Revisions in the Analysis of Archaic Grammar in the Book of Mormon

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Virtually none of the grammatical variants listed in section 4 · ARCHAIC GRAMMAR are solely archaic. All but the plural *governments* show up rather robustly in the 1700s. Two of these were, in fact, already identified in NOL as persisting into modern English, namely the plural *imaginations* and the superlative *most foremost* (each of these are marked below with an arrow, →). We will also add a couple of other archaic grammatical variants to this section, namely: (1) *other* used with a plural meaning, equivalent to *others;* and (2) *the one* used alone in a sentence, without any following reference to the other member of a pair. Neither of these archaic grammatical forms have persisted to any degree in English.

Summary for revised section 4 · Archaic Grammar

2 ARCHAIC WORD FORMS

governments 'administrations'
the one (without any associated other)

12 PERSISTENT WORD FORMS

armors
beforetimes
conditions that
consuming in the fire
converted for many years
ends of the law
face of angels
→ *imaginations*
more still
→ *most foremost*
whims
wills and pleasures

1 BIBLICAL WORD FORM

other 'others'

+ *Armors* (in the plural)

> "the people came running together with their **armors** girded about their loins" (Alma 46:21)

In NOL, we provide three instances from Early Modern English of plural *armors* being used in describing the armor used by a plurality of persons. We have since discovered instances from the 1700s and 1800s, as in these examples:

> 1704, Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub*
> leaving the two heroes asleep, seized on both their **armors**

> 1753, "translated by a person of quality", Heliodorus, *Æthiopian Adventures*
> making his young Thessalians put off their glorious habit and put on their **armors**

> 1791, Elkanah Settle, *The New History of the Trojan Wars and Troy's Destruction*
> but Hercules, Jason, Theseus, and Pirotheus put on their **armors** to pursue them

> 1808, Andrew St. John, *Tales of Former Times*
> the young knight and Lancelot put on their **armors**

> 1812, *The Lady's Monthly Museum*
> save the repressed clank of their **armors** as the knights regained their seats

Thus the plural *armors* persisted beyond Early Modern English. *Google Ngram Viewer* shows that the frequency of *their armo(u)rs* became virtually zero after 1850. From 1700 up to 1850, the plural occurred at a considerably lower frequency (less than 10 percent on the average) than the singular *their armo(u)r*.

+ *Beforetimes* (with the adverbial *-s* ending)

> "because of the disputations which hath been among you **beforetimes**" (3 Nephi 18:34)

The King James Bible has the form without the adverbial *-s* ending, 11 times, as in 1 Samuel 9:9: "for *he that is* now *called* a Prophet was **beforetime** called a Seer". In NOL, we cite four examples of *beforetimes* from Early Modern English. We have now found examples from the 1700s and 1800s, as in these instances from the late 1700s and the early 1800s, with some predominance in legislative language:

> 1788, David Gilson, *Sermons in Practical Subjects*
> those false gods that we have **beforetimes** mistakenly adored

> 1801, Edmund Burke, *Annual Register*
> in 1765 the noviciate, **beforetimes** at Watten, as was said above, was placed here

> 1831, *Reports from Committee, House of Commons*
> the magistrates **beforetimes** used to hold that if the man was drunken, the woman
> ought not to suffer

Google Ngram Viewer shows a very low frequency for *beforetimes* from the 1700s on. The alternative form *beforetime* has been nearly just as low in frequency, but has persisted longer (until the early 1900s, probably because of its biblical usage). It is not surprising that here in 3 Nephi 18:34 Joseph Smith omitted the

old-fashioned *beforetimes* in his editing for the 1837 edition, although to maintain the original meaning he probably should have written something like "in past times".

