The Witnesses of the Book of Mormon

Introduction

There are two basic types of witnesses for the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. The first type deals with those who saw the golden plates. This type includes the three witnesses and the eight witnesses; their testimonies are included as part of every Book of Mormon edition, either at the end (the earliest editions) or at the beginning (the more recent editions). We shall only briefly deal with their testimonies here since they are well known. But also included in this first type is the testimony of Mary Whitmer, the wife of Peter Whitmer Senior and mother of the five Whitmers who were official witnesses of the plates. Under this first type we will also include the accounts of those who either felt or hefted the plates when they were covered up; of course, their witness must be considered secondhand.

The second type of witness deals with those who viewed the translation process, witnesses who actually observed Joseph Smith dictating the text of the Book of Mormon. We have at least eight individuals who qualify as firsthand witnesses of the translation process. And in this section we will compare, where possible, their testimonies against the evidence that we find in the original manuscript. In particular, they made certain claims that are supported by manuscript evidence, namely:

- When necessary, Joseph Smith would spell out the strange Book of Mormon names to his scribe. He also probably spelled out infrequent, difficult biblical names (such as those in the Isaiah quotations) to his scribe.

- It is possible that Joseph could have spelled out words of English to his scribe, but the evidence for this is meager, at best.

- After Joseph dictated what he was viewing with his instrument, the scribe would read it back to Joseph, and thus the scribe would make sure what he had written agreed with what Joseph was viewing, at least to the degree they could do this aurally.

- In using his translation instrument, Joseph Smith was viewing at least 20 words and probably up to 30 or more words at a time.

- Before quitting a translation session, Joseph had to make sure the scribe had gotten down all the words that he had last been viewing with his instrument. As a result, when he would start up after an interruption, Joseph would never need to be prompted because the instrument would start off with the next viewing of text and would not repeat what had last been viewed.

But there is one major claim of the witnesses of the translation that is directly contradicted by manuscript evidence, namely, the claim that no error in the transmission could ever occur, that the instrument would not go on to the next viewing unless the scribe had gotten down everything correctly. These witnesses

claimed that this accuracy not only included words and word forms, but also the spelling of words. In other words, the scribe's transmission had to be letter-perfect. This claim is clearly wrong: there are substantive errors in the original manuscript. Besides the obvious ones dealing with the spelling of names, there are errors in the actual words of the text. The instrument did not prevent Joseph Smith and his scribe from going on even when the reading in the original manuscript was incorrect. The witnesses believed the instrument had an ironclad control over what the scribe ended up writing. This assumption of theirs was wrong; and it seems to have been based on the witnesses seeing Joseph occasionally spelling out names to his scribe. Ultimately, the accuracy of the transmission depended on the joint carefulness of Joseph Smith and his scribe, but errors did occur.

In selecting witnesses and their statements, we hunt for those accounts that are firsthand, preferably in the witness's own hand or otherwise based on fairly recent interviews of the witness. As with all accounts of historical events, we will find that they tend to change over time, which means that the earliest accounts are the more reliable ones. Most importantly, we find that the most reliable accounts are supported by more than one witness and they end up being quite consistent.

Here I list the more comprehensive sources for the witness statements:

◻ Lyndon W. Cook's *David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness,* published by Grandin Book Company, Orem, Utah, 1991

◻ Dan Vogel's *Early Mormon Documents,* published in five volumes by Signature Books, Salt Lake City, Utah: volume 1 (1996), volume 2 (1998), volume 3 (2000), volume 4 (2002), and volume 5 (2003)

◻ "Documents of the Translation of the Book of Mormon", pages 126–227 in John W. Welch's second edition of his *Opening the Heavens* (published by BYU Studies, Provo, Utah, 2017)

As an example of how the citations will work, here is how I will refer to Wilhelm Poulson's interview of David Whitmer on 13 August 1878, published in the 16 August 1878 issue of the *Deseret Evening News:* Cook 19–24, Vogel 5:36–40, Welch 163. I always specify which of Vogel's five volumes the quotation appears in. Note here that Welch's quotation of this interview is highly excerpted. This is often the case with the quotations in *Opening the Heavens.* Original spellings are retained in all of the quotations.

Witnesses of the golden plates

The golden plates were viewed by three groups of people: (1) the three witnesses; (2) the eight witnesses; and (3) Mary Whitmer. With respect to the first two groups, we should also include Joseph Smith. Each of these three witness types vary in significant ways from each other:

(1) **The three witnesses** (Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris)—and in the presence of Joseph Smith—were shown the golden plates by the angel, sometime near the end of June 1829. The experience was visionary, and none of them actually handled the plates. Instead, the angel showed them the plates and turned the leaves over so they could see them. When the angel appeared, there also appeared a table on which the golden plates lay, along with other Book of Mormon artifacts, including the original plates of brass, the sword of Laban, the Liahona, and the interpreters that

came with the golden plates. The voice of the Lord told the three witnesses that the translation was correct and that they should testify of what they had seen. David and Martin consistently referred to their experience as spiritual (as being seen with their "spiritual eyes"). This witnessing occurred twice, first to Oliver and David along with Joseph; and then soon thereafter, to Martin along with Joseph once more. Their account of this experience was published as "The Testimony of Three Witnesses" in the first (1830) edition of the Book of Mormon; in the earliest editions it was placed at the end of the Book of Mormon, but with later editions at the beginning.

(2) **The eight witnesses** (Christian Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer, Peter Whitmer Junior, John Whitmer, Hiram Page, Joseph Smith Senior, Hyrum Smith, and Samuel H. Smith) were shown the plates by Joseph Smith, also near the end of June 1829. Each witness was allowed to hold and examine the plates. Their witness was purely physical in nature, without any visionary or spiritual aspect. Their account of this experience was published in the first (1830) edition as "And also the Testimony of Eight Witnesses"; and it has always appeared immediately after the three-witness statement.

(3) **Mary Whitmer** (the mother of the five witnesses from the Whitmer family) was shown the plates by the angel sometime in the early part of June 1829. She was the first witness of the golden plates. Her experience was a physical one, unlike the spiritual one of the three witnesses, but also differing from the eight witnesses' experience: the angel turned over the leaves of the plates so she could view them, but Mary did not handle the plates; and Joseph Smith was not present. Mary never wrote down her experience, as far as we know, but she told it to her children; we have three accounts of her experience, one from David Whitmer, another from John C. Whitmer (the son of John Whitmer), and a third from the extended family of Christian Whitmer.

The language of the three-witness and eight-witness statements differ from each other in significant ways. For a discussion of those linguistic differences, see section 14 · WITNESS STATEMENTS in *The Nature of the Original Language,* part 3 of volume 3 of the critical text, *The History of the Text of the Book of Mormon.* Here I will provide the three family accounts of Mary Whitmer's experience, none of which were ever officially published as a testimony of the golden plates, unlike the three-witness and eight-witness statements. The following write-up detailing these three family accounts was first published in 2014 in *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture,* volume 10, pages 35–44; it is here reproduced with a few minor emendations.

Another Account of Mary Whitmer's Viewing of the Golden Plates

by Royal Skousen

Carl T. Cox has graciously provided me with a new account of the angel showing the Book of Mormon plates to Mary Whitmer (1778–1856), wife of Peter Whitmer Senior. Mary was the mother to five sons who were witnesses to the golden plates: David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses; and Christian Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer, John Whitmer, and Peter Whitmer Junior, four of the eight witnesses.

For a long time we have known that Mary Whitmer was also shown the plates. These accounts are familiar and derive from David Whitmer and John C. Whitmer (the son of John Whitmer).

◻ **David Whitmer's 1878 account,** according to an interview with Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith on 7 September 1878, published 16 November 1878 in the *Deseret News* [Cook 41–43, Vogel 5:51–52]

When I was returning to Fayette with Joseph and Oliver all of us riding in the wagon, Oliver and I on an oldfashioned wooden spring seat and Joseph behind us, while traveling along in a clear open place, a very pleasant, nice-looking old man suddenly appeared by the side of our wagon who saluted us with, "good morning, it is very warm," at the same time wiping his face or forehead with his hand. We returned the salutation, and by a sign from Joseph I invited him to ride if he was going our way. But he said very pleasantly, "No, I am going to Cumorah." This name was something new to me, I did not know what Cumorah meant. We all gazed at him and at each other, and as I looked round enquiringly of Joseph the old man instantly disappeared, so that I did not see him again. . . . It was the messenger who had the plates, who had taken them from Joseph just prior to our starting from Harmony. Soon after our arrival home, I saw something which led me to the belief that the plates were placed or concealed in my father's barn. I frankly asked Joseph if my supposition was right, and he told me it was. Sometime after this, my mother was going to milk the cows, when she was met out near the yard by the same old man (judging by her description of him) who said to her, "You have been very faithful and diligent in your labors, but you are tried [the original reads *tried,* not *tired*] because of the increase of your toil, it is proper therefore that you should receive a witness that your faith may be strengthened." Thereupon he showed her the plates. My father and mother had a large family of their own, the addition to it therefore of Joseph, his wife Emma and Oliver very greatly increased the toil and anxiety of my mother. And although she had never complained she had sometimes felt that her labor was too much, or at least she was perhaps beginning to feel so. This circumstance, however, completely removed all such feelings, and nerved her up for her increased responsibilities.

◻ **John C. Whitmer's 1878 account,** as recorded by Andrew Jenson (see his *Latter-Day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* 1:283, Salt Lake City, Utah: 1901) [Vogel 5:261–262]

I have heard my grandmother (Mary M. Whitmer) say on several occasions that she was shown the plates of the Book of Mormon by an holy angel, whom she always called Brother Nephi. (She undoubtedly refers to Moroni, the angel who had the plates in charge.) It was at the time, she said, when the translation was going on at the house of the elder Peter Whitmer, her husband. Joseph Smith with his wife and Oliver Cowdery, whom David Whitmer a short time previous had brought up from Harmony, Pennsylvania, were all boarding with the Whitmers, and my grandmother in having so many extra persons to care for, besides her own large household, was often overloaded with work to such an extent that she felt it to be quite a burden. One evening, when (after having done her usual day's work in the house) she went to the barn to milk the cows, she met a stranger carrying something on his back that looked like a knapsack. At first she was a little afraid of him, but when he spoke to her in a kind, friendly tone, and began to explain to her the nature of the work which was going on in her house, she was filled with unexpressible joy and satisfaction. He then untied his knapsack and showed her a bundle of plates, which in size and appearance corresponded with the description subsequently given by the witnesses to the Book of Mormon. This strange person turned the leaves of the book of plates over, leaf after leaf, and also showed her the engravings upon them; after which he told her to be patient and faithful in bearing her burden a little

longer, promising that if she would do so, she should be blessed; and her reward would be sure, if she proved faithful to the end. The personage then suddenly vanished with the plates, and where he went, she could not tell. From that moment my grandmother was enabled to perform her household duties with comparative ease, and she felt no more inclination to murmur because her lot was hard. I knew my grandmother to be a good, noble and truthful woman, and I have not the least doubt of her statement in regard to seeing the plates being strictly true. She was a strong believer in the Book of Mormon until the day of her death.

We should note here that there is some issue about the identity of the angel. Mary Whitmer referred to him as Nephi, but John C. Whitmer identifies him as Moroni.

▢ Here is what Carl Cox writes about a third account, one coming through the Christian Whitmer line:

This same experience with Mother Whitmer and the plates is a part of my family history. Elvira Pamela Mills Cox heard the story before she was married. Christian Whitmer, one of the Book of Mormon witnesses and the eldest son of Peter Whitmer, had married Anna Schott in 1825. They must have lived in close proximity to Peter Whitmer while the Book of Mormon was being translated. When Christian died in Clay County, Missouri, in 1835, Anna was left a widow. Sylvanus Hulet married the widowed Anna, and also had care of his orphaned niece, Elvira Mills. The experience of Mother Whitmer would have been known by family members, and Elvira was an interested teenager at that time. This is the way the story appears in our family history:

"Elvira Pamela Mills", *Cox Bulletin II* (1958), written by Orville Cox Day (O C Day):

Grandma stopped telling a story of Mother Whitmer till 1900 when B. H. Roberts printed it in his "New Witness for God." Then she said, "I'm so glad I can tell it again."

David Whitmer had invited Joseph and Oliver to live in his father's home while translating the Book of Mormon. When Oliver's hand and Joseph's eyes grew tired they went to the woods for a rest. There they often skated rocks on a pond.

Mary Whitmer, with five grown sons and a husband to care for, besides visitors, often grew tired. She thought they might just as well carry her a bucket of water or chop a bit of wood as to skate rocks on a pond.

