics of Nostalgia in the Classical Arabic Nasib* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

61 Lines 4–5 from text 64 in Stetkevych, *Zephyrs of Najd*, 107, 215–16, citing Ahmad Ibn Muhammad al-Maqqari al-Tilimsani, *Nafh al-Tib min Ghusn al-Andalus*

Were we to follow the hints contained in that Classical Arabic tradition, i.e., going by a typical oral declamation at the Abbasid court of the Caliph in old Baghdad, we might imagine a dramatic scene in which Lehi stood grasping his staff or bow solidly planted on the ground before him as he stared at his encampment and declaimed his lyric *naṣib* to his eldest sons (1 Ne. 2:9–10):

> And when my father saw that the waters of the river emptied
> > into the fountain of the Red Sea,
> > he spake unto Laman, saying:
> > "O that thou mightest be like unto this river,
> > continually running into the fountain of all righteousness!"

> And he also spake unto Lemuel:
> > "O that thou mightest be like unto this valley,
> > firm and steadfast and immovable in keeping the
> > commandments of the Lord!"

Later in the book, at the other pole of the book-length chiasm of 1 Nephi (deliberately placed for maximum poetic effect, and again using parallelism of members), we find the antiphonal and elegiac response[62] to Lehi's apparent *naṣib* in a tricolon quoted from Isaiah 48:18 (1 Ne. 20:18):

> O that thou hadst hearkened to my *commandments*!
> Then had thy peace been as a *river*,
> And thy *righteousness* as the waves of the sea.

The lesson here is primarily addressed by Isaiah (or his school) to the disobedient of Judah who could have avoided the consequences of Exile by the Chaldeans/ Neo-Babylonians (verses 19–22), but is secondarily applicable also (with particular force) to some disobedient members of the clan of Lehi, who have gone into a separate exile, for they liken all Scripture unto themselves (1 Ne. 19:23, 2 Ne. 6:5, 11:2,8).

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al-Ratib – wa Dhikr Waziriha Lisan al-Din Ibn al-Khatib, ed. M. M. al-Din Ibn al-Hamid, 2 vols. (Beirut, 1967), 1:284.

62   Welch, "A Study Relating Chiasmus," 150–53 (2:9–10 river...righteousness... commandments; 20:18 commandments...river... righteousness; 3:7, 17:3 ways and means provided to obey commandments; 4:9, precious steel sword; 16:18, fine steel bow; 8:1–15:36, Lehi and Nephi visions and prophecies, etc.); ABCDEFGHIJKJIGFDCHEBA.

Poetry in Midrash and Apocalyptic

Midrash is part of that likening process, and is specifically the exegesis or interpretation of a holy text, along with application to the situation in life (*Sitz im Leben*) of those making that interpretation, and it can be found taking place already in Deuteronomy, Ezekiel, and Habakkuk, i.e., quite early.[63] Above, we have seen a climactic tricolon in 2 Nephi 26, in the midst of a *midrash* on Isaiah 29 (*midrash* can be found throughout 2 Ne. 26–27). We can also find a kind of progressive or climactic parallelism combined with a *midrash* on Isaiah 52:7 in Mosiah 15:15–18, in the words of Abinadi:

> And *O how beautiful*[64] *upon the mountains were their feet!*
> And again, *how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet*
>   of those that are still publishing peace!
> And again, *how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet*
>   of those who shall hereafter publish peace,
>   yea, from this time henceforth and forever!
> And behold, I say unto you, this is not all.
> For *O how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet*
>   of him that bringeth good tidings,[65]
>   that is the founder of peace,
>   yea, even the Lord, who has redeemed his people;
>   yea, him who has granted salvation unto his people;

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63 Gary G. Porton, "Midrash," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 4:819; Gary Porton, "Midrash: The Jews and the Hebrew Bible in the Greco-Roman Period," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 19, no. 2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1979), 103–38; James L. Kugel and Rowan A. Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 46–51, 79–81.

64 "How beautiful" here is the translation of biblical Hebrew *ma-nāvû* מה–נאוו which was the name of Hugh Nibley's LDS ward in Provo for much of his life, and is also the source of the name of the city of *Nauvoo*, "The Beautiful"—though the transliteration in that last case is Sephardic (which was used by Joseph and his brethren in the School of the Prophets at Kirtland)—and which can ultimately be compared to Akkadian *nawû* "flock, pastureland" = Sumerian á-dam "country, pasture" (cf. Adam-Ondi-Ahman D&C 117:8,11).