+ *Conditions* (plural number)
> "and we will guard them from their enemies by our armies on **conditions** that they will give us
> a portion of their substance to assist us that we may maintain our armies" (Alma 27:24)

The Book of Mormon text has at least two cases of plural *conditions* where there is actually only one condition specified, here in Alma 27:24 and also in Alma 54:11: "I will not exchange prisoners save it be on **conditions** that ye will deliver up a man and his wife and his children for one prisoner". In NOL, we list various examples where plural *conditions* is used in Early Modern English to specify one or more conditions. We have also found this usage continuing into modern English, as in these examples from the early 1800s where only one condition is specified:

> 1800, David Eaton, *Scripture the Only Guide to Religious Truth*
> offering them a full and free pardon for all offences on **conditions** that they lay down their arms

> 1821, *The Inquisitor*
> He accordingly offered to put the King of France in possession of the Kingdom
> on **conditions** that he was to act as his Viceroy, to which the King of France acceded.

> 1823, R. T., *A Plain Discourse*
> but then it is, remember, only on **conditions** that we promise something on our parts

+ *Consume* (intransitive verb)
> "when Amulek saw the pains of the women and children which were **consuming** in the fire / he was
> also pained" (Alma 14:10)

We have found examples of "consuming in the fire" (as in Alma 14:10) from the first half of the 1700s to the first decades of the 1800s:

> 1706, John Potter, *Archæologia Græca*
> whilst they are **consuming** in the fire, wine is poured upon them

> 1733, Nathaniel Markwick, *Six Small Tracts*
> the enemies of the Lord . . . are now **consuming** in the fire of his indignation

> 1823, Conrad Speece, *The Mountaineer*
> and say at what price you rate your splendid possessions while they are **consuming** in the fire
> of the last day, and evaporating into smoke

> 1828, Timothy Flint, *A Condensed Geography and History of the Western States*
> in which they . . . drank the warm blood of their victim, or danced and yelled round the stake,
> where he was **consuming** in the fire

+ *Converted* (stative adjective)

> "she **having been converted** unto the Lord **for many years** on account of a remarkable vision
> of her father" (Alma 19:16)

We have been able to find two later examples where the past-participial adjective *converted* refers to an extended state of conversion rather than to the act of conversion, although in neither case does *converted* refer to religious conversion:

> 1774, John Leland, *Joannis Lelandi antiquarii de rebus Britannicis collectanea*
> and the Monastery **was converted for some time** into a Royal Seat

> 1826, Richard Warner, *An History of the Abbey of Glaston*
> and to have its own chapel, called Jacob's chapel, contiguous to it, which is still existing,
> though it **has been converted**, **for many years**, into a Wesleyan meeting-house

+ *Ends* (plural number)

> "for he hath answered the **ends** of the law" (Moroni 7:28)

The phrase "the ends of the law", with *ends* in the plural, occurs four times in the Book of Mormon, along with a single instance of "the ends of the atonement". The noun *end* here means 'aim, purpose', as explained under definition 14a for the noun *end* in the OED. In fact, the OED lists one instance of plural *ends* in the phrase "the ends of justice", dating from the 1800s:

> 1851, Douglas Jerrold, *The History of St. Giles and St. James*
> [he] was delighted . . . that the **ends** of justice would be satisfied

The OED editors also use the same phraseology in their definition of the phrase "a miscarriage of justice", stating that it is equivalent to "a failure of a court or judicial system to attain the **ends** of justice". We have found several instances of the phrase "the ends of the law" in the early 1700s as well as later in the early 1800s; in each case, the plural phraseology refers to the 'purposes, aims, or intents of the law', in accord with the OED definition:

> 1715, William Higden, *The Case of Admission of Dissenters to the Holy Communion*
> Yet according to the known Rule we must avoid that sense, which defeats the **ends** of the Law;
> and take that sense which doth the work of it.

> 1811, *The Debates upon the Bills for Abolishing the Punishment of Death*
> What then, my Lords, are the baneful consequences to society of this susceptibility?
> The **ends** of the law are defeated.

> 1825, *The Methodist Review*
> no injustice is done to him as an individual; and if, by such disposal, the **ends** of the law
> are served, and the public good promoted, no wrong is done to society.