She was about to order them out of her home.

One morning, just at daybreak, she came out of her cow stable with two full buckets of milk in her hands, when a short, heavy-set, gray-haired man carrying a package met her and said,

"My name is Moroni. You have become pretty tired with all the extra work you have to do. The Lord has given me permission to show you this record:" turning the golden leaves one by one!

The most interesting aspect of this story is that Mary Whitmer's difficulty with the household situation was more than just being overwhelmed by all the extra work. She was irritated by Joseph and Oliver's indifference to all the work she was doing, with them not helping out and instead skipping rocks for relaxation, so "she was about to order them out of her home." Thus Moroni's intervention was perhaps more purposeful than we might have previously thought. Undoubtedly, many others exerted much effort on behalf of providing help to Joseph and Oliver (such as Emma Smith had just done in Harmony, Pennsylvania, for the previous three months). Here, however, Moroni needed to deal with a more difficult situation, one that could have forced Joseph to find another place—and a secure one—to do the translating. Moroni (and the Lord) weren't in the habit of just showing the plates to people to encourage them to act as a support team for the work of the translation.

There is independent evidence that during the translation process Joseph Smith liked to skip rocks on water as a form of relaxation. Martin Harris tells of one such occasion in the spring of 1828 when he was acting as scribe when Joseph was translating the book of Lehi (the 116 manuscript pages that were later lost). In an interview with Edward Stevenson and published in the *Deseret Evening News* on 13 December 1881 and republished in the *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* (30 January and 6 February 1882), Martin says (on page 87 of the *Millennial Star*) that "after continued translation they would become weary, and would go down to the river and exercise by throwing stones out on the river, etc." [Vogel 2:321]

There are a few other differences in this account. The plates were in a package rather than a knapsack. Mary had already done the milking, and it was in the morning rather than the evening. As with all independent accounts of historical events, there will be minor additions, omissions, and variants. But the reason for Moroni's intervention is clearly a significant difference—and probably accurate.

Carl Cox has also provided me in various emails (dating from 2012) with the following information on the provenance of this account:

▫ *21 August 2012, email from Carl Cox to Royal Skousen:*

I talked to O C Day's children (he is the one that published the pamphlet) and they do not know of any earlier written stories. O C's mother, Euphrasia, liked to tell family stories at night to the children, and her mother Elvira Pamela Mills Cox probably did the same. O C was 18 when Elvira died, so he would have heard the stories from her, and also from his mother. I have another Cox history pamphlet from 1957 that has genealogy with many tidbits of stories interspersed. O C was born in 1885, so he was in his 70s by that time. The pamphlet we are interested in was published just a little later.

The other pamphlets were published in the late 1950s by the Alpine Publishing Company, in Alpine or American Fork. Orville Cox Day is the son of Euphrasia Cox Day, who is the daughter of Elvira Pamela Mills Cox, who married Orville Sutherland Cox, my great grandfather. All this genealogy is on the website, OSCox.org. I got the pamphlet in the 1960s when I published the Cox Family Bulletin, which was the source for the beginnings of the OSCox.org website about 10 years ago.

▫ *29 September 2012, email from Carl Cox to Royal Skousen:*

My investigation of the source of the Elvira Mills Cox story mostly confirms my earlier ideas. I have almost identical copies of the story, one typed on the legal size sheet used for Books of Remembrance, and the other which may be the published Cox Bulletin II printed in typewriter paper size.

I believe that O C Day heard the stories from his grandmother, Elvira, and from his mother, Euphrasia, in his youth, but didn't write them down until the 1950s, when he decided such history needed to be shared. His daughter and granddaughter that I talked with only knew of them after the stories were printed in 1958. And at the beginning of the compilation of Elvira's stories he said: "While spinning and weaving wool, grandma liked to tell us stories about her people."

At the end of the 14 page bulletin is written: "Abridged from information written by" in pencil just before the typewritten—Orville Cox Day—, and indicating 5 sentences just above about Elvira's character. But the whole bulletin is a Xerox copy, which I just noticed. And this bulletin says it is John Whitmer whose widow Sylvester married, but it is Christian Whitmer instead.

▫ *1 October 2012, email from Carl Cox to Royal Skousen:*

> I have scanned the 14 page printing. I think some of the marks on there were instructions to the typist 50 years ago when I published the Cox Family Bulletin, but otherwise I don't know anything other than it came from O C Day when he was about 73 years old. I think I corrected his errors.
>
> I am just sending the cover this time, and will send about 4 pages at a time because they are big files.

▫ *3 October 2012, email from Carl Cox to Royal Skousen:*

> Christian Whitmer was in the David Whitmer [Peter Whitmer Senior] home during the translation process, and is listed as one of those who actually acted as scribe, I believe. He and his wife would have known of the visit of Moroni to Christian's mother. He died in 1835, and his widow, Anna Schott, whom he had married in 1825, then married Sylvester Hulet, in troubled Missouri. Sylvester cared for his niece and nephew after their parents died, while Elvira Pamela Mills was a teenager, during this time. Elvira married Orville Sutherland Cox, my great grandfather, in 1839, and told the stories to her descendants.
>
> Elvira's youngest daughter was Euphrasia Cox, who married Eli Day as a second wife. Their oldest child was Orville Cox Day (O C Day), 1885–1969, who followed his mother as the family genealogist. He was also one of the grandchildren who heard Elvira's stories, and wrote down some of what he heard in later life.

We should also add here the earliest record of the angel appearing to Mary Whitmer. This is found in Edward Stevenson's interview of David Whitmer on 22–23 December 1877 and is recorded as follows in Stevenson's diary [Cook 13, Vogel 5:31]:

> & the next Morning Davids Mother Saw the Person at the Shed and he took the Plates from A Box & Showed them to her She Said that they Were fastened with Rings thus: ⊅ he turned the leaves over this was a Sattisfaction to her.

This early account agrees with the Christian Whitmer extended family account in two respects: (1) the angel took the plates from a package that could be described as a box, not the knapsack as in John C. Whitmer's account, and (2) this event occurred in the morning rather than the evening.

Witnesses who felt or hefted the covered plates

The plates were often out in the open but covered up with cloth. This allowed others to feel the plates through the cloth as well as to move or heft the plates. Joseph Smith originally brought the plates into the house wrapped in a tow frock, which was soon shifted to a pillow case. The earliest accounts derive from the first morning Joseph brought the plates home. William Smith, younger brother of Joseph Smith, left four accounts of him hefting the plates. His sister Katherine's account was recorded very late, in 1945, by her grandson. Martin Harris and his family also hefted the plates early on but in a closed box. Some of these accounts are secondary, but they all seem consistent.

□ Josiah Stowell, as told to Martha Campbell, in a letter to Joseph Smith, 19 December 1843;
the pronoun *I* represents Martha Campbell's own first-person voice [Vogel 4:83]

if I understood him wright he was the first person that took the Plates out of your hands the
morning you brought them in

□ Lucy Mack Smith, as told to Sally Parker, in a letter to John Kempton, 26 August 1838;
the pronoun *I* represents Sally Parker's own first-person voice [Vogel 1:219]

I axter [*akst ʼer* 'asked her'] if she saw the plates she said no it wass not for hur to see them but
she hefted and handled them

□ William Smith, *William Smith on Mormonism,* 1883 [Vogel 1:497]

I was permitted to lift them as they laid in a pillow-case, but not to see them, as it was contrary
to the commands he had received. They weighted about sixty pounds according to the best of
my judgment.

□ William Smith, in a sermon preached at Detroit, Iowa, 8 June 1884 [Vogel 1:505]

When the plates were brought in they were wrapped up in a tow frock. My father then put them
into a pillow case. Father said, "What, Joseph, can we not see them?" "No. I was disobedient the
first time, but I intend to be faithful this time; for I was forbidden to show them until they are
translated, but you can feel them." We handled them and could tell what they were. They were
not quite as large as this Bible. Could tell whether they were round or square. Could raise the
leaves this way (raising a few leaves of the Bible before him). One could easily tell that they were
not a stone, hewn out to deceive, or even a block of wood. Being a mixture of gold and copper,
they were much heavier than stone, and very much heavier than wood.

One wonders here how Joseph Smith Senior was able to transfer the plates from the tow
frock to the pillow case without seeing the plates, perhaps by averting his eyes and obvi-
ously not in the presence of others except his son Joseph.

□ William Smith, interviewed by John W. Peterson and William S. Pender, 1890 [Vogel 1:508]

He said he had hefted the plates as they lay on the table wrapped in an old frock or jacket in which
Joseph had brought them home. That he had thumed them through the cloth and ascertained
that they were thin sheets of some kind of metal.

□ William Smith, interviewed by Edmund C. Briggs, 1893 [Vogel 1:510 – 511]

I did not see them uncovered, but I handled them and hefted them while wrapped in a tow frock
and judged them to have weighed about sixty pounds. I would feel they were plates of some kind
and that they were fastened together by rings running through the back.

□ Katharine Smith Salisbury, reminiscence recalled in 1945 by Herbert S. Salisbury, her grandson
[Vogel 1:524]

She told me Joseph allowed her to "heft" the package but not to see the gold plates, as the angel
had forbidden him to show them at that period. She said they were very heavy.

□ Martin Harris, interviewed by Joel Tiffany, 1859 [Vogel 2:309]

> While at Mr. Smith's I hefted the plates, and I knew from the heft that they were lead or gold, and I knew that Joseph had not credit enough to buy so much lead.

> > A day or two earlier, Martin's wife Lucy and his daughter, also named Lucy, visited the Smiths, and they too were allowed to heft the plates laid in a closed box:

> > > When they came home, I questioned them about them [the plates]. My daughter said, they were about as much as she could lift. They were now in the glass-box, and my wife said they were very heavy. They both lifted them.

□ Emma Smith Bidamon, interviewed by Joseph Smith III, February 1879 [Vogel 1:541, Welch 143]

> Q. Are you sure that he had the plates at the time you were writing for him?
>
> A. The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table cloth, which I had given him to fold them in. I once felt of the plates, as they thus lay on the table, tracing their outline and shape. They seemed to be pliable like thick paper, and would rustle with a metalic sound when the edges were moved by the thumb, as one does sometimes thumb the edges of a book.

Two different methods of translating the Book of Mormon

The Book of Mormon, as we have it today (the result of losing the 116 manuscript pages), was nearly all translated by means of a seer stone that Joseph Smith had. While translating the 116 pages (the book of Lehi and the first chapter or so of the book of Mosiah), Joseph apparently used the Nephite interpreters (that is, the spectacles) that came with the plates. It seems that Joseph would look through one of the two clear stones in the interpreter at the characters on the plates (or perhaps on characters that he had copied from the plates) and the translation would appear in his viewing. When using this method, Joseph needed to have the plates out in the open. And since no one was allowed to see the plates until later, Joseph used a curtain or blanket to separate himself from others who might act as scribe for him or might otherwise need to communicate with him. Ultimately, a more convenient method was for him to use the seer stone, by placing it in a hat to obscure the light; when using this means, he was able to see a string of characters from the plates and underneath it the translation in English (according to what he told his scribe or those witnessing the translation). Martin Harris claimed that Joseph could use either method for translating, but that he found the seer stone more convenient, which makes sense. David Whitmer and Emma Smith claimed that Joseph used the interpreters for the 116 pages, but after its loss he used the seer stone. In fact, David insisted that the angel kept the interpreters after the loss of the 116 pages, so that only the seer stone was available for Joseph to translate with after that. It is worth noting, however, that there is nothing in the original manuscript to indicate which method of translation Joseph Smith was using. The result seems to be the same: a viewing of a line of characters from the plates, along with its English translation underneath. Of course, the earliest extant part of the original manuscript is composed of fragments from Alma 10 – 13, which means that the initial part of the book of Mosiah, the only part that could have been translated by means of the Nephite interpreters, is not extant.

We should also point out that Joseph Smith seems to have consistently refused to tell others how the translation process worked:

☐ Joseph Smith, 25 October 1831, minutes of conference at Orange Township, Ohio [Welch 131]

> Br. Hyrum Smith said that he thought best that the information of the coming forth of the book of Mormon be related by Joseph himself to the Elders present that all might know for themselves. Br. Joseph Smith jr. said that it was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the book of Mormon, & also said that it was not expedient for him to relate these things &c.

Joseph liked to simply refer to the translation as having been done "by the gift and power of God", which doesn't really tell us anything about the actual translation procedure.