65 The "good tidings" (*mĕbaśśr tôb*) in Isa. 52:7 (מבשר טוב) is identical to the New Testament use of "Gospel" (εὐαγγέλιον) as "good news" (Mark 1:1), while "Salvation, Savior" (ישועה *Yĕšûʿâ*) is the specific meaning and actual spelling of the name of Jesus: **Yĕšûʿâ** (Luke 1:31,69, 2:21,30). That the very name of a forthcoming anointed holy one might be provided well ahead of time may be seen also in 1 Kings 13:2 (**Josiah**) and Isa. 44:28, 45:1 (**Cyrus**).

Apocalyptic

That apocalyptic texts can be found in 1 Nephi 8–14,[66] and elsewhere in the Book of Mormon, is likewise not an indicator of late development. As part of his early work on the FARMS *Book of Mormon Critical Text Project*, Grant Hardy noted that 1 Nephi 1 contains the pillar of fire, heavenly book, mystery of God, and prophecy (in an angelic vision), which are likewise to be found in Revelation 10:1–11.[67] Such parallels may be quite useful. And as noted by John W. Welch in his 1986 BYU Book of Mormon Symposium paper, the motifs in both 1 Nephi 1 and Revelation 10 are among the normal items to be expected as part of a *prophetic call* in the Classical Israelite period[68] and later.[69]

Portions of the visions recounted in 1 Nephi 8–14 can likewise be compared with the book of Revelation, though undoubtedly for the same reasons as just mentioned, i.e. the chiastic manner in which Nephi lays the visions out is another pattern of rhetorical importance. Claims that apocalyptic is a late literary genre, and so must be anachronistic in the Book of Mormon, ignore the sage observations of scholars like the late Frank Moore Cross, Jr.: "The origins of the apocalyptic must be searched for as early as the sixth century BC"[70] Thus, not only are Second Isaiah, and Isaiah 24–27 (the so-called *Isaianic Apocalypse*), 34–35, all from no

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66 Cf. Mark D. Thomas, *Digging in Cumorah: Reclaiming the Book of Mormon Narrative* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 99–109.

67. See *Book of Mormon Critical Text*, 2nd ed., 3 vols., which contains by far the most comprehensive and relevant listing of texts parallel to the *Book of Mormon* available in any published source.

68 John W. Welch, "The Calling of a Prophet," in *First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1988), 35–54; cf. Samuel Meier, *The Messenger in the Ancient Semitic World* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

69 Cf. Blake T. Ostler, "The Throne-Theophany and Prophetic Commission in 1 Nephi: A Form-Critical Analysis," *BYU Studies* 26, no. 4 (1986): 67–95. See in particular Geo Widengren, *Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book* (Uppsala: Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1950), for a look at these motifs throughout the ancient Near East; similarly, non-Mormon scholar Willis Barnstone, ed., *The Other Bible* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 537, was quite taken with the strong parallels he adduced in comparison of the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the story of Joseph Smith's obtaining the Book of Mormon.

70 Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 343, i.e., the Exile presumably transformed religious institutions such as prophecy; cf. Frank Moore Cross, "Light on the Bible from the Dead Sea Caves," in *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Hershel Shanks (New York: Random House, 1992), 163–66; Paul D. Hanson, "From Prophecy to Apocalyptic: Unresolved Issues," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 15 (1980): 3–6.

later than the 6ᵗʰ century BC, but (according to Cross), "the mythological lore of Ugarit will be increasingly important for apocalyptic studies. One thinks of the superb paper of J. A. Emerton, 'The Origin of the Son of Man Imagery.'"[71]

The origins of apocalyptic, it seems, must now be sought for at least as early as the second millennium BC, and perhaps earlier, according to the 1984 University of Oslo dissertation of Helge S. Kvanvig,[72] especially comparing Daniel 7 with the Akkadian "Vision of the Nether World."[73] The arguments for the transmission of major apocalyptic traditions from such early times down to the time of Joseph Smith have been dealt with elsewhere, and will not concern us here.[74]

Proverbs—The Wisdom Tradition

The wisdom tradition in the Book of Mormon is also early, and a very early origin is likewise evident for the Wisdom tradition in Israel, as noted by John Bright:

> Personified Wisdom has nothing essentially Hellenic about it, but stems ultimately from Canaanite-Aramean paganism, being attested in the Proverbs of Ahiqar (about sixth century). The

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71 Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 345 n. 8 for quotation, citing Emerton, "The Origin of the Son of Man Imagery," *Journal of Theological Studies* 9 (1958): 225–42; cf. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 346, n. 13, where he states that Jewish apocalyptic was derived from "old Canaanite mythic lore." See also the comments of Matthew Black, "The Strange Visions of Enoch," *Bible Review* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 39, on the very early nature of the Enoch tradition (cf. 19, 21, 23). In addition, Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 1:73, 79 n. 59, interprets Egyptian *s₃ s* in the *Maxims of Ptahhotep* 35 (line 494 = page 15 in *Papyrus Prisse*) as "Son-of-man, wellborn," and considers it similar to the Hebrew-Aramaic tradition (cf. *Book of Abraham* 3:27).