✓ *Face* (singular number)
       "they did shine exceedingly / even as the **face** of angels" (Helaman 5:36)

In NOL, we cited five instances of "face of angels" from Early Modern English. We have now been able to find several instances of the same phraseology with the singular *face* dating from the 1700s:

      1702, Cotton Mather, *The Ecclesiastical History of New England*
        if we would always behave ourselves as before the **face** of angels

      1747, John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament*
        just as the **face** of angels is used to express the greatest glory and beauty of the face

      1787, Thomas Newton (died 1782), *The Works of the Right Reverend Thomas Newton*
        we have known the **face** of angels with the temper of furies

✓ *Governments* 'administrations' (plural number)
       "and Moroni took all the command and the **governments** of their wars" (Alma 43:17)

There is a second instance of *governments* in the Book of Mormon text, again in a conjoined form: "for as their laws and their governments were established by the voice of the people" (Helaman 5:2). There are two issues here in Alma 43:17: first, the archaic use of the noun *government* with the meaning 'management, administration'; second, the use of this noun in the plural, as a count noun. Under definition 5 for the verb *govern,* the OED lists examples of *govern* with the obsolete meaning 'to administer, manage', with the last citation dating from Samuel Richardson's 1739–40 *Pamela.* This meaning for *govern* seems to have continued into the later 1700s, which correspondingly supports the nominal form *government,* as in this example:

      1771, William Henry Mountague, *A New and Universal History of England*
        His wife, by whom he enjoyed his pretensions to Brittany, compelled by the present necessity,
        took upon herself the **government** of the party; and proved herself, in every respect,
        a formidable rival to the countess of Montfort, both in the field, and in the cabinet.

On the other hand, it is much more difficult to find examples of the plural *governments* with this obsolete meaning. In NOL, we list the one King James example from 1 Corinthians 12:28 ("gifts of healings, helps, **governments**, diversities of tongues"), but this biblical instance is not contextually rich enough (it occurs only in a list of plural nouns) to serve as a basis for predicting how *governments* is used in Alma 43:17. And thus far we have been unable to find any instances of plural *governments* with this obsolete meaning later than the citation from Edward Pyot's 1667 *The Quakers Vindicated:* "in their **governments** and administration of their laws". For this reason, we continue to classify the Book of Mormon plural use of *governments* in Alma 43:17 under section 4 · ARCHAIC GRAMMAR.

+ *Imaginations* (plural number)
       "and the large and spacious building which thy father saw is vain **imaginations**" (1 Nephi 12:18)

There are also two examples in the Book of Mormon text of "the foolish imaginations of his heart" (1 Nephi 2:11 and 17:20), where Laman and Lemuel make this complaint about Lehi. In NOL, we do not claim that

the plural *imaginations* is restricted to Early Modern English usage; we provide two examples from Joseph Smith's time of *imaginations* in the plural (one of *vain imaginations,* the other of *foolish imaginations*). Here is a third example, dating from the late 1700s:

> 1791, Johann Georg Zimmermann, *Solitude Considered*
>> The infatuation seizes on his brain, and his corrupted heart teems with idle fancies and **vain imaginations**.

In today's English, we prefer the singular in these cases. The OED also gives its own examples (dating from around 1900) using the singular, not the plural. *Google Ngram Viewer* shows that both *vain imaginations* and *foolish imaginations* occurred regularly but not too frequently in the 1820s and 1830s (in fact, each of these plural forms was somewhat more frequent than its respective singular form). Beginning about 1850, the frequency of both *vain imaginations* and *foolish imaginations* started to diminish, and eventually both ended up, along with *vain imagination* and *foolish imagination,* at virtually zero around the 1920s. Based on the evidence given in NOL itself, the plural uses of *imagination* should have been placed under section 21 · CHANGING PHRASES.

+ *More still* (scalar adjective used in the comparative)
> "they became **more still** and durst not commit any wickedness" (Alma 1:33)

Prescriptivists might complain that if you are still, then you can't become more still; that is, the adjective *still* should be used only categorically to describe the property of making no movement or sound. But speakers are perfectly willing to refer to degrees of stillness, and thus they use *still* as a scalar. Prescriptivists also make similar claims for words like *perfect* and *unique* (that these words should only be used categorically), yet English speakers have also used both these words as scalars for a long time (thus "a more perfect union" and "one of the most unique people"). Here are some additional examples of *more still* dating from the later part of the 1600s up to the early 1800s:

> 1667, Henry Oldenburg (editor), *Philosophical Transactions*
>> after which time the air became **more still**

> 1705, Cornelius Nary, *A Modest and True Account of the Chief Points in Controversy between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants*
>> yet when they began to see with their own eyes and became **more still** and calm

> 1749, John Hutchinson (died 1737), *The Philosophical and Theological Works of the Late Truly Learned John Hutchinson*
>> and consequently become **more still** and sedate

> 1753, John Holland, *Sermons on Various Subjects and Prayers*
>> his behavior was **more still**, his countenance more pleasant

> 1777, Thomas Pennant, *British Zoology*
>> where the water is deep and **more still** than it is upon our coast

> 1779, Alban Butler (died 1773), *The Lives of the Primitive Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Principal Saints*
>> In the church no one was **more still** in silence.

    1779, *The Scotch Preacher*

        more still than the unruffled surface of the deep

    1827, *The Amulet* (a poem published in the *Christian Advocate*)

        The evening breeze became **more still**,
        And as the chill wave grew more chill,

Clearly, references to *more still* have persisted in English.

+ *Most foremost* (redundant superlative)

    and the one which was the **most foremost** among them saith unto him . . . " (Alma 32:5)

Prescriptivists have objected to using the comparative and superlative with categorical adjectives such as *perfect* and *unique.* The same would apply to *foremost.* Here in Alma 32:5, the Book of Mormon uses *most foremost* as a scalar adjective, referring to the superlative degree of being foremost. In NOL, we provide several examples of *most foremost* dating from the 1800s. Here are a couple more examples:

    1820, Henry Hunt, *Correspondence*

        should bear their full share of the burdens which they have been **most foremost** in loading
        upon the shoulders of others

            Hunt was a member of Parliament representing Preston.

    1831, *Ireland Vindicated*

        there was a general pause amongst the **most foremost** catholic and protestant leaders,
        indicative of their present satisfaction

The Book of Mormon editors have unnecessarily removed this redundancy from Alma 32:5.

✳ *Other* 'others'

    "now Gid and his men was on the right and **the other** on the left" (Alma 58:17)

Under section 15 · KING JAMES VOCABULARY, we consider the possibility that the singular *other* in Alma 58:17 could stand for Teomner alone or it could be archaic English standing for the plural *others* (that is, for Teomner and his men). 𝒪 is not extant here, but 𝒫 reads *the other;* the 1830 typesetter emended this reading to the plural, *the others.* Here in Alma 58:17, it is more reasonable to assume that *other* is semantically singular and that it refers to Teomner (along with his men). Notice in the preceding verse 16 that the text refers to Teomner with a small number of men secreting himself (not themselves) in the wilderness — and similarly for Gid:

    Alma 58:16

        I caused that Gid with a small number of men
        should secrete **himself** in the wilderness
        and also that Teomner should with a small number of men
        secrete **himself** also in the wilderness

Of course, strict parallelism in verse 17 with the preceding "Gid and his men was on the right" could argue that *the other* refers to "Teomner and his men", a plural. The use of the singular form *other* to refer to a

plurality, that is, to *others,* is characteristic of Early Modern English and the King James Bible. A brief list of examples occurs in the write-up for *Other* in section 15 · KING JAMES VOCABULARY. But in actual fact, we are here dealing with the grammatical form *other,* and the question in Alma 58:17 is whether it is singular or plural in meaning. For that reason, we should relegate this write-up regarding *Other* here to section 4 · ARCHAIC GRAMMAR. This archaic usage actually shows up in the original text for 1 Nephi 21:20, where the King James reading for Isaiah 49:20 is quoted: "the children which thou shalt have after thou hast lost **the other** shall say again in thine ears". The intended King James reading is a conjectured reading that involves ellipsis of the noun *children;* in other words, "the children which thou shalt have after thou hast lost the other [children]". But here the Masoretic text literally reads: "again shall the children **of thy bereavement** say in thine ears". Elsewhere when the Book of Mormon text uses *the other,* it is consistently conjoined to a preceding singular *one* or to an assumed singular, as in Matthew 5:39: "turn to him the other [cheek] also" (see the entire list in NOL under *Other* in section 15 · KING JAMES VOCABULARY). Of interest here is one case in a non-biblical Book of Mormon passage where the plural form *the others* actually shows up, and here there is no reference to a preceding *one:*