Here we first list the evidence for the initial translation using the Nephite interpreters or the spectacles, later generally referred to as the Urim and Thummim. Then we list the evidence for the use of the seer stone to translate the Book of Mormon text as we have it today.

The first method: using the Nephite interpreters along with the plates

In the beginning, Joseph had the plates out in the open, either to copy the characters or to view them directly with the interpreters; a curtain or blanket was used to prevent anyone from seeing the plates. Joseph Smith's own account of his initial translation efforts, which occurred after his move to Pennsylvania in December of 1827, does not provide much detail:

☐ 1839, Joseph Smith, *History* [Vogel 1:70, Welch 136]

> By this timely aid was I enabled to reach the place of my destination in Pennsylvania, and immediately after my arrival there I commenced copying the characters of the plates. I copied a considerable number of them and by means of the Urim and Thummim I translated some of them which I did between the time I arrived at the house of my wife's father in the month of December, and the February following.

Most of the information we have about the specific use of the Nephite interpreters or the spectacles that came with the plates (later referred to generally as the Urim and Thummim) is secondary and derives, it would appear, from Martin Harris. The Reverend John Clark recalls what Martin Harris told him in 1828:

☐ John A. Clark, *Gleanings by the Way,* 1842 [Vogel 2:268, Welch 146]

> The way that Smith made his transcripts and transcriptions for Harris was the following: Although in the same room, a thick curtain or blanket was suspended between them, and Smith concealed behind the blanket, pretended to look through his spectacles, or transparent stones, and would then write down or repeat what he saw, which, when repeated aloud, was written down by Harris, who sat on the other side of the suspended blanket. Harris was told that it would arouse the most terrible divine displeasure, if he should attempt to draw near the sacred chest, or look at Smith while engaged in the work of deciphering the mysterious characters. This was Harris' own account of the matter to me.

And we have two letters from Charles Anthon, recalling what Martin Harris told him when he, Martin, visited Anthon in New York City in 1828:

☐ Charles Anthon, 17 February 1834, letter to Eber D. Howe, published in Howe's *Mormonism Unvailed,* 1834 [Vogel 4:379, Welch 208]

This young man was placed behind a curtain, in the garret of a farm house, and, being thus concealed from view, put on the spectacles occasionally, or rather, looked through one of the glasses, decyphered the characters in the book, and, having committed some of them to paper, handed copies from behind the curtain, to those who stood on the outside.

☐ Charles Anthon, 3 April 1841, letter to the Reverend Thomas Winthrop Coit, reprinted in John A. Clark's *Gleanings by the Way,* 1842 [Vogel 4:384, Welch 212]

A young man, it seems, had been placed in the garret of a farm-house, with a curtain before him, and, having fastened the spectacles to his head, had read several pages in the golden book, and communicated their contents in writing to certain persons stationed on the outside of the curtain. He had also copied off one page of the book in the original character, which he had in like manner handed over to those who were separated from him by the curtain, and this copy was the paper which the countryman had brought with him.

We also have this brief independent description of the Urim and Thummim and how they worked:

☐ Joseph Smith, as recorded by Nancy Towle, while visiting Kirtland, Ohio, October 1831 [Vogel 1:204, Welch 132]

He accordingly went; and was directed by the angel to a certain spot of ground, where was deposited a 'Box,' and in that box contained 'Plates,' which resembled gold; also, a pair of 'interpreters,' (as he called them,) that resembled spectacles; by looking into which, he could *read* a writing engraven upon the plates, though to himself, in a tongue unknown.

Shifting from the first method to the second one

A few witnesses clearly distinguish between the two translating instruments. According to these accounts, the Nephite interpreters were used for translating the lost 116 pages (or only in part, according to Martin Harris's account), but afterwards Joseph Smith used only the seer stone:

☐ Emma Smith Bidamon, letter to Emma Pilgrim, 27 March 1870 [Vogel 1:532, Welch 142]

Now the first part that my husband translated, was translated by the use of Urim, and Thummim, and that was the part that Martin Harris lost, after that he used a small stone, not exactly, black, but was rather a dark color, . . .

☐ David Whitmer, interviewed by Edward Stevenson, 22–23 December 1877 [Cook 12, Vogel 5:30]

David Said that the Prophet translated first by the urim & thumim & afterwards by A Seer Stone

☐ Martin Harris, account recorded by Edward Stevenson on 30 November 1881, six years after Martin's death, but told by Martin as early as 1870 [Vogel 2:320 – 321, Welch 149]

> He said that the Prophet possessed a seer stone, by which he was enabled to translate as well as from the Urim and Thummim, and for convenience he then used the seer stone. . . . Martin said further that the seer stone differed in appearance entirely from the Urim and Thummim that was obtained with the plates, which were two clear stones set in two rims, very much resembling spectacles, only they were larger.

The second method: placing the seer stone in a hat in order to obscure the light

All eight primary witnesses of the translation independently refer to Joseph Smith using the seer stone to translate the Book of Mormon, from the beginning in the spring of 1828 in Susquehanna, Pennsylvania, to the end in June 1829 at the Peter Whitmer home in Fayette, New York; that is, from some portion of the 116 pages containing the book of Lehi to the small plates of Nephi; and from the first scribes, Emma Smith, Reuben Hale, and Martin Harris, to the final scribes, Oliver Cowdery and two Whitmers, John and Christian. Nearly all mention obscuring the light or at least having the viewing occur in darkness; all explicitly state that the seer stone was placed in a hat. In these statements, there is some variety in how the seer stone is referred to: once as "the Urim and Thummim" (Joseph Knight), once as "the director" (Elizabeth Anne Whitmer), three times as simply "the stone" (Emma Smith, Elizabeth McKune, and Joseph McKune), and three times as "the seer stone" (Michael Morse, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris). By implication, there was no curtain or blanket separating Joseph Smith and his scribe. Nor did Joseph have any books, manuscripts, or notes that he was consulting.

(1) Joseph Knight Senior

☐ reminiscence in his own hand dated between 1835 and 1847 (the year of his death) [Vogel 4:17 – 18, Welch 189]

> Now the way he translated was he put the urim and thummim into his hat and Darkned his Eyes then he would take a sentance and it would apper in Brite Roman Letters then he would tell the writer and he would write it then that would go away the next sentance would Come and so on But if it was not Spelt rite it would not go away till it was rite so we see it was marvelous thus was the hol [whole] translated.

> > Quite a bit earlier in this reminiscence, Joseph Knight referred to Joseph Smith getting the Nephite interpreters along with the golden plates, stating that Joseph Smith "seamed to think more of the glasses or the urim and thummem then he Did of the Plates for says he I can see any thing they are Marvelus" [Vogel 4:15]. It is difficult to see here how Joseph could have put the interpreters into his hat; he would have had to have removed the two stones and place one or both of them in the hat. But that isn't what he says. I have assumed that Joseph Knight here uses the term "urim and thummim" to mean the seer stone. Earlier in this reminiscence he used the singular *glass* to refer to the seer stone: "then he looked in his glass and found it was Emma Hale" that he was supposed to marry [Vogel 4:13].

(2) Elizabeth Anne Whitmer Cowdery

▢ ultimately from a certificate in her own hand, copied by William E. McLellin into a letter, not fully extant, 15 February 1870 [Vogel 5:260, Welch 186]

He would place the director in his hat, and then place his face in his hat, so as to exclude the light, and then . . .

Vogel's version ends the quotation with "and then [read?] to his scribe the words (he said) as they appeared before him." Welch's version has "and then [read the words?] as they appeared before him." McLellin's copy of Elizabeth's original certificate here is missing the bottom part and ends with "and then".

In the Book of Mormon, the interpreters are sometimes referred to as directors (Alma 37:21, 24) while the singular *director* is used to refer to the compass that Lehi found, also called the Liahona (Mosiah 1:16; Alma 37:38, 45).

(3) Emma Smith Bidamon

▢ interviewed by Joseph Smith III, February 1879 [Vogel 1:541, Welch 143]

In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us.

(4) Michael Morse, brother-in-law to Emma Smith, never a Mormon

▢ interviewed by William W. Blair and Edwin Cadwell, 8 May 1879 [Vogel 4:343, Welch 219]

He further states that when Joseph was translating the Book of Mormon, he, (Morse), had occasion more than once to go into his immediate presence, and saw him engaged at his work of translation. The mode of procedure consisted in Joseph's placing the Seer Stone in the crown of a hat, then putting his face into the hat, so as to entirely cover his face, resting his elbows upon his knees, and then dictating, word after word, while the scribe—Emma, John Whitmer, O. Cowdery, or some other, wrote it down.

(5) David Whitmer

▢ interviewed by John L. Traughber, Jr., October 1879; here the pronoun *I* represents Traughber's own first-person voice [Cook 52–53, 55; Vogel 5:59, 61; Welch 164]

I, too, have heard Father Whitmer say that was present many times while Joseph was translating; but I never heard him say that the translation was made by aid of Urim and Thummim; but in every case, and his testimony is always the same, he declared that Joseph first offered prayer, then took a dark colored, opaque stone, called a "seer-stone," and placed it in the crown of his hat, then put his face into the hat, and read the translation as it appeared before him. This was the daily method of procedure, as I have often heard Father Whitmer declare; and, as it is generally agreed to by parties who know the facts, that a considerable portion of the work of translation was performed in a room of his father's house, where he then resided, there can be no doubt but what Father David Whitmer is a competent witness of the manner of translating. . . .

With the sanction of David Whitmer, and by his authority, I now state that he does not say that Joseph Smith ever translated in his presence by aid of Urim and Thummim; but by means of one dark colored, opaque stone, called a "Seer Stone," which was placed in the crown of a hat, into which Joseph put his face, so as to exclude the external light. Then, a spiritual light would shine forth, and parchment would appear before Joseph, upon which was a line of characters from the plates, and under it, the translation in English; at least, so Joseph said.

□ interviewed by a reporter for the *Kansas City Journal*, 1 June 1881 [Cook 62, Vogel 5:76, Welch 166]

He had two small stones of a chocolate color, nearly egg shaped and perfectly smooth, but not transparent, called interpreters, which were given him with the plates. He did not use the plates in the translation, but would hold the interpreters to his eyes and cover his face with a hat, excluding all light, and before his eyes would appear what seemed to be parchment, on which would appear the characters of the plates in a line at the top, and immediately below would appear the translation in English, which Smith would read to his scribe, who wrote it down exactly as it fell from his lips.

Here the reporter for the *Kansas City Journal* mistakenly mixed up the seer stone with the interpreters and thus described the interpreters as "two small stones of a chocolate color, nearly egg shaped and perfectly smooth, but not transparent". David will correct this account two weeks later, as noted below.

□ David Whitmer's corrections to the *Kansas City Journal*, 13 June 1881 [Cook 72, Vogel 5:81–82, Welch 167]

I did not say that Smith used "two small stones" as stated nor did I call the stone "interpreters." I stated that "he used one stone (not two) and called it a sun stone."

□ David Whitmer's further correction in a letter to S. T. Mouch, 18 November 1882 [Cook 241–242, Vogel 5:82n1]

As to the interview published in the Kansas City Journal of June 5th 1881 there were So many Errors in it as published that I felt compelled to correct what I thought to be the most damaging Errors— these corrections were published in the same paper of Date June 19th 1881 and Even in publishing the Statement Correcting their former publication where I had written "Seer Stone" they made it read "Sun Stone"

David's *seer* could easily be misread as *sun*, especially if the two *e*'s showed little looping and the final stroke for the *r* looked like the downstroke of an *n*.

□ interviewed by a reporter for the *Chicago Times*, 14 October 1881 [Cook 76, Vogel 5:85–86]

The tablets or plates were translated by Smith, who used a small oval kidney-shaped stone, called Urim and Thummim, that seemed endowed with the marvelous power of converting the characters on the plates, when used by Smith, into English, who would then dictate to Cowdery what to write.

(6) Martin Harris

☐ reminiscence dating as early as 4 September 1870, recorded by Edward Stevenson, 30 November 1881 [Vogel 2:320–321, Welch 149]

Martin Harris related an Instance that occurred during the time that he wrote that portion of the translation of the Book of Mormon, which he was favored to write direct from the mouth of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He said that the Prophet possessed a seer stone, by which he was enabled to translate as well as from the Urim and Thummim, and for convenience he then used the seer stone. Martin explained the translating as follows: By aid of the seer stone, sentences would appear and were read by the Prophet and written by Martin, and when finished he would say, "Written," and if correctly written, that sentence would disappear and another appear in its place, but if not written correctly it remained until corrected, so that the translation was just as it was engraven on the plates, precisely in the language then used. Martin said, after continued translation they would become weary and would go down to the river and exercise by throwing stones out on the river, etc. While so doing on one occasion, Martin found a stone very much resembling the one used for translating, and on resuming their labor of translation, Martin put in place the stone that he had found. He said that the Prophet remained silent unusually and intently gazing in darkness, no traces of the usual sentences appearing. Much surprised, Joseph exclaimed, "Martin! What is the matter? All is as dark as Egypt." Martin's countenance betrayed him, and the Prophet asked Martin why he had done so. Martin said, to stop the mouths of fools, who had told him that the Prophet had learned those sentences and was merely repeating them, etc.