72 Helge S. Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic: The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and the Son of Man* (Neukirchener Verlag, 1988), part 1 from his dissertation, and part 2 from his article, "An Akkadian Vision as Background for Dan 7," *Studia Theologica* 35 (1981): 85–89; cf. James VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984).

73 Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic*, 389–441; E. A. Speiser, "Descent of Ishtar to the Nether World," in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, ed. James B. Pritchard, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 109–10 (hereafter as *ANET*); cf. John J. Collins, *Daniel: With an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 79.

74 On the survival of early Jewish apocalyptic mysticism, see H. Curtis Wright, "A Sophic and Mantic People," *BYU Studies* 31, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 63, n.. 6.

> text of Prov., chs. 8;9, must go back to a Canaanite
> original of about the seventh century with roots in
> still earlier Canaanite lore.[75]

This ought to be of some interest, since (as noted by Margaret Barker) the Book of Mormon clearly participates in the proverbial Wisdom tradition,[76] e.g., at 2 Nephi 2:11–29 (see below on the "Two Ways"), Jacob 4:10, Mosiah 8:20–21, Alma 3:27, Ether 12:26, etc.[77] Indeed, the pre-exilic Israelite Wisdom tradition focused upon esoteric temple rites, much of which Barker has insisted, was carefully removed from the Hebrew Canon by the revisionist Deuteronomistic School.[78] I will leave that issue for a separate discussion.

However, aside from the tradition of personified Wisdom (*ḥokmâ*) qua Holy Spirit in biblical usage, there was also the centrality of *mꜣꜥt*, "Truth, Justice, Order, and Righteousness," in the Egyptian wisdom tradition,[79] along with the more generic, didactic and sapiential sense of wisdom: Noteworthy among the latter are the profound and powerful bicola in 2 Nephi 2:25 (abbc),

> Adam fell that men might be;
> And men are, that they might have joy.[80]

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75   John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 448.

76   Margaret Barker, "Joseph Smith and Preexilic Israelite Religion," in *The Worlds of Joseph Smith: A Bicentennial Conference at the Library of Congress*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2006), 69–82.

77   See more in Alyson Skabelund Von Feldt, "'His Secret is with the Righteous': Instructional Wisdom in the Book of Mormon," *Maxwell Institute Occasional Papers* 5 (2007): 49–83; cf. 2 Ne. 7:4, Isa. 50:4; and 2 Ne. 21:2, Isa. 11:2, Prov. 1:2, Eccles. 24:25–27, 2 Esdras 14:47.

78   Margaret Barker, *Temple Mysticism: An Introduction* (London: SPCK, 2011).

79   Ronald J. Williams, "Egyptian Wisdom Literature," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 2:395.

80   Joy and rejoicing is the final objective in both Ecclesiastes and Proverbs (Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* [New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981], 125), and this is in line with the Egyptian *Songs of the Harpers* (James L. Crenshaw, "Ecclesiastes, Book of," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 2:278). Candice Wendt suggested that wisdom is needed to make independent decisions, which requires opposition in all things, which includes knowing sorrow in order to know joy, and keyed to the trees in the Garden of Eden (2 Ne. 2:10–25), during Q&A on her paper "Partaking of the Fruit of Ecological Wisdom," presented June 7, 2013, at the Mormon Theology Seminar meeting on "Opposition in All Things: Mormon Perspectives on the Fall," held at Utah Valley University (UVU), Provo, Utah.

Alma 40:8,

> All is as one day with God,
> and time only is measured unto man.

Alma 34:32,

> For behold,
>> This life is the time for men to prepare to meet God;
> Yea, behold,
>> The day of this life is the day for men to perform
>> their labors.

The clever chiasm in Moroni 7:11,

> A bitter fountain cannot bring forth good water,
> Neither can a good fountain bring forth bitter water.

And Mosiah 2:17, which consciously labels itself as wisdom,

> That ye may learn wisdom
> That ye may learn that
> When ye are in the service of your fellow beings,
> Ye are only in the service of your God.

Mosiah 8:20b–21, presents feminine Wisdom in climactic fashion,

> For they will not seek Wisdom,
> Neither do they desire that she should rule over them.
> Yea, they are like a wild flock which fleeth from the
>> shepherd,
> And scattereth, and are driven, and are devoured by the
>> beasts of the forest!

And Alma 37:35, which likewise consciously labels itself as wisdom,

> O remember, my son,
> And learn wisdom in thy youth;
> Yea, learn in thy youth
> To keep the commandments of God.