> Jacob 5:25
>> behold I have nourished this tree like unto **the others**

In other words, "I have nourished this tree like unto the other trees". Note, by the way, that the preceding *this tree* is not necessarily singular; it could have read "I have nourished these trees like unto the others". In any event, the text here does not read "I have nourished this tree like unto the other" (that is, using the archaic King James *other* rather than the standard plural *others*). This is the only place in the Book of Mormon text proper where a choice is textually possible; and in this case the text has the standard *the others,* not the archaic *the other.* Based on usage itself, the King James style would have usually preferred *the other* for Jacob 5:25, although *the others* would still be possible:

the other 'the others'

Numbers 10:21	and **the other** did set up the tabernacle against [= before] they came
Joshua 8:22	and **the other** issued out of the city against them
Isaiah 49:20	the children which thou shalt have after thou hast lost **the other**
Matthew 23:23	these ought ye to have done and not to leave **the other** undone
Luke 11:42	these ought ye to have done and not to leave **the other** undone
Acts 17:9	and when they had the security of Jason and of **the other**
1 Corinthians 14:29	let the prophets speak two or three and let **the other** judge

the others 'the others'

Ezekiel 9:5	and to **the others** he said in mine hearing
Daniel 7:19	the truth of the fourth beast which is diverse from all **the others**

In all of these cases except Isaiah 49:20, the original language (in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek) supports the plural meaning, 'the others'. In seven out of nine cases, the translators chose the archaic plural, *the other.* As already noted, the Book of Mormon has the archaic *the other* in only one place (in 1 Nephi 21:20, where Isaiah 49:20 is quoted), but there the archaic *the other* occurs in a King James conjectured reading, not in the literal biblical reading. Since we are here rejecting the archaic plural reading for *the other* in Alma 48:17,

we have only this single instance where it does apply. As a result, this analysis for *Other* should be retained in section 15 · KING JAMES VOCABULARY, or perhaps even moved to section 18 · KING JAMES GRAMMAR.

✓ *the one* 'one of them'
> "and within the ball was two spindles and **the one** pointed the way whither we should go
>   in the wilderness" (1 Nephi 16:10)

The use of *the one* is isolated here; we expect a following *the other,* as in the following usage from the Sermon on the Mount: "no man can serve two masters; for either he will hate **the one** and love **the other**, or else he will hold to **the one** and despite **the other**" (3 Nephi 13:24 = Matthew 6:24). Even when there is no following *the other,* there will usually be some reference to the other member of the pair, as in these examples from the King James Bible:

> Genesis 38:27–29 (here *the one* was supplied by the King James translators)
>   and it came to pass in the time of her travail that behold twins *were* in her womb
>   and it came to pass when she travailed that ***the one*** put out *his hand* . . .
>   and it came to pass as he drew back his hand that behold **his brother** came out

> Genesis 44:27–28 (here Jacob is referring to Joseph and Benjamin, the two sons of his wife Rachel)
>   ye know that my wife bare me two *sons*
>   and **the one** went out from me . . . and I saw him not since
>   and if ye take **this** also from me and mischief befall him
>   ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave

> 1 Chronicles 1:19
>   and unto Eber were born two sons
>   the name of **the one** *was* Peleg because in his days the earth was divided
>   and **his brother's name** *was* Joktan

> Ecclesiastes 4:9–10
>   two *are* better than one . . .
>   for if they fall, **the one** will lift up **his fellow**

Here is perhaps the closest biblical example we have to 1 Nephi 16:10, although in this case *the one* follows a paired instance of *the one* and *the other:*

> 1 Kings 12:29–30 (referring to Jeroboam's two calves of gold, made for idol worship)
>   and he set **the one** in Bethel and **the other** put he in Dan
>   and this thing became a sin
>   for the people went *to worship* before **the one** / *even* unto Dan
>> The last line appears to be defective; some versions of the Greek Septuagint add at the end of verse 30: "and before **the other** unto Bethel", as explained in the textual note in Alfred Rahlfs' *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1935). But then, of course, this exceptional reading may be secondary (that is, it may represent an attempt to supply the expected reading, one with both *the one* and *the other*).