> Martin Harris died on 10 July 1875; thus this account is more than six years old. If this reminiscence dates from the Sabbath meeting that occurred on 4 September 1870 or shortly thereafter, then this account would be over 11 years old. One aspect that is unexplained is what Joseph and Martin did when the text remained after Martin said "written". It seems that they would have had to repeat the text in some manner in order to correct it. Although this account does not mention any hat being used for the darkening, it clearly indicates that Joseph Smith was viewing the text under conditions of darkness, thus Joseph's exclamation "All is as dark as Egypt."

In Stevenson's later accounts of this incident, he has Martin explicitly referring to Joseph using the seer stone in a hat, as here:

☐ Martin Harris's reminiscence, as recorded by Edward Stevenson, 1886 [Vogel 2:324, Welch 150–151]

He also stated that the Prophet translated a portion of the Book of Mormon, with the seer stone in his possession. **The stone was placed in a hat** that was used for the purpose, and with the aid of this seer stone the Prophet would read sentence by sentence as Martin wrote, . . . Martin on one occasion picked up a stone resembling the one with which they were translating, and on resuming their work Martin placed **the false stone in the hat.** He said that the Prophet looked quietly for a long time, when he raised his head and said: "Martin, what on earth is the matter, all is dark as Egypt." Martin smiled and the seer discovered that **the wrong stone was placed in the hat.**

(7) Elizabeth L. McKune, never a Mormon

▫ reminiscence recorded by Hiel Lewis, 29 September 1879 [Vogel 4:320]

I worked in the families of Joseph Smith and uncle Isaac Hale for about nine months, during which time Mrs. Emma Smith had a child which was still-born and much deformed. The dwellings of Mr. Hale and Joseph Smith, jr., were near each other. I saw Smith translating his book by the aid of the stone and hat. Reuben Hale, acted as scribe, writing down the words from Joseph Smith's mouth, but after a short time Martin Harris did the writing.

Hiel Lewis (Elizabeth McKune's brother) explains, much like Martin Harris, that early on in the translation Joseph Smith used the seer stone with the hat instead of the spectacles that came with the plates, although Lewis's actual statement accidentally replaces his intended *peep-stone* with *spectacles,* in anticipation of the following use of *spectacles* [Vogel 4:320]:

There were many persons in Harmony who had from Joe Smith positive promise that they should see the plates and the spectacles, but all say that they never saw them. Alva Hale says he never saw them. I presume he saw that old glass-box that Isaac Hale spoke of, said to contain the plates. Smith's excuse for using his **spectacles** [that is, **peep-stone**] and hat to translate with, instead of those **spectacles,** was that he must keep the **spectacles** concealed; but any and all persons were permitted to inspect the **peep-stone;** and that he could translate just as well with the stone.

(8) Joseph Fowler McKune, never a Mormon

▫ reminiscence recorded by Rhamanthus M. Stocker, 1887 [Vogel 4:402, Welch 225]

Joseph Fowler McCune, now residing in Windsor, Broome County, N. Y., boarded in this neighborhood and attended school at Hickory Grove while Smith was engaged in translating the Bible, and was quite often in Smith's house. Mr. McCune states that Reuben Hale acted as scribe a part of the time. He says Smith's hat was a very large one, and what is commonly called a "stove-pipe." The hat was on the table by the window and the stone in the bottom or rather in the top of the hat. Smith would bend over the hat with his face buried in it so that no light could enter it, and thus dictate to the scribe what he should write.

Stocker is here referring to the early translating of the Book of Mormon, in 1828, when Reuben Hale was one of the scribes. This provides additional evidence that the seer stone was used early on in the translation. McKune himself was born in 1815, so he would have been about 13 years old when he observed Joseph Smith translating.

We can identify several characteristics of the second translation method:

■ *The plates were not directly used*

We have two accounts that explicitly state that the plates were not directly used; Emma Smith's account further states that the plates were nearby, wrapped up in a linen cloth.

□ Emma Smith Bidamon, interviewed by Joseph Smith III, February 1879 [Vogel 1:541–542, Welch 143–144]

Q. Are you sure that he had the plates at the time you were writing for him?

A. The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table cloth, which I had given him to fold them in. . . .

Q. I should suppose that you would have uncovered the plates and examined them?

A. I did not attempt to handle the plates, other than I have told you, nor uncover them to look at them. I was satisfied that it was the work of God, and therefore did not feel it to be necessary to do so.

Q [from Major Bidamon]. Did Mr. Smith forbid your examining the plates?

A. I do not think he did. I knew that he had them, and was not specially curious about them. I moved them from place to place on the table, as it was necessary in doing my work.

□ David Whitmer, interviewed by a reporter for the *Kansas City Journal,* 1 June 1881 [Cook 62, Vogel 5:76, Welch 166]

He did not use the plates in the translation, but would hold the interpreters to his eyes and cover his face with a hat, excluding all light, . . .

■ *There was no curtain or blanket between Joseph Smith and his scribe*

The blanket or curtain preventing others from viewing Joseph seems to have been used only in the very beginning, when Joseph Smith had the plates out in the open (and no one else was yet allowed to see the plates). This apparently occurred when Martin Harris got his sample of characters and a translation to take to the professors in New York City, as well as some of the time when Martin scribed for Joseph Smith. In using the seer stone, there was no need for a curtain since the plates were not being used. This allowed witnesses to observe the translation process. David Whitmer provides another reason why a blanket was used, namely, to prevent visitors from seeing Joseph and his scribe at work.

□ Elizabeth Anne Whitmer Cowdery, 15 February 1870 [Vogel 5:260, Welch 186]

Joseph never had a curtain drawn between him and his scribe while he was translating.

□ Emma Smith Bidamon, interviewed by Joseph Smith III, February 1879 [Vogel 1:541–542, Welch 143]

Q. What of the truth of Mormonism?

A. I know Mormonism to be the truth; and believe the Church to have been established by divine direction. I have complete faith in it. In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in the hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us. . . .

Q. Where did father and Oliver Cowdery write?

A. Oliver Cowdery and your father wrote in the room where I was at work.

◻ David Whitmer, purportedly interviewed by a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune,* 15 December 1885 [Cook 173, Vogel 5:153, Welch 172]

The house of the senior Whitmer was a primitive and poorly designed structure, but it was deemed the most secure for carrying out the sacret trust on account of the threats that had been made against Smith by his mercenary neighbors. In order to give privacy to the proceeding a blanket, which served as a portiere, was stretched across the family living room to shelter the translators and the plates from the eye of any who might call at the house while the work was in progress. This, Mr. Whitmer says, was the only use made of the blanket, and it was not for the purpose of concealing the plates or the translator from the eyes of the amanuensis. In fact, Smith was at no time hidden from his collaborators, and the translation was performed in the presence of not only the persons mentioned, but of the entire Whitmer household and several of Smith's relatives besides.

■ *There were no notes, manuscripts, or books*

And by implication, no source manuscript for the Book of Mormon, and no Bible! The entire text is dictated, but not from memorization on Joseph Smith's part.

◻ Emma Smith Bidamon, interviewed by Joseph Smith III, February 1879 [Vogel 1:541–542, Welch 143–144]

Q. Had he not a book or manuscript from which he read, or dictated to you?
A. He had neither manuscript nor book to read from.

Q. Could he not have had, and you not know it?
A. If he had had anything of the kind he could not have concealed it from me. . . .

Q. Could not father have dictated the Book of Mormon to you, Oliver Cowdery and the others who wrote for him, after having first written it, or having first read it out of some book?
A. Joseph Smith [and for the first time she used his name direct, having usually used the words, "your father," or "my husband"] could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter; let alone dictating a book like the Book of Mormon.

> Here Emma Smith means, I would think, that **at that time, in 1828,** Joseph "could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter".

◻ Michael Morse, interviewed by William W. Blair and Edwin Cadwell, 8 May 1879 [Vogel 4:343]

Bro. Cadwell enquired as to whether Joseph was sufficiently intelligent and talented to compose and dictate of his own ability the matter written down by the scribes. To this Mr. Morse replied with decided emphasis, No. He said he [Morse] then was not at all learned, yet was confident he had more learning than Joseph then had. Bro. Cadwell enquired how he (Morse) accounted for Joseph's dictating the Book of Mormon in the manner he had described. To this he replied he did not know. He said it was a strange piece of work, and he had thought that Joseph might have found the writings of some good man and, committing them to memory, recited them to his scribes from time to time. We suggested that if this were true, Joseph must have had a prodigious

memory—a memory that could be had only by miraculous endowment. To this Mr. Morse replied that he, of course, did not know as to *how* Joseph was enabled to furnish the matter he dictated.

> Michael Morse has the same view as Emma Smith regarding Joseph Smith's ability, at that time, to author the Book of Mormon text. Morse suggests that Joseph Smith had perhaps memorized someone else's text and was repeating it from memory. The two RLDS interviewers challenge Morse on this point, and Morse acknowledges that he himself has no actual evidence on how Joseph Smith was able to dictate the text of the Book of Mormon.

☐ David Whitmer, interviewed by a reporter for the *Chicago Times,* 14 October 1881 [Cook 76, Vogel 5:86, Welch 168]

> Mr. Whitmer emphatically asserts as did Harris and Cowdery, that while Smith was dictating the translation he had no manuscript notes or other means of knowledge save the seer-stone and the characters as shown on the plates, he being present and cognizant how it was done.

Problematic accounts

Here, for the record, I provide several accounts that I exclude from consideration. They usually involve mixtures of the two methods of translations, or they introduce aspects that are not found in any other account. There may be some correct information in any given account, but the account can be so muddled that it becomes virtually worthless.

☐ Joseph Smith, purportedly heard by Truman Coe, perhaps as a secondhand account; published 11 August 1836 as a letter to the editor, *Ohio Observer* [Vogel 1:47, Welch 135]

> The manner of translation was as wonderful as the discovery. By putting his finger on one of the characters and imploring divine aid, then looking through the Urim and Thummim, he would see the import written in plain English on a screen placed before him. After delivering this to his emanuensi, he would again proceed in the same manner and obtain the meaning of the next character, and so on till he came to a part of the plates which were sealed up, and there was commanded to desist: and he says he has a promise from God that in due time he will enable him to translate the remainder. This is the relation as given by Smith.

> > The specific "relation" given here is highly unusual because Joseph Smith always refused to give this kind of detailed account. He consistently said and wrote that he translated the Book of Mormon "by the gift and power of God", without details. The plates would have to be in the open for Coe's description of the method to work, so the scribe would have to have been on the opposite side of some separating blanket or curtain because no one at this time was allowed to see the plates; in any event, no blanket or curtain is mentioned in this account. A single character corresponding to an entire thought ("the import written in plain English" and "the meaning of the next character") also shows up in David Whitmer's later accounts, but this too seems to be impossible. Moreover, Joseph was also told in advance not to touch the sealed portion, so this description of him working up to the sealed part and then suddenly being told not to go on also contradicts Joseph's own account

of the sealed portion. Of course, Coe himself is not a firsthand witness of the translation process. It appears that most of this account was based on hearsay, even if some part of it derives from Joseph Smith.

☐ David Whitmer, interviewed by Eri B. Mullin, 1874, published in 1880 [Cook 3, Vogel 1:15, Welch 165]

I for my part know he said that Joseph had the instrument Urim and Thummim. I asked him how they looked. He said they looked like spectacles, and he (Joseph) would put them on and look in a hat, or put his face in the hat and read. Says I, "Did he have the plates in there." "No; the words would appear, and if he failed to spell the word right, it would stay till it was spelled right, then pass away; another come, and so on."

So David supposedly says that Joseph Smith put on the Nephite interpreters (the spectacles) and then looked in the hat, "or put his face in the hat and read"—without anything in the hat? This account mixes up the seer stone with the Nephite interpreters.