Egyptian religious poetry consists of many hymns and prayers which may entail any of these sapiential characteristics. Jan Assmann argues that such "poems share the spirit of personal piety which dominates late Egyptian Wisdom Literature, exemplified in the *Wisdom*

of Amenemope"[81] (*ANET*³ 421–24; *COS* 1.47), which we mention immediately below.

Several of the *Ten Commandments*, which were on the Brass Plates of Laban and which appear in Mosiah 12 and 13, are very similar to advice in ancient Egyptian wisdom compilations, as in the *Instruction of ꜥAnkhsheshonqy* 6/6: "Serve your father and mother that you may go and prosper" (Exod. 20:12, 1 Ne. 17:55, Mosiah 13:20), and 6/10 "Do not set your heart upon the property of another" (Exod. 20:17, Mosiah 13:24). Indeed, much of what passes for Israelite wisdom can often be traced to ancient Egypt, e.g., Proverbs 22:17–23:11 is heavily dependent upon the content and structure of the Egyptian *Instruction of Amenemope*, and is even specifically referred to in the Syriac, LXX Greek, Qumran Hebrew, and *qeri* of Proverbs 22:20 "thirty sayings of admonition and knowledge" (NRSV; *Amenemope* had thirty chapters). Psalm 1, and Jeremiah 17:5–8 are likewise dependent on the *Instruction of Amenemope* (*ANET* 421–24; *COS* 1.47).[82] Note also the *Instruction for Merikare* 99 (*COS* 1.35), "For as you do, so it will be done to you," where we find the same wise counsel as in 3 Nephi 14:2 (Matt. 7:2):

> For with what judgment ye judge,
>   Ye shall be judged;
> And with what measure ye mete,
>   It shall be measured to you again.[83]

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81   Jan Assmann, "Survey of Egyptian Literature," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 2:382, citing Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 2:110–14,146–63; Jan Assmann, "Weisheit, Loyalismus und Frömmigkeit," in *Studien zu altägyptischen Lebenslehren*, ed. Erik Hornung and Othmar Keel, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 28 (Freiburg & Göttingen, 1979), 11–72.

82   Not only *ꜥAnkhsheshonq* generally, but also the *Papyrus Insinger, and the Dialogue of a Man with His Soul* (Crenshaw, "Ecclesiastes, Book of," 2:278, citing Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 3:159–217, and Pritchard, *ANET*, 405–07); Glendon E. Bryce, *A Legacy of Wisdom: The Egyptian Contribution to the Wisdom of Israel: The Egyptian Contribution to the Wisdom of Israel* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1979); Carol R. Fontaine, "A Modern Look at Ancient Wisdom: The Instruction of Ptahhotep Revisited," *Biblical Archaeologist*, 44 (Summer 1981): 155–60; Leo G. Perdue, *Wisdom and Cult: A Critical Analysis of the Views of Cult in the Wisdom Literature of Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977); Donald B. Redford, "Egypt and the World Beyond," in *Ancient Egypt*, 56; Willams, "Egyptian Wisdom Literature," 2:397.

83   Crenshaw, "Ecclesiastes, Book of," 2:278, notes that "the royal testament must surely correspond to this literary type in such instructions as those for Merikare,"; cf. Talmud Babli, *Soṭa* 1:7–9 (8b), 3:7–9; *Sanhedrin* 90a (10:1/11:1); *Nedarim* 32a (3:16); *Megilla* 12b (1:13); *ꜣAbot* 2:7, 3:19; Mk 4:24, Lk 6:38; 2 Enoch 44:5;1 Clement 13:2; Polycarp *Philippians* 2:3.

In other cases we have very archaic Wisdom from the East (Arabia), such as that of Lëmû'ēl of Massā' in Proverbs 31:1–9, or (as we see immediately below) the rumination at Job 14:1–2, in characteristic 3+3 meter:

> Man that is born of a woman,
> Is of few days, and full of trouble.
> He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down;
> He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

However, "the most striking verbal similarity occurs in a Mesopotamian text, the *Gilgamesh Epic* (*ANET*, 72–99,503–07)" (*COS* 1.132), as well as in the *Babylonian Theodicy* (*ANET*, 601–04; *COS* 1.154), the *Dialogue between a Master and His Slave* (*ANET*, 600–01; *COS* 1.155), and *I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom* (*ANET*, 596–600; *COS* 1.153), all of which have specific parallels with Ecclesiastes.[84]

Of even greater importance is the river and tree of Life motif as a stock exemplar of wisdom in both Bible[85] and Book of Mormon,[86] particularly at Proverbs 3:18, 11:30, Psalm 1, and 2 Nephi 2:11–29 (Lehi's Opposites), as part of the early Doctrine of the Two Ways,[87] while Divine

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84   Crenshaw, "Ecclesiastes, Book of," 2:278.