Despite the biblical tendency to match *the one* with a following reference to the other member of a pair, there are instances in Early Modern English where *the one* stands alone:

> 1566, Thomas Stapleton, *A Return of Untruths*
>
> Here be two untruths, and **the one** joined with a slander. The first is that
> the true authentic copies were sent from Alexandria and Constantinople.

> 1574, John Whitgift, *The Defense of the Answer to the Admonition Against the Reply of T. C.*
>
> Neither Steven nor Philip, when they being deacons preached, and **the one** ministered
> the sacrament of baptism also, did break into that which appertained not unto them,
> being incident to their office when they be thereunto called.

> 1581, A. M., *The True Report of the Prosperous Success . . . in Ireland in the Year 1580*
>
> In all this conflict there were only two hurt of our men,
> whereof **the one** was Master John Cheeke, who is thought unlikely to recover.
> Thus may we see how God fighteth for us . . .
>
>> That is to say, "whereof one was Master John Cheeke", or in more modern English, "of which one
>> was Master John Cheeke".

> 1620, John Smith, *New England's Trials*
>
> The Londoners . . . sent two more [ships] in July . . . it was ten months ere they arrived
> in New England, wasting in that time their seasons, victual, and healths; yet there they found
> means to refresh themselves, and **the one** returned, near fraught with fish and train [fish oil].

Thus far we have been unable to find any later examples in English where *the one* is used to refer to one member of a pair without there being some reference to the other member of the pair (here we exclude the one questionable case in 1 Kings 12:29–30 that refers to Jeroboam's two golden calves). The use of *the one* in 1 Nephi 16:9 therefore appears to be archaic.

+ *Whims* (plural)
> "their traditions and their dreams and their **whims** and their visions and their pretended mysteries"
> (Alma 30:28)

The plural of *whim* was discussed here in section 4 · ARCHAIC GRAMMAR because some had suggested that the plural form was restricted to modern English; thus NOL lists examples of *whims* dating from 1651 to 1702. Here we list a few more examples of *whims,* from the mid-1700s to the mid-1800s:

> 1758, John Free, *Rules for the Discovery of False Prophets*
> indulging their **whims** in private

> 1770, "The Character of the Germans", *London Packet*
> their fancies, their **whims**, and their passions

> 1810, Robert R. Livingston, *Essay on Sheep*
> their taste, their **whims**, or their luxury

> 1838, *The American Monthly Magazine*
> and more independent of their **whims** and caprice

+ *Wills and pleasures* (plural numbers)

> "placing themselves in a state to act or being placed in a state to act according to
>   their **wills and pleasures**" (Alma 12:31)

NOL lists "their wills and pleasures" as occurring 74 times in EEBO. The example cited in NOL is from legal language:

> 1581, William Lambarde, *Eirenarcha*
>   then also the same justices . . . shall assess the fine at their **wills and pleasures**

In fact, the Book of Mormon language itself is legalistic. And this plural phraseology, *wills and pleasures,* continued to be used in legal and governmental language up through the 1700s and into the 1800s, as in these examples from Google Books:

> 1721, John Dunton, *A Collection of Choice, Scarce, and Valuable Tracts*
>   to enforce and absolve from oaths and covenants at their **will and pleasures**

> 1763, Danby Pickering, *The Statutes at Large*
>   from time to time hereafter, at their **wills and pleasures**, and at their costs

> 1791, George Edwards, *The Great and Important Discovery of the Eighteenth Century*
>   to conciliate the **wills and pleasures** of subjects associated with him in government

> 1808, *A Concise History of Worcester*
>   at their **wills and pleasures** from time to time to break, change, and new[ly] make
>   the said seal at their **wills and pleasures**

> 1833, *The Court Journal*
>   my making myself amiable in the eyes of the monsters on whose **wills and pleasures**
>   my Parliamentary existence hung