☐ David Whitmer, interviewed by a reporter for the *Chicago Times,* August 1875 [Cook 7, Vogel 5:21, 24]

Having placed the Urim and Thummim in his hat, Joseph placed the hat over his face, and with prophetic eyes read the invisible symbols syllable by syllable and word by word, while Cowdery or Harris acted as recorders. . . .

Three times has he been at the hill Cumorah and seen the casket that contained the tablets, and the seer-stone.

This account mixes up the (Nephite) interpreters with the seer stone. The stone box that held the plates and the interpreters are referred to as a casket, while the plates are referred to as tablets. The seer stone did not come with the plates. But Joseph did put the seer stone ("the Urim and Thummim") in his hat, and read off the text to his scribes. Nothing special should be read into the phraseology "and with prophetic eyes read the invisible symbols syllable by syllable and word by word".

☐ Oliver Cowdery, interviewed by Samuel W. Richards during the winter of 1848–49, statement recorded 58 years later on 21 May 1907 [Vogel 2:501–502, Welch 161]

He represents Joseph as sitting by a table with the plates before him, and he reading the record with the Urim & Thummim. Oliver, his scribe, sits close beside to hear and write every word as translated. This is done by holding the translators over the words of the written record, and the translation appears distinctly in the instrument, which had been touched by the finger of God and dedicated and consecrated for the express purpose of translating languages. This instrument now used fully performed its Mission. Every word was made distinctly visible even to every letter, and if Oliver did not in writing spell the word correctly it remained in the translator until it was written correctly. This was the Mystery to Oliver, how Joseph being compartively ignorant could correct him in spelling without seeing the word written, and he would not be satisfied until he should be permitted or have the gift to translate as well as Joseph. To satisfy Oliver, Joseph with

him went to the Lord in prayer until Oliver had the gift by which he could translate, and by so doing learned how it was that Joseph could correct him even in the spelling of words.

> This statement is full of error. First of all, Oliver Cowdery had not yet seen the plates. It is possible that this is how the (Nephite) interpreters worked, but Joseph Smith would have done this behind a curtain at this time, if he had been translating using the interpreters. But with the seer stone it was done with a hat and no plates being directly used, although they were often nearby wrapped up in a cloth. Also, Richards repeats the ironclad interpretation, and has Joseph correcting Oliver's spelling. This could only have happened with the first occurrence of Book of Mormon names or for unfamiliar biblical names. Otherwise, Oliver Cowdery's spelling was second rate and never corrected in the original manuscript. And finally, Oliver never did translate, as it states in Doctrine and Covenants 9:1–6. So he never did find out how Joseph (as he supposed) could figure out what he, Oliver, had misspelled.

☐ David Whitmer, interviewed by Nathan Tanner Junior, 13 May 1886 (reminiscence written in a letter dating from 17 February 1909) [Cook 191–192, Vogel 5:169]

He said that Joseph was separated from the scribe, by a blanket as I remember; that he had the Urim and Thummim, and a chocolate colored stone, which he used alternatively, as suited his convenience, and he said that he believed Joseph could as well accomplished the translation by looking in to a hat, or in to any other stone, as by the use of the Urim, or the chocolate colored stone. David expressed absolute faith in the Prophets power to get any information he desired, and by any means he should adopt for the purpose. I mean he appeared to have absolute faith in Josephs power with God, to get any information he wished for. And he did not think that either the Urim or the stone he had were essential, or absolutely essential to the obtaining of the information. He said that Joseph would—as I remember—place the manuscript beneath the stone or Urim, and the characters would appear in English, which he would spell out, and they would remain there untill the word was fully written and corrected, when it would disappear and another word appear, etc.

> Much of this account of Tanner's interview from nearly 23 years earlier is compounded by the folklore that had arisen by the early 1900s about the translation process. Tanner's diary entry for this day [Vogel 5:165–167] lacks all of this information. The story of the blanket between Joseph and the scribe, mentioned in only the earliest part of the translation, is invoked here. The alternative use of the two instruments (the Nephite interpreters and the seer stone) seems to derive from Martin Harris's account of his work with Joseph on the 116 pages, reported first by Edward Stevenson in the 13 December 1881 issue of the *Deseret Evening News* [Vogel 2:318–321]. And what does Tanner mean when he says that Joseph would "place the manuscript beneath the stone or Urim"? Maybe he meant to say the plates rather than the manuscript, or perhaps he is referring to characters Joseph had copied from the plates on to a manuscript sheet of paper. Tanner also has the characters corresponding to a single English word, with Joseph spelling out the word to the scribe, and the word would not disappear until the scribe got it down right, letter for letter. Definitely, an ironclad approach. But one word at a time? If this were so, Joseph and his scribes never could have gotten the translation done in less than three months, from the first part of April 1829 to the end of June 1829.

Generic accounts from Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery

The two individuals that could have told us the most about the translation process are Joseph Smith, the translator, and Oliver Cowdery, his primary scribe. Besides stating that the translation was done by "the gift and power of God", they both explicitly claim that Joseph made the translation using the Urim and Thummin, meaning the interpreters that came with the plates. But in no case did they give any details, nor did they ever mention the seer stone. It appears that their witness statements purposely avoid mentioning the stone in the hat, the method that would have linked Joseph to treasure hunting. And although it is true that Joseph used the interpreters in the very beginning of the translation, there is no firsthand witness who confirms its use after the loss of the 116 pages of manuscript. In fact, three witnesses gave evidence that the seer stone was used when Oliver was the scribe: Emma Smith (February 1879), Michael Morse (8 May 1879), and David Whitmer (14 October 1881); Emma's evidence is indirect, but the two others specifically list Oliver by name. Thus Joseph Smith's claim that he used the Urim and Thummin is only partially true; and Oliver Cowdery's statements that Joseph used the original instrument while he, Oliver, was the scribe appear to be intentionally misleading.

□ Joseph Smith, "Answers to Questions", 8 May 1838, published in the *Elders' Journal* in July 1838 [Vogel 1:52, Welch 135]

Question 4th. How, and where did you obtain the book of Mormon?
Answer. Moroni, the person who deposited the plates, from whence the book of Mormon was translated, in a hill in Manchester, Ontario County, New York, being dead, and raised again therefrom, appeared unto me, and told me where they were; and gave me directions how to obtain them. I obtained them, **and the Urim and Thummim with them; by the means of which, I translated the plates;** and thus came the book of Mormon.

□ Joseph Smith, letter to John Wentworth, published on 1 March 1842 in the *Times and Seasons* [Vogel 1:171, Welch 138]

With the records was found a curious instrument which the ancients called "Urim and Thummim," which consisted of two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow fastened to a breastplate. **Through the medium of the Urim and Thummin I translated the record by the gift, and power of God.**

□ Oliver Cowdery, letter to W. W. Phelps, 7 September 1834, published the next month in the *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* [Vogel 2:419, Welch 157]

Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, **as he translated, with the Urim and Thummim,** or, as the Nephites would have said, "Interpreters," the history, or record, called "The book of Mormon."

□ Oliver Cowdery, as recorded by Reuben Miller in his journal, 21 October 1848, published in 1859 in the *Deseret News* [Vogel 2:494–495, Welch 159]

I wrote, with my own pen, the entire Book of Mormon (save a few pages) as it fell from the lips of the Prophet Joseph Smith, **as he translated it by the gift and power of God, by the means of the Urim and Thummim,** or, as it is called by that book, "Holy Interpreters."

Other accounts

We now note some additional claims the witnesses of the translation made. As before, we are unable to provide any evidence from the extant original manuscript regarding these claims.

■ *Joseph Smith was ignorant of the walls of Jerusalem*

Emma Smith was surprised that her husband, Joseph Smith, was so ignorant of the Bible that he did not know the city of Jerusalem had walls. The first time Joseph Smith dealt with the walls of Jerusalem, he asked Emma whether Jerusalem had walls. This event would have occurred in early 1828 when Joseph was dictating the beginning of the book of Lehi to Emma as part of the 116 pages. The second time Joseph could have confronted this issue was in June 1829, when he was translating the small plates of Nephi at the Whitmer home. David Whitmer claimed that Joseph was ignorant of the walls of Jerusalem, but this remembrance of David's is probably based on what he had heard from Emma Smith about Joseph's translation of the book of Lehi. It is very unlikely that Joseph would have asked this question the second time around, when he was translating 1 Nephi at the Peter Whitmer home in June 1829. Martin Harris also knew of this incident, again probably from Emma.

☐ Emma Smith Bidamon, interviewed by Edmund C. Briggs, 8 December 1856, mentioned in Briggs and Etzenhouser's 1884 published interview of David Whitmer [Cook 126–127, Vogel 5:120]

And one time while translating, where it speaks of the walls of Jerusalem, he stopped and said, "Emma, did Jerusalem have walls surrounding it." When I informed him it had, he replied, "O, I thought I was deceived."

☐ Emma Smith Bidamon, interviewed by Edmund C. Briggs, 8 December 1856, published in 1916 [Vogel 1:530–531, Welch 142]

and one time while he was translating he stopped suddenly, pale as a sheet, and said, "Emma, did Jerusalem have walls around it?" When I answered, "Yes," he replied "Oh! I was afraid I had been deceived." He had such a limited knowledge of history at that time that he did not even know that Jerusalem was surrounded by walls.

☐ Emma Smith Bidamon, interviewed by Nels Madsen and Parley P. Pratt Junior, 1877, recorded in 1931 [Vogel 1:546, Welch 142–143]

In regard to the Book of Mormon Mrs. Bidemon stated emphatically that here [her] husband Joseph Smith could not have written such a book without inspiration. He had not read the Bible enough to kno that there were walls around jeruselum and he cam and asked me if there were walls around the city of jeruselum.

This is recorded very late, by Nels Madsen in 1931. Emma in her 1856 interview says she was acting as scribe, so it's unlikely Joseph needed to "come and ask Emma".

☐ Martin Harris, interviewed by Edward Stevenson, 1870, published in 1893 [Vogel 2:326]

and when Joseph received the book, he was so unlearned that he did not know that Jerusalem was a walled city until explained.

▢ David Whitmer, interviewed by a reporter for the *Chicago Times,* August 1875 [Vogel 5:21]

"So illiterate was Joseph at that time," said Mr. Whitmer, "that he didn't even know that Jerusalem was a walled city, . . . "

▢ David Whitmer, purportedly interviewed by a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune,* 15 December 1885 [Cook 174, Vogel 5:154, Welch 172]

and Mr. Whitmer recalls the fact that at that time Smith did not even know that Jerusalem was a walled city.

▢ David Whitmer, interviewed by Martin Jones Hubble, 13 November 1886 [Cook 211, Vogel 5:184, Welch 175]

He said . . . that Smith was ignorant of the Bible that when translating he first came to where Jerusalem was spoken of as a "Walled City" he stoped untill they got a Bible & showed him where the fact was recorded—Smith not believing it was a walled City.

Here David appears to have added the notion that they consulted a Bible, which seems unlikely. Emma simply knew, and her answer was sufficient.

This incident shows that Joseph Smith was not the author of the Book of Mormon text. He just didn't know enough about the Bible, for one thing.

■ *Working long periods of time*

Witnesses said that Joseph Smith and his scribe would work for long periods of time. Benjamin Hunter's replication of the dictation process (discussed separately) indicates that it would take about half an hour to do the equivalent of one page of the 1830 edition. If the translation took 74 days, as John W. Welch has proposed (see Welch 121–125), this would mean that Joseph and his scribe would need to cover each day about eight pages of the 583 pages in the 1830 edition, or four hours a day given half an hour per page. Of course, these four hours would have been spread out in any given day, but it would still require long periods of dictation time, which the witnesses quickly became aware of.

▢ Elizabeth Anne Whitmer Cowdery, 15 February 1870 [Cook 233–234, Vogel 5:260, Welch 186]

I cheerfully certify that I was familiar with the manner of Joseph Smith's translating the book of Mormon. He translated the most of it at my Father's house. And I often sat by and saw and heard them translate and write for hours together.

▢ Emma Smith Bidamon, interviewed by Joseph Smith III, February 1879 [Vogel 1:541, Welch 143]

In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in the hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us.

■ *Joseph Smith had to be in the right spirit*

If Joseph was not in the right spirit, he was unable to translate. He first had to make sure that all was well, especially with his wife Emma, before continuing; we apparently have two accounts from David Whitmer of the same event:

□ David Whitmer, interviewed by William H. Kelley and George A. Blakeslee, 15 January 1882 [Cook 86, Vogel 5:91, Welch 169]

> He could not translate unless he was humble and possessed the right feelings towards every one. To illustrate, so you can see. One morning when he was getting ready to continue the translation, something went wrong about the house and he was put out about it. Something that Emma, his wife, had done. Oliver and I went up stairs, and Joseph came up soon after to continue the trans-lation, but he could not do anything. He could not translate a single syllable. He went down stairs, out into the orchard and made supplication to the Lord; was gone about an hour — came back to the house, asked Emma's forgiveness and then came up stairs where we were and the translation went on all right. He could no nothing save he was humble and faithful.