85   R. E. Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Barker, *Temple Mysticism*, 8.

86   Daniel C. Peterson, "Nephi and His Asherah: A Note on 1 Nephi 11:8–23," in *Mormons, Scripture, and the Ancient World: Studies in Honor of John L. Sorenson*, ed. Davis Bitton (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1998), 191–243. On the significance of the presence of Mary, Mother of the Son of God, in the Vision of the Tree of Life, and the function of the Wisdom genre there: cf. Prov. 3:18, "She [Wisdom] is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her." For Wisdom is the wife of God, and the Mother goddess Asherah is often associated with the Tree of Life (Alyson Skabelund Von Feldt, "Does God Have a Wife?" *FARMS Review*, 19, no. 1 [2007]: 81–118).

87   Cf. Ernest Horton, Jr., "Koheleth's Concept of Opposites," *Numen* 19 (1972): 1–21; Avraham Gileadi, *Isaiah Decoded: Ascending the Ladder to Heaven* (Hebraeus Press, 2013), presents a "bifid" structure of the entire book of Isaiah, with seven parallel themes arranged chiastically in each half of the book, through a series of opposites (ruin & rebirth, rebellion & compliance, etc.); James H. Charlesworth, "A Critical Comparison of the Dualism of 1QS 3:13–4:26 and the 'Dualisms' Contained in the Gospel of John," in *John and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 76–106; "Reinterpreting John: How the Dead Sea Scrolls Have Revolutionized Our Understanding of the Gospel of John," *Bible Review* 9, no. 1 (Feb. 1993): 18–25, 54; Herbert Braun, *Qumran und das Neue Testament* (Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1966), 1:201–04; cf. also Amos 5:14–15 in Francis L. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Amos*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 506 (good & evil | evil & good), cited by Andrew H. Bartelt, "Isaiah 5 and 9: In- or Interdependence?" in *Fortunate the Eyes That See*, 167–68, "triple chiasm" of evil,good | good,evil; darkness,light | light,darkness; bitter,sweet | sweet,bitter; Gen. 2:9,17, 3:22, Deut. 11:26, 30:15–20, Prov. 4:18–19, 12:28, 15:24, 28:6,18, Jer. 17:8, 21:8, Ezek. 47:12, Matt. 5:14–18, 7:12–14, 19:16–26, 22:34–40,

Wisdom and the Law are the source of life eternal and the Spirit, which are symbolized by spring water (living water).[88] Note the *Community Rule Scroll* from Qumran Cave 1 (1QS 4:21–22):

> God…will purify…him with the Holy Spirit
> Will sprinkle upon him the spirit of truth
> Like waters for purification from all abominations.

And some striking lines from Ethiopic Enoch (1 Enoch 48:1):

> In that place I saw the fountain of righteousness,
> Which does not become depleted,
> And is surrounded completely by numerous fountains
>   of wisdom.

Moreover, Wisdom is the Holy Spirit in Proverbs 8, Wisdom of Solomon 7–8, and Ecclesiasticus 24 (Ben Sira).[89]

Not incidentally, the "Two Ways" (life & death, good & evil) was likewise an integral part of ancient Egyptian theology,[90] as well as significant at Qumran and in intertestamental literature (apocrypha & pseudepigrapha).[91]

To find more such material, one ought to take careful note also of the powerful homilies (sermons) which can be found in Mosiah 1–5 (a combined New Year, covenant renewal ceremony, pilgrimage festival of ingathering, and coregency ritual), Alma 5, and Moroni 7—all of which include poetry.

Luke 13:24, John 10:9–10, 14:6, Rom. 12:16–21, 13:8–12; Rev. 2:7; 1 Ne. 8:10–35, 11:8–25, 15:22–36, 2 Ne. 2:15, 4:4, Alma 5:34,62, 12:23–26, 32:40, 42:2–6.

88   Gen. 26:14–25, Exod. 15:22–27, 17:1–7, Ps. 36:8–9, 46:4, Prov. 13:14, 14:27, 16:22, 18:4, Isa. 12:3–4 (2 Ne. 22:3–4), 44:1–4, 55:1, 58:11b, Jer. 2:13, 17:5–8 (2 Ne. 4:34, 28:31), Ezek. 36:25–28, 47:1–12, Joel 2:28 (Acts 2:14–27 Pentecost), Zech. 14:8, Matt. 3:11, Mark 1:8, John 1:32–34, 4:14, 7:37–39, Rev. 7:16–17, 22:17; 1 Ne. 2:9, 8:13–26, 11:25, 20:18 (Isa. 48:18), Alma 5:34, 42:27, 3 Ne. 12:6, Ether 8:26, 12:28, Moro. 7:11.

89   Patrick Skehan, "Structures in Poems on Wisdom: Proverbs 8 and Sirach 24," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (1979): 371, n. 11.

90   Leonard Lesko, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

91   Wisdom of Solomon 18:3; Eccles. (Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sirach) 11:14–16, 15:3,17, 24:23–31, 33:14; CD (*passim*); 1QM (*passim*), 1QS 1:9–10, 3:16–4:26 (Community Rule); 4Q246; Testament of Abraham 11–12 rescension A, and 8–9 rescension B; Testament of Asher 6; Didache 1 (*Doctrina Apostolorum*); Epistle of Barnabas 18–20.

Poetry Using Typologies, Metaphors, Similes, Allegories, Parables, and Puns

Richard Rust and Donald Parry have explained in short compass the typologies (type–antitype) in 2 Nephi 11:4, and Mosiah 13:31,[92] but these are merely hints of things to come, as suggested by Rowan Greer and then Northrop Frye in a biblical context:

> We cannot read Luke's infancy narratives without being reminded of the story of Sam.'s birth. Matthew's Sermon on the Mount is clearly meant to take us to a new Sinai. The miraculous feeding of the multitude in the wilderness harks back to the manna miracle in the wilderness, as John 6 makes explicit. Behind Christ hover the figures of Adam, Abraham, Moses, and David. . . . the Hebrew Scriptures become a type of Christ, foreshadowing him and his work, or an allegory in which the letter of Scripture points toward the timeless truths explicitly defined in the New Testament writings. John 3:14 treats Moses' lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness (Num. 21:9) as a type of Christ's exaltation on the cross. Matthew 12:39ff. (cf. Matt. 16:4) treats Jonah's three days in the belly of the whale as a type of Christ's three days in death, but Luke 11:29ff. interprets Jonah as a sign of repentance. 1 Peter 3:21 understands the deliverance of Noah as a type of Christian baptism. And in Galatians 4, Paul interprets the story of Abraham's two children in a partly typological partly allegorical fashion to argue for the incorporation of the Gentiles into God's people.[93]

> This typological way of reading the Bible is indicated too often and explicitly in the New Testament itself for us to be in any doubt that this

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92   Richard Dilworth Rust and Donald W. Parry, "Book of Mormon Literature," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:183–84.

93   Kugel and Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, 133–34.

> is the "right" way of reading it—"right" in the only
> sense that criticism can recognize, as the way that
> conforms to the intentionality of the book itself
> and to the conventions it assumes and requires.[94]

Not just the garden and Tree of Life (along with path and river) are rendered allegorically and typologically, but other agricultural metaphors are rendered particularly well in the Book of Mormon. Exilic Israel and the Israel of the Restoration are, for example, each compared to an olive tree in Jacob 5 (a long parable, with interpretation in Jacob 6).[95] While the human soul expands in Alma 5:9–14, it is the word of God in Alma 32:28–34 (which Rust & Parry term an "extended metaphor") compared to a seed which begins to grow as it is cultivated, first swelling and sprouting, and finally leading to full flowering of the soul in whom it was planted, bringing enlightenment and understanding. Such metaphors, similes, and allegories are quite common biblically,[96] and extra- biblically,[97] and they play an essential part in the composition and understanding of poetry (and epistemology) in the Book of Mormon. Rust and Parry note the simile curse in Abinadi's denunciation of King Noah at Mosiah 12:10–11.[98] Jacob's Blessing in Genesis 49 includes alliterative punning at verse 19, which is reminscent of the best etymology for Book of Mormon **Gaddianton**-robbers:[99]

94   Frye, *The Great Code*, 79–80.

95   See J. Dominic Crossan, "Parable," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 5:146–52; cf. the grape vine motif at 1 Ne. 15:15, and 2 Ne. 15:1–7 (Isa. 5:1–7), "For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the House of Israel, And the men of Judah his pleasant plant" (7).

96   Ps. 1:1–3, 44:2, 80:8–13, 92:12–14, 128:3, 144:12, Isa. 5:1–7 (= 2 Ne. 15:1–7), 27:2–11, Ezek. 19:10–14, Zech. 8:12–13, Matt. 20:1–16, 21:33–45, Luke 13:6–9, 20:9–19, John 15:1–8, Rom. 11:13–25, 1 Cor. 3:5–9.

97   *Ahiqar* Syriac 8:35 and Elephantine 73; 1QHodayot VIII; Odes of Solomon 11:18; Gospel of Thomas, logia 65–66; Midrash *Sifre Deuteronomy* 32:9 '312; Midrash *Leviticus Rabba* 11 (113a); cf. Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch, eds., *The Allegory of the Olive Tree* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994); Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, (Munich: Beck, 1922), 1:874–75.