□ David Whitmer, interviewed by D. C. Dunbar for the *Omaha Herald,* 10 October 1886 [Cook 199, Vogel 5:178, Welch 173]

> This rigorous exactment required him to be humble and spotless in his deportment in order that the work might progress. On one occasion the prophet had indulged in a stormy quarrel with his wife. Without pacifying her or making any reparation for his brutal treatment, he returned to the room in the Whitmer residence to resume the work with the plates. The surface of the magic stone remained blank, and all his persistent efforts to bring out the coveted words proved abortive. He went into the woods again to pray, and this time was gone fully an hour. His friends became positively concerned, and were about to institute a search, when Joseph entered the room, pale and haggard, having suffered a vigorous chastisement at the hands of the Lord. He went straight in humiliation to his wife, entreated and received her forgiveness, returned to his work, and, much to the joy of himself and his anxious friends surrounding him, the stone again glared forth its letters of fire.

Testable claims

At this point, an important distinction needs to be made about the claims discussed thus far: there is no evidence in the original manuscript for any of these claims by the witnesses of the translation. But for the following claims, we can find evidence, either direct or indirect, that allows us to more accurately evaluate their statements. We first turn to an important case of hearsay that apparently came from Joseph Smith.

■ *What did Joseph Smith see using the instrument?*

It appears that Joseph Smith himself left no record of what he saw in the translation instrument, either the Nephite interpreters or the seer stone (either of which could be referred to as a "Urim and Thummim"). In fact, Joseph studiously avoided saying how he translated, only that he translated "by the gift and power of God". Even so, we do have two witnesses, David Whitmer and Joseph Knight, who gave accounts of what they believed Joseph saw in the instrument. And David stated in a couple of interviews (in October 1879 and January 1885) that he wasn't speculating, but that Joseph himself had told him (and others) what he, Joseph,

was seeing. Nonetheless, whatever these witnesses said about what Joseph saw with the seer stone must be considered hearsay and not firsthand. David's earliest accounts, from October 1879 to 1885, state that Joseph saw "a line of characters from the plates" (not just a single character) and underneath it the translated English sentence. In addition, the whole process seems to have been visionary, with Joseph seeing a piece of parchment and on it the characters and underneath that the translation (apparently also on the parchment):

▢ David Whitmer, interviewed by John L. Traughber Junior, October 1879 [Cook 55, Vogel 5:61, Welch 164]

> With the sanction of David Whitmer, and by his authority, I now state that he does not say that Joseph Smith ever translated in his presence by aid of Urim and Thummim; but by means of one dark colored, opaque stone, called a "Seer Stone," which was placed in the crown of a hat, into which Joseph put his face, so as to exclude the external light. Then, a spiritual light would shine forth, and parchment would appear before Joseph, upon which was **a line of characters from the plates, and under it, the translation in English;** at least, so Joseph said.

▢ David Whitmer, interviewed by a reporter for the *Kansas City Journal,* 1 June 1881 [Cook 62, Vogel 5:76, Welch 166]

> He had two small stones of a chocolate color, nearly egg shaped and perfectly smooth, but not transparent, called interpreters, which were given him with the plates. He did not use the plates in the translation, but would hold the interpreters to his eyes and cover his face with a hat, excluding all light, and before his eyes would appear what seemed to be parchment, on which would appear **the characters of the plates in a line at the top, and immediately below would appear the translation in English,** which Smith would read to his scribe, who wrote it down exactly as it fell from his lips.

▢ David Whitmer, his corrections to the *Kansas City Journal,* 13 June 1881, two weeks after the interview on 1 June 1881 [Cook 72, Vogel 5:81–82, Welch 167–168]

> I did not wish to be understood as saying that those referred to as being present were all of the time in the immediate presence of the translator, but were at the place and saw how the translation was conducted. I did not say that Smith used "two small stones" as stated nor did I call the stone "interpreters." I stated that "he used one stone (not two) and called it a sun [seer] stone." The "interpreters" were as I understood taken from Smith and were not used by him after losing the first 116 pages as stated. It is my understanding that the stone refered to was furnished him when he commenced translating again after losing the 116 pages. My statement was and now is that in translating he put the stone in his hat and putting his face in his hat so as to exclude the light and that then the light and **characters appeared in the hat together with the interpretation** which he uttered and was written by the scribe and which was tested at the time as stated.

▢ David Whitmer, interviewed by George Q. Cannon, 27 February 1884 [Cook 108, Vogel 5:113, Welch 170]

> In speaking of the translating he said that Joseph had the stone in a hat from which all light was excluded. In the stone **the characters appeared and under that the translation in English** and they remained until the scribe had copied it correctly.

But occasionally in the first half of the 1880s David refers to some variability, stating in particular that "one character would make two lines of manuscript":

◻ David Whitmer, interviewed by a reporter for the *Chicago Times,* 14 October 1881 [Cook 76, Vogel 5:85–86, Welch 168]

> The tablets or plates were translated by Smith, who used a small oval or kidney-shaped stone, called Urim and Thummim, that seemed endowed with the marvelous power of converting the characters on the plates, when used by Smith, into English, who would then dictate to Cowdery what to write. **Frequently, one character would make two lines of manuscript, while others made but a word or two words.**

◻ David Whitmer, interviewed by James H. Hart, 10 March 1884 [Cook 115, Vogel 5:104, Welch 170]

> The way it was done was thus: Joseph would place the seer-stone in a deep hat, and placing his face close to it, would see, not the stone, but what appeared like an oblong piece of parchment, on which the hieroglyphics would appear, and also the translation in the English language, all appearing in bright luminous letters. Joseph would then read it to Oliver, who would write it down as spoken. Sometimes Joseph could not pronounce the words correctly, having had but little education; and if by any means a mistake was made in the copy, the luminous writing would remain until it was corrected. It sometimes took Oliver several trials to get the right letters to spell correctly some of the more difficult words, but when he had written them correctly, the characters and the interpretation would disappear, and be replaced by other characters and their interpretation. When the seer-stone was not placed in the hat, no characters or writing could be seen therein, but when so placed then the hieroglyphics would appear as before described. **Some represented but one word, or name, some represented several, and some from one to two lines.**

And finally, from the mid-1880s to late 1880s, David Whitmer refers only to a single character from the plates corresponding to the English sentence; even so, in the first account, dating from January 1885, David claims that Joseph Smith stated this to him and to others. This is no accident since it appears in his own publication from 1887.

◻ David Whitmer, interviewed by Zenas H. Gurley, 14 January 1885 [Cook 157–158, Vogel 5:138, Welch 171]

> 25 Q. Were you present during any of the time of translation, if so, state how it was done.
> Ans—The "Interpreters" were taken from Joseph after he allowed Martin Harris to carry away the 116 pages of Ms—of the Book of Mormon as a punishment, but he was allowed to go on and translate by the use of a "Seer stone" which he had, and which he placed in a hat into which he buried his face, stating to me and others that **the original character appeared upon parchment and under it the translation in english,** which enabled him to read it readily.

◻ David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ,* 1887 [Vogel 5:196, Welch 175]

> Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. **One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English.**

So David Whitmer, over time, has changed his account of what Joseph Smith told him about the translation: "one line of characters from the plates" has been replaced by "a single character". Linguistically, there is no writing system where single characters consistently stand for whole sentences. Most important is that initially David had it correct: Joseph Smith said he saw a line of characters from the plates, with its translation into English underneath. Linguistically, this is perfectly reasonable, no matter what the writing system (logographic, syllabic, consonantal, or alphabetic).

There is one other statement from a witness of the translation process, Joseph Knight Senior. As with David Whitmer, Joseph Knight himself could not have observed what he claims Joseph Smith saw in the instrument, here the seer stone, but referred to as the Urim and Thummim (the Nephite interpreters were much too large to put into a hat). Joseph Knight's "sentence" seems to refer to the translated English sentence since it appeared in Roman letters. As with David Whitmer, Joseph Smith could have told Joseph Knight what he, Joseph Smith, was viewing. In any event, it is consistent with what Joseph Smith told David Whitmer:

□ Joseph Knight Senior, reminiscence dating from between 1835 and 1847 (the year of Knight's death) [Vogel 4:17−18, Welch 189]

Now the way he translated was he put the urim and thummim into his hat and Darkned his Eyes then he would take a sentance and it would apper in Brite Roman Letters then he would tell the writer and he would write it then that would go away the next sentance would Come and so on

These claims are based on hearsay (that is, they derive from what Joseph Smith told these witnesses), but they are nonetheless reasonable in their earliest telling.

There are aspects of these claims that can be substantiated by evidence in the original manuscript. We now consider three of these.

■ *How many words were viewed by Joseph Smith?*

The original manuscript provides instances of anticipation, some apparently on the part of Joseph Smith as he dictated the text, and others on the part of his scribe in taking down the dictation. The length of the dictated sequences indicate that Joseph saw up to as many as twenty words at a time. Most commonly we can see the scribe starting out along with Joseph's dictation, then skipping a few words as he tries to keep up with the dictation, with the result that he writes down the last part of Joseph's dictated sequence of words. With one exception, such anticipations were immediately corrected by deleting the words that would properly come later. In each case we can estimate the minimal number of words Joseph had to have been viewing as he dictated the passage:

Christian Whitmer

1 Nephi 7:11 (18 words)
yea and how is it [*how great things* > NULL   0] that ye have forgotten
how great things the Lord hath done for us

1 Nephi 11:19 (17 words)
and after that she had been carried away in the spirit [*a time* > NULL   0]
for the space of **a time**

Oliver Cowdery

Alma 36:4 (20 words)

I know of myself
not of the [*Carnal mind but of the spiritual* > NULL   0] temporal but of the spiritual
not of the **carnal mind** but of God

Alma 56:41 (20 words)

and it came to pass that again [*we saw the Lamanites* > NULL   0]
when the light of the morning came **we saw the Lamanites** upon us

Ether 14:24 (19 words)

for he had sworn to avenge himself upon [*the blood* > NULL   0] Coriantumr
of **the blood** of his brother which had been slain

2 Nephi 25:6 (21 words)

and I have made mention **unto my children**
concerning the judgments of God which hath come to pass among the Jews
unto my children

In the last example, the critical text removes the first instance of "unto my children" since it appears to be in anticipation of the second instance of this preposition phrase, which in this sentence is postponed. In this instance only, Oliver Cowdery seems to have neglected to delete his anticipated phrase, the first "unto my children".

Here are a couple examples where Joseph Smith himself seems to have introduced the error; in these two cases, the anticipated text comes at the beginning of a syntactic break (also see under Alma 26:12 and Alma 47:28 in *Analysis of Textual Variants* for two more possible examples):

Oliver Cowdery

2 Nephi preface (at least 16 words)

An account of the death of Lehi
[*the Lord* > NULL   0] Nephi's brethren rebelleth against him
the Lord warns Nephi . . .

Alma 46:17 (at least 19 words)

both on the north and on the south
[*and he* > NULL   0] a chosen land and the land of liberty
and he saith . . .

■ *There was no prompting to remind Joseph Smith where he had left off*

According to Emma Smith, Joseph never had to be prompted about where he had left off; that is, when starting a new session of dictation, he never had to ask the scribe to reread the last words that had been dictated:

□ Emma Smith, interviewed by Edmund C. Briggs, 8 December 1856, published in 1916 [Vogel 1:530, Welch 142]

When he stopped for any purpose at any time he would, when he commenced again, begin where he left off without any hesitation, . . .

☐ Emma Smith Bidamon, interviewed by Joseph Smith III, February 1879 [Vogel 1:542, Welch 144]

Q. Mother, what is your belief about the authenticity, or origin of the Book of Mormon?

A. My belief is that the Book of Mormon is of divine authenticity—I have not the slightest doubt of it. I am satisfied that no man could have dictated the writing of the manuscripts unless he was inspired; for, when acting as his scribe, your father would dictate to me hour after hour; and when returning after meals, or after interruptions, he would at once begin where he had left off, without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him. This was a usual thing for him to do. It would have been improbable that a learned man could do this; and, for one so ignorant and unlearned as he was, it was simply impossible.