98   Rust and Parry, "Book of Mormon Literature," 1:183–84.

99   Spelled with the double-*d* in the Original Book of Mormon Manuscript. As pointed out by John W. Welch in 1985 (Welch "Thieves and Robbers," in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, 248–49), the Hebrew word for "band; bandits," is spelled with the double-*d*, gĕdûd. In fact, the Hebrew phrase 'îš gĕdûdîm "band of robbers" is even used in Hosea 6:9. Thus, perhaps the name is metonymic or a symbolic epithet. This might also apply to later Giddianhi (note the double-*d*), who was also chief of this powerful criminal conspiracy (3 Ne. 3).

Gad will be raided by raiders,	(*Gad gĕdûd yegûdennû*)
	גד גדוד יגודנו
And he will raid at (their) heel(s).	(*wĕhû' yāgud ʿaqeb[am]*)
	והוא יגד עקב

Wordplay (paronomasia), which takes various forms in the biblical tradition,[100] is difficult to establish in a translated text for which the original is inaccessible, but it is clear that punning (which was exceedingly popular in ancient Egypt as well) does take place in the Book of Mormon. Pedro Olavarria and David Bokovoy have noted the puns on the name Zarahemla "Seed of compassion" at Mosiah 9:2 and 3 Nephi 3:24, based on KJV use of the word "spared; compassion" (*ḥml)* there and at 1 Samuel 15:9. We also have instances of metonymic naming, such as that of Zeezrum (hypothetical Hebrew **Ze-ezrum*, "That-Ezrum-Guy; Silverman," following a suggestion of Ben Urrutia), the "Money-man," or "Mister-Silver," bearing as he does the name of a type of Nephite silver-measure, the *ezrum*, for which the otherwise inexplicable digression on weights & measures in Alma 11 makes sense, as well as Antionah (a chief ruler in Alma 12:20), possibly meaning "That-Gold-Guy; Goldman; Money-man," similarly based on the Nephite gold-measure, the *antion* (Alma 11:19).[101] The two puns thus apparently frame the explanatory digression into Nephite weights & measures as part of an ABA triptych. The same sort of thing can be found in the book of Isaiah, in a section quoted in the Book of Mormon (Isa. 5:8–25; 9:7–10:4) in which the Emmanuel Booklet of 6:1–9:6, and/or the *Denkschrift* – Isaianic Memoirs of 6–8, at first appear to be intrusive, since this central material separates two perfectly matched poems, with a double inclusio of Seven Woes

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100   Scott R. Noegel, ed., *Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature* (Bethesda: CDL, 2000); J. J. Gluck, "Paronomasia in Biblical Literature," *Semitics* 1 (1970): 50–78; William L. Holladay, "Form and Word-Play in David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan," *Vetus Testamentum* 20, no. 2 (1970): 153–189; Raymond Van Leuwen, "What Comes out of God's Mouth: Theological Wordplay in Deuteronomy 8," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (1985): 55–57; cf. Phil. 4:3, Col. 10.

101   Both these examples fully explained by Gordon C. Thomasson, "What's in a Name? Book of Mormon Language, Names, and [Metonymic] Naming," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, 3, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 15–16; cf. James Barr, "Symbolism of Names in the Old Testament," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 52 (1969): 11–29; *The Scope and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), 141 n. 6.

(deliberately concluded at 10:1), and thus giving us an unexpected, but deliberate overall ABCDCBA chiastic structure.[102]

Other examples of wordplay can be found elsewhere in the Book of Mormon. In his opening lines (1 Ne. 1:1), for example, Nephi appears to exhibit a play on the sound of his likely Egyptian name, *nfy* "Captain; Wind; Sail," and *nfr* "good,"

> I, *Nephi*, having been born of *goodly* parents,

We see these plays on just such words in the Egyptian story of *The Eloquent Peasant*, for example, at B1 305,[103]

> That goodness should be good is good indeed.
> *nfr nfrt nfr rf*

Other puns may be based on various Book of Mormon place-names, including *Jershon*, "Place of Inheritance,"[104] *Nahom*, "Place of Rest, Comfort,"[105] and perhaps one may also see dual Hebrew word-play between the theophoric place-name *Ammonihah*, "Ammon-YHH; My- Kinsman-is-the-Lord,"[106] and its diabolical alternative designation, "Desolation of Nehors" (Alma 16:11), owing to their knowing rejection of the Gospel (Alma 1:12–16, 8:9–25, 15:15), and sinning against great "light and . . . knowledge" (Alma 9:19). Compare this to the esoteric,

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102   Bartelt, "Isaiah 5 and 9: In- or Interdependence?" 157–58 (and n. 2);168.