This ability implies that each view in the instrument was a fresh one: that when Joseph Smith would quit, he had to make sure that what he had been viewing had been properly dictated to the scribe because when he would start up again, the next view would appear, not the previous one.

As support for this claim of Emma Smith's about the lack of prompting, we find that in the original manuscript there are 14 clear cases of dittography and each one involves either a single word or a phrase. In the critical text there are five conjectured instances of phrasal dittography in the earliest extant text, all of which have been removed in the Yale edition of the Book of Mormon: see the discussion in *Analysis of Textual Variants* for each of the following dittographies: "unto my children" (2 Nephi 25:6), "death and hell" (2 Nephi 28:23), "and work" (Mosiah 10:5), "and he did" (Helaman 1:29), "and dwelt in tents" (Ether 2:13). Finally, there are three passages where one could argue for a clausal dittography, yet under further analysis each of these appears to be a legitimate repetition; for discussion of these three cases, see under 1 Nephi 14:1–2, 2 Nephi 2:10, and Ether 4:1–2 in *Analysis of Textual Variants*. At no place do we see the scribe writing a sentence that had already been given and then deleting it. We would expect such dittographies to occur if Joseph Smith had been unsure of where he had ended when he last quit and had to be reminded by the scribe.

There is one additional piece of evidence regarding how much text Joseph Smith was viewing in his instrument, and this is related to the question of prompting. In Alma 45:22 of the original manuscript, there are 28 words in Joseph Smith's own hand, indicated here in bold:

Alma 45:22 (original accidentals in ℗ retained, but not the original line breaks)
therfore Helaman & his Brethren went forth
to establish the church again in all the land
yea in every citty throughout all the land
which was possessed by the people of Nephi
and it came to pass that they did appoint priests and teachers
throughout all the land over all the churches

Four lines earlier in ℗, there is a clear indication that Oliver Cowdery, the scribe here, was having trouble staying awake. There inline he inexplicably wrote "they had become exceeding [desenting]" (the last word is hard to read), which he immediately crossed out and then wrote inline the correct text: "and the many little dissensions and disturbances which had been among the people" and so on. (For this unusual error on Oliver's part, see the discussion under Alma 45:21 in *Analysis of Textual Variants*.) By the time he and Joseph got to verse 22, Oliver was unable to go on, but Joseph had to finish taking down the text he was currently viewing, thus he took up the quill and wrote down the remaining 28 words he was viewing. Emma Smith

indicated that Joseph never had to be prompted for the last words he had dictated. This implies that he couldn't leave unfinished any part of the text being currently viewed with the instrument. He had to get all of what he was viewing written down; otherwise, the undictated part of the text would be lost when he came back to continue the translation (when a new view would appear). If this interpretation of Alma 45:22 is correct, it also means that Joseph's view of the text could end with a phrase in the middle of a sentence (thus "they did appoint priests and teachers") and leave the rest of the sentence for the next viewing ("throughout all the land over all the churches"), which is what Joseph then dictated to Oliver when they started up their work again (after Oliver had taken a break). In this particular case, we can assume that the view in the instrument had at least 28 words. Some of the preceding text could have also been in view.

◼ *The scribe read back the text to Joseph Smith*

In this section, I consider the evidence in ☉ that supports statements by David Whitmer that the scribe would read back to Joseph Smith what he had recently written down, and thus they would make sure, to the degree possible, that the original manuscript agreed with what Joseph was viewing in his instrument. Here are the the statements from David Whitmer:

▫ David Whitmer, interviewed by a reporter for the *Kansas City Journal,* 1 June 1881 [Cook 62, Vogel 5:76, Welch 166]

and before his eyes would appear what seemed to be parchment, on which would appear the characters of the plates in a line at the top, and immediately below would appear the translation in English, which Smith would read to his scribe, who wrote it down exactly as it fell from his lips. **The scribe would then read the sentence written,** and if any mistake had been made, the characters would remain visible to Smith until corrected, when they faded from sight to be replaced by another line.

▫ David Whitmer, his corrections to the *Kansas City Journal,* 13 June 1881, two weeks after the interview on 1 June 1881 [Cook 72, Vogel 5:81–82, Welch 167–168]

then the light and characters appeared in the hat together with the interpretation which he uttered and was written by the scribe **and which was tested at the time as stated**

▫ David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ,* 1887 [Vogel 5:196–197, Welch 175]

One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down **and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct,** then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear.

In order to evaluate David Whitmer's claim that the scribe read back what he had recently written down, we should be able to find examples in ☉ of the scribe revising a text that was perfectly fine in the first place, but just happened to be wrong and was therefore corrected. It turns out that there are 15 cases of textually equivalent corrections in ☉ that involve a minor change in the level of ink flow for the correction. Here I list them in their order of occurrence in ☉ (with the small plates of Nephi coming at the end since they were translated last):

■ Alma 24:2

```
                                                            in
   (                              ) sor(  a)gainst them even ^somuch that ...
     & THEIR HATRED BECAME EXCEEDING       E
```

The text has 3 instances of "even **so much** that S" and 2 of "even **insomuch that** S" (here S stands for a stand-alone clause). These two phraseologies seem to be equivalent, as we can see when we compare Alma 2:2 ("even **so much** that they began to become very powerful") against the final reading for Alma 24:2 ("even **insomuch** that they began to rebel against their king"). Here in Alma 24:2, the *in* of *insomuch* was supralinearly inserted with slightly heavier ink flow, which argues that the text here was corrected a little later, probably when the scribe, Oliver Cowdery, read the text back to Joseph Smith, and the missing *in* was noticed and then supplied.

■ Alma 25:12

```
                                   be put to
   their seed (                  y) to <suffer>^ death in the like manner as he was
                  SHOULD CAUSE MAN
```

Here Oliver Cowdery initially wrote "to suffer death"; but somewhat later, with slightly heavier ink flow, he corrected this to read "to be put to death". The text could have read either way. Earlier in this passage the text refers to "suffering death" three times and once to "being put to death":

Alma 25:7	that they should **be put to death**
Alma 25:9	that he should **suffer death** by fire
Alma 25:11	and now Abinadi was the first that **suffered death** by fire
Alma 25:11	that many should **suffer death** by fire according as he had **suffered**

This initial error of Oliver's in verse 12 was influenced by the three immediately preceding instances of "suffering death" (plus one elliptic instance at the end of verse 11). Elsewhere in the text, there are 17 instances where either reading could have occurred: 6 of these refer to "suffering death", but 11 refer to "being put to death". It seems very likely that this case of correction in verse 12 occurred as a result of Oliver reading the text back to Joseph Smith.

■ Alma 29:11

```
   the God of Abraham \&/ the God of Isaac & the (          co)b
                                               GOD OF JA
```

In two places in extant 𝒪, Oliver Cowdery initially omitted the *and* between conjuncts involving *Abraham* and *Isaac,* then somewhat later, with weaker ink flow each time, he inserted an ampersand, somewhat elevated, between the two conjuncts: here in Alma 29:11 and later in 1 Nephi 17:40, listed below (the small plates of Nephi were translated last). When Oliver copied the text from 𝒪 into 𝒫 for these passages, he once more omitted the extra *and,* in part because they were only weakly inserted in 𝒫 but also because he preferred the reading without the extra *and.* Generally, the Book of Mormon prefers an *and* between all the conjuncts involving *Abraham, Isaac,* and *Jacob* (there are 9 instances), as in 3 Nephi 4:29: "the God Abraham **and** the God of Isaac **and** the God of Jacob". Only when the Book of Mormon has the preposition *with* in this construction do we find that the *and* can be omitted between *Abraham* and *Isaac,* as in "with Abraham / with Isaac **and** with Jacob" (Alma 5:23) and "with Abraham / Isaac **and** Jacob" (Alma 7:25). The King James

Old Testament has 19 conjunctive instances involving the three patriarchs, all of which lack the *and* between *Abraham* and *Isaac,* while the King James New Testament has 7 conjunctive examples, and they all have the extra *and.* It appears that in these two Book of Mormon passages (Alma 29:11 and 1 Nephi 17:40) Oliver preferred the Old Testament phraseology without the extra *and.* But the correct reading had the *and,* and this was only caught when Oliver read back the text to Joseph and the extra *and* was then supplied. For this phrase, the Book of Mormon clearly prefers the King James New Testament phraseology, but Oliver was influenced by the Old Testament phraseology, just as speakers of modern English prefer "Abraham / Isaac and Jacob" over "Abraham **and** Isaac and Jacob". (This issue of the repeated *and* in this conjunctive construction in the Book of Mormon is thoroughly discussed under 1 Nephi 19:10 in *Analysis of Textual Variants.*)

■ Alma 30:2

```
  now their dead were not numbered because of the greatness of their number|s|
```

Here the plural *s* was added to *number* in heavier ink flow. For the phrase "the greatness of their number(s)", the text has 7 instances with the singular *number* and 4 with the plural, so either singular or plural for *number* is possible. (All 11 cases are listed under Alma 30:2 in *Analysis of Textual Variants.*) Thus this change to the plural in Alma 30:2 was not motivated except to make the reading in 𝒪 agree with what Joseph Smith was viewing in his instrument. This change very likely occurred when the scribe, Oliver Cowdery, read back the text, and he and Joseph discovered that 𝒪 incorrectly read in the singular. Oliver dipped his quill and made the correction to the plural.

■ Alma 35:13

```
  & an account shall be given of their war\s/ hereafter
```

The slightly raised plural *s* for *war* has a less distinct ink flow than the surrounding text, including the word *war.* This correction was not immediate, but instead very likely occurred when Oliver Cowdery read the text back to Joseph Smith. Earlier, in this verse, the text read "and thus commenced **a war** betwixt the Lamanites and the Nephites in the eighteenth year of the reign of the judges", and the singular *war* here prompted Oliver to initially write *war* once more later in the verse. But the unexpected plural *wars* was the correct reading, which we find support for later on in the text, in Alma 43:3: "and now I return to an account of the **wars** between the Nephites and the Lamanites in the eighteenth year of the reign of the judges".

■ Alma 38:11

```
                                    [own]
  (                      b )ast in your ^ wisdom
    YEA SEE THAT YE DO NOT  O
```

Here Oliver Cowdery initially wrote "in your wisdom", then later, with considerably weaker ink flow, he supralinearly inserted the adjective *own,* which is hard to read in extant 𝒪, although the insert mark is clearly visible. 𝒫 and all the printed editions read with *own* ("in your own wisdom"). Oliver's correction undoubtedly came when he read the text back to Joseph Smith since the text allows for either reading. Elsewhere in the text there are 2 more instances of "in <possessive pronoun> own wisdom", namely: "in mine own wisdom" (2 Nephi 27:22) and "in my own wisdom" (Alma 26:11). But more commonly, there are 6 instances without *own,* as in 2 Nephi 2:19 ("in my wisdom"). Since either reading is possible here in Alma 38:11, Oliver's correction must have been the original reading.

■ Alma 46:21

```
                                             behold
  when Moron(i                    )ds ^ the People came running together
            HAD PROCLAIMED THESE WOR
```

The word *behold* was supralinearly inserted with slightly heavier ink flow. Its occurrence here is syntactically optional. Oliver Cowdery apparently omitted it when he initially took down Joseph Smith's dictation, but the error was discovered when Oliver read the text back to Joseph; there would have been very little semantic motivation here for Oliver to have added *behold* on his own initiative.

■ Alma 47:35

```
        Lamanites & the                        all
  composed of the ^ Lemuelites & the Ishmaelites & ^ the dessenters of the Nephites
```

Here the text lists the separate peoples that made up "the people of the Lamanites". In this listing, Oliver Cowdery accidentally omitted naming the Lamanites themselves, but he also omitted the universal quantifier *all* for *the dissenters.* It appears that both omissions were discovered when Oliver read back the text to Joseph Smith since the ink flow for these two supralinear insertions is somewhat heavier. Including *the Lamanites* in the list was appropriate since it is consistently found four other times in the text (in Jacob 1:13, 4 Nephi 1:38, Mormon 1:8, and Mormon 1:9). On the other hand, the *all* before "the dissenters" is textually optional. In fact, this is the only place in the text where *dissenters* is modified by *all*. Consider, for instance, this example from Helaman 4:8 where there is no *all:* "and thus **those dissenters** of the Nephites—with the help of a numerous army of the Lamanites—had obtained all the possession of the Nephites which was in the land southward". Here the text could have read "and thus **all those dissenters** of the Nephites", but it did not.