103   Vincent A. Tobin, trans., "The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant," in *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, ed. William Kelley Simpson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 41 n. 34.

104   Hypothetical Hebrew Yĕršôn *ירשון "Place of Inheritance," from *yaraš*, "to inherit" (Alma 27:22,24, 35:14, all with puns. Stephen D. Ricks and John Tvedtnes, "The Hebrew Origin of Some Book of Mormon Place-Names," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6, no. 2 [1997]: 257–58).

105   Arabic *Nhm*, burial place in modern and ancient Yemen (1 Ne. 16:34), at the proper turning point for the Lehites in 1 Ne. 17:1 (Warren P. Aston, "Newly Found Altars from Nahom," J*ournal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10, no. 2 [2001]: 56–61,71; S. Kent Brown, "'The Place That Was Called Nahom': New Light from Ancient Yemen," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8, no. 1 [1999]: 66–68; G. Lankester Harding, *Index and Concordance of Pre-Islamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971], 602ff.; K. A. Kitchen, *Documentation for Ancient Arabia,* Part II [Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000], 744); cf. Job 2:11 *lĕnaḥămô* " to comfort, console him."

106   Note the very early Trigrammaton, YHH, on ostraca and papyri at the Jewish colony at Elephantine: see A. E. Cowley, ed. and trans., *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), 1:2, 13:14; Ronald J. Williams, "Egypt and Israel," in *The Legacy of Egypt*, ed. J. R. Harris, 2ⁿᵈ ed. (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1971), 261 n. 1; Bezalel Porten, "Egyptian Aramaic Texts," in *Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, ed. E. Meyers (Oxford Univ. Press, 1997), 2:215.

temple-centered pun in Daniel, "Horrifying Abomination," שממות נחרצת (Dan. 9:27); השקוץ משומם (Dan. 11:31, 12:11 "abomination that maketh desolate"), in which Hellenizing Jews went along with the sacrilege of King Antiochus Epiphanes' requiring observance of pagan rites, and putting up the pagan image of Baal-Shamem "Lord of Heaven" (=Olympian Zeus) on the Jewish Temple altar in Jerusalem—the once and future "Abomination of Desolation," τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως (Matt. 24:15; cf. 1 Macc. 1:54, 6:7, and 2 Macc. 6:2). Note the marked contrast in each case.

The Upshot

In light of all the poetic beauty, depth, diversity, and power of the Book of Mormon, what is the upshot? It is that many of those not accepting the divine origin of the book have now actually admitted and openly announced that, even if it is in their opinion unhistorical, apocryphal, and fictional, the Book of Mormon is yet a "sacred text" which makes "a powerful statement of humanity's worth in a world where human worth is everywhere questioned,"[107] and does indeed include visions and sermons of "beauty and brilliance," in a variety of literary genres including "parables, poetry, hyperbole, psalms, historical verisimilitude,"[108] and chiasmus. This is a compelling legacy of the modern scholarship assaying and extolling the literary value of the Book of Mormon, which has not only brought considerable respect to the book from outside the LDS faith,[109] but which has been accompanied by some very sophisticated analysis and exegesis of the text.[110]

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107   Roger Launius, "From Old to New Mormon History: Fawn Brodie and the Legacy of Scholarly Analysis of Mormonism," in *Reconsidering No Man Knows My History*, ed. Newell G. Bringhurst (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), 208–09.

108   Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe, "Editors' Introduction," in *American Apocrypha*, ed. Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), ix.

109   John W. Welch, "A Book You Can Respect," *Ensign* (September 1977): 45–48.

110   Val Larsen, "The Benjamin/Noah Nexus: The Little Appreciated Literary Devices the Nephites Used to Communicate Their Messages," paper delivered at the Sunstone East Symposium, May 16, 1987, in Bethesda, Maryland; "Restoration: A Theological Poem in the Book of Mormon," *Interpreter* 10 (2014): 239–56; Mark D. Thomas, "A Rhetorical Approach to the Book of Mormon: Rediscovering Nephite Sacramental Language," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology*, ed. Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 53–80; *Digging in Cumorah*; "Moroni: The Final Voice," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 1 (2003): 88–99, 119–20; Marilyn Arnold, "Unlocking the Sacred Text," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8, no. 1 (1999): 48–53, 79; Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon*.

The cornucopia of ancient Near Eastern parallels and insights which 1 have presented here suggests that we should continue to seek *Chabad* in the Book of Mormon, i.e., wisdom, understanding, and knowledge (*ḥokmâ, bînâ, daʿat* = CHaBaD), through pre-exilic Israelite poetry (and other ancient Near Eastern poetry), since this will surely lead us to something much deeper and more esoteric.

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