■ Alma 50:12

```
  thus Moroni with his armies which did increas daily because of

  the assureance of protection which his works did bring forth
       therefore they
  unto them ^ did seek to cut off the strength & the power of the Lamanites
```

Here Oliver Cowdery initially omitted the resumptive *therefore they,* but it appears he supplied it supralinearly with a somewhat heaver ink flow after reading the text back to Joseph Smith and discovering the error. The antecedent for the pronoun *they* is "Moroni with his armies". The initial form of this sentence is quite acceptable since one can consider *Moroni* as the subject for the verb phrase *did seek*. The repetitive nature of the resumptive form is considered ungrammatical in today's English (which explains why the editors for the 1920 LDS edition removed the extra *therefore they*). It is highly unlikely that Oliver would have supplied *therefore they* on his own.

■ Alma 50:37

```
  & it came to pass that in that same year that the People of Nephi
                                 that
  had peace restored unto them ^ Nephihah the second Chief Judge died
```

Here Oliver Cowdery missed the repeated subordinate conjunction *that,* but he supplied it later when he read back the text to Joseph Smith. The supralinearly inserted *that* was written with somewhat heavier ink flow.

The repeated subordinate conjunction occurs in today's English in colloquial speech and in unedited writing as well as inconsistently in the original (and current) text of the Book of Mormon (for discussion of this usage in the Book of Mormon, see under 1 Nephi 10:2–3 in *Analysis of Textual Variants*). Either reading, with or without the repeated *that,* is possible here in Alma 50:37. This particular instance of the repeated *that* has been retained in the current LDS text.

■ Alma 52:1

```
                                              own
  Behold they found Ameleckiah was dead in his ^ tent
```

Here's another example where Oliver Cowdery initially omitted the modifier *own,* but then supplied it later with weaker ink flow. As explained under Alma 52:1 in *Analysis of Textual Variants,* the text typically has *own* in contexts referring to residence (broadly defined). Even so, "in his tent" seems perfectly acceptable here. Oliver's correction seems to have occurred when he read the passage back to Joseph Smith. For another example of *own* being supplied as a result of rereading the text, see above under Alma 38:11.

■ Alma 58:36

```
              fear
  behold we <fe^el> that there is some fraction in the (g        )
                                                     OVERMENT
```

Oliver Cowdery initially wrote the verb *feel,* a mishearing of the phonetically similar *fear.* He later corrected the verb to *fear* by crossing out *feel* and supralinearly inserting *fear,* all with heavier ink flow. Since either verb will work in this context (at least in some loose sense), the correction probably occurred when Oliver read the text back to Joseph Smith and only then did they discover that *feel* had been substituted for the original *fear.*

■ 1 Nephi 2:19

```
                   Nephi
  blessed art thou ^ because of thy faith
```

The correction is with weaker ink flow. There are 14 instances in the text of "blessed art thou", and 7 are followed by a name, as in "**blessed art thou Lehi** because of the things which thou hast done" (1 Nephi 2:1), in contrast to 7 cases where there is no name mentioned, as in "**blessed art thou** because thou hast established a church among this people" (Mosiah 26:17). In the first case, the Lord is speaking, of course, to Lehi; in the second case, to Alma.

■ 1 Nephi 17:40

```
  yea even Abraham \&/ Isaac & Jacob
```

This same initial error occurred earlier in ℧, at Alma 29:11. For discussion of this correction in lighter ink flow, see above under that passage in Alma.

■ 2 Nephi 25:16

```
                              will
   & then at that time <will> the day ^ come that ...
```

The entire correction is written with somewhat heavier ink flow (both the crossout and the supralinearly inserted *will,* along with its insert mark, as can be seen in plate 1 in volume 1 of the critical text). Here the quill was redipped before making the correction. Note that either reading is acceptable: "and then at that time **will the day** come" or "and then at that time **the day will come**", as we can see elsewhere in the text for all 14 cases of *and then* that take a following helping verb of *will:* in 5 cases the subject comes before *will,* as in "and then **they will** be taken captive by the devil" (Alma 12:11), compared against 9 cases where the subject follows *will,* as in "and then at that day **will they** not rejoice" (1 Nephi 15:15).

If the scribe read back the text to Joseph Smith, as David Whitmer claimed, then we should also expect to find homophonic errors in ☉, that is, cases where the scribe's text in ☉ differed from what Joseph had dictated but sounded the same (or close to it). In cases like these, Joseph would naturally assume that no mistake had been made, and thus they would go on. Such a scenario allowed for the following kinds of errors to be retained in ☉:

	Joseph Smith's dictation	*text read back by the scribe*
1 Nephi 13:29	**an** exceeding great many	**and** exceeding great many
2 Nephi 12:9	forgive '**em** [them] not	forgive '**im** [him] not
Alma 41:14	my **son** see	my **sons** see
Alma 56:37	as we **supposed** that	as we **suppose** that
Alma 56:7	twenty and **sixth** year	twenty and **six** year
Helaman 6:10	the Lord did bring **Muloch**	the Lord did bring **Mulek**

To this list we can add numerous mixups of homophonic spellings, errors that a letter-perfect method of checking should have caught:

	Joseph Smith's dictation	*text read back by the scribe*
1 Nephi 16:23	out of a **straight** stick	out of a **strait** stick
Alma 43:45	their **rights** of worship	their **rites** of worship
3 Nephi 18:37	the disciples **bear** record	the disciples **bare** record
3 Nephi 25:2	the **Sun** of righteousness	the **Son** of righteousness

There are also cases where the word analysis was wrong, as in this example:

	Joseph Smith's dictation	*text read back by the scribe*
1 Nephi 21:11	make all my mountains **a way**	make all my mountains **away**

All these errors show that the scribe was reading back the text to Joseph Smith and that if it sounded right, then Joseph accepted it! Ultimately, this process depended upon the carefulness of Joseph and his scribes. Yet contrary to this homophonic evidence in ☉, virtually all of the witnesses believed that the instrument itself would not go on if there was any error, whether in the words or even in the spelling. This ironclad interpretation of theirs was clearly wrong. This misconception seems to have resulted from the witnesses

occasionally seeing Joseph Smith spell out to his scribe Book of Mormon names (and also perhaps infrequent biblical names).

We now turn to claims that the witnesses made about how accurate the scribe's copy had to be. All the witnesses that refer to this question claimed that the scribe was not allowed to make any mistake, even in spelling! They all seem to believe in ironclad control over the scribal copy, that somehow the revelatory process itself, either from Joseph Smith or through the instrument, recognized when there was an error and would not go on until it was corrected. First, we consider the witnesses' statements and compare them against the manuscript evidence in order to determine whether there are errors in the original manuscript. And the answer is definitely yes, and they are real errors in the wording, not just spelling errors or scribal slips. Second, we attempt to determine what led all the witnesses to think there was this ironclad control over the dictation process. It turns out that the only aspect of the dictation that seems to support anything like this control is the spelling out of names, especially Book of Mormon names. We can find explicit evidence for this kind of control over spelling in the original manuscript, and that must have led the witnesses to assume that every word and phrase was being controlled this way, down to the very letter. That assumption is totally wrong.

■ *The witnesses claimed that Joseph Smith or the instrument had ironclad control over the text*

Virtually all the accounts claim that the text Joseph was viewing would not disappear until all scribal errors were corrected, even the spelling. Emma Smith, in her account, also adds that Joseph could somehow see whether she was making the right spelling correction by just looking through his instrument. Emma also claimed that Joseph could not pronounce difficult words of English when he started out (undoubtedly during the dictation of the 116 pages), so he would spell them out to her. She also includes the name *Sariah* as one that Joseph had particular difficulty with; he apparently tended to read it off as *Sarah*. Of course, none of these witnesses were actually comparing what Joseph was seeing with what the scribe had written. And moreover, none of them were especially good spellers, so their ability to spot spelling errors seems to have been limited. In any event, here are their claims regarding ironclad control:

□ Joseph Knight Senior, reminiscence dating from between 1835 and 1847 (the year of Knight's death) [Vogel 4:18, Welch 189]

then that would go away the next sentance would Come and so on But if it was not Spelt rite it would not go away till it was rite, so we see it was marvelous thus was the hol [whole] translated.

□ Emma Smith Bidamon, interviewed by Edmund C. Briggs, 8 December 1856, published in 1916 [Vogel 1:530, Welch 141–142]

When my husband was translating the Book of Mormon, I wrote a part of it, as he dictated each sentence, word for word, and when he came to proper names he could not pronounce, or long words, he spelled them out, and while I was writing them, if I made any mistake in spelling, he would stop me and correct my spelling, although it was impossible for him to see how I was writing them down at the time.

☐ David Whitmer, interviewed by Eri B. Mullin, 1874 [Cook 3–4, Vogel 5:15, Welch 165]

Says I, "Did he have the plates in there." "No; the words would appear, and if he failed to spell the word right, it would stay till it was spelled right, then pass away; another come, and so on."

☐ David Whitmer, interviewed by a reporter for the *Kansas City Journal,* 1 June 1881 [Cook 62, Vogel 5:76, Welch 166]

and before his eyes would appear what seemed to be parchment, on which would appear the characters of the plates in a line at the top, and immediately below would appear the translation in English, which Smith would read to his scribe, who wrote it down exactly as it fell from his lips. The scribe would then read the sentence written, and if any mistake had been made the characters would remain visible to Smith until corrected, when they faded from sight to be replaced by another line.

☐ Martin Harris, account recorded by Edward Stevenson on 30 November 1881, six years after Martin's death, but told by Martin as early as 1870 [Vogel 2:320–321, Welch 149]

By aid of the seer stone, sentences would appear and were read by the Prophet and written by Martin, and when finished he would say, "Written," and if correctly written, that sentence would disappear and another appear in its place, but if not written correctly it remained until corrected, so that the translation was just as it was engraven on the plates, precisely in the language then used.

☐ David Whitmer, interviewed by George Q. Cannon, 27 February 1884 [Cook 108, Vogel 5:113, Welch 170]

In speaking of the translating he said that Joseph had the stone in a hat from which all light was excluded. In the stone the characters appeared and under that the translation in English and they remained until the scribe had copied it correctly. If he had made a mistake the words still remained and were not replaced by any other.

☐ David Whitmer, interviewed by James H. Hart, 10 March 1884 [Cook 115, Vogel 5:104, Welch 170]

Joseph would place the seer-stone in a deep hat, and placing his face close to it, would see, not the stone, but what appeared like an oblong piece of parchment, on which the hieroglyphics would appear, and also the translation in the English language, all appearing in bright luminous letters. Joseph would then read it to Oliver, who would write it down as spoken. Sometimes Joseph could not pronounce the words correctly, having had but little education; and if by any means a mistake was made in the copy, the luminous writing would remain until it was corrected. It sometimes took Oliver several trials to get the right letters to spell correctly some of the more difficult words, but when he had written them correctly, the characters and the interpretation would disappear, and be replaced by other characters and their interpretation.

▢ David Whitmer, interviewed by Edmund C. Briggs and Rudolph Etzenhouser, 25 April 1884 [Cook 128, Vogel 5:122, Welch 169]

> "How did it appear in them?" we asked. His answer was: "The letters appeared on them in light, and would not go off until they were written correctly by Oliver. When Joseph could not pronounce the words he spelled them out letter by letter."

The manuscript evidence is clear that this is all wrong. First of all, there are substantive errors in the original manuscript.

Substantive errors in the original manuscript

Most of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon translation process had the notion that the instrument Joseph Smith was using would not allow him to go on if there was any error in what the scribe had written down. In fact, they typically indicated that this ironclad control over the text included the spelling of common words. It is obvious that this kind of control over the spelling is false, as can be seen in *Spelling in the Manuscripts and Editions* (part 6 of volume 3 of the critical text, referred to as SPL). In section 1 of the chapter "Lists of Scribal Errors" in SPL, I provide long lists of the spelling errors the scribes made in 1 Nephi of the original manuscript: there are 237 misspellings by Oliver Cowdery (scribe 1 of ℧), 142 by John Whitmer (scribe 2 of ℧), and 487 by Christian Whitmer (scribe 3 of ℧).

But excluding misspellings, what evidence do we have that the actual words the scribes wrote down in ℧ were incorrect? In other words, ignoring spelling, did the scribes make textual errors in ℧ that were left uncorrected. And the answer to that is clearly yes. In section 1 of the chapter "Lists of Scribal Errors" in SPL, I list 30 examples of incoherent language produced by the three scribes (12 by John Whitmer, 14 by Christian Whitmer, and 4 by Oliver Cowdery). In this section, I will be providing numerous additional examples of errors by each of these scribes. For each citation, the actual, but problematic, reading X and the correct reading Y are both given in square brackets, separated by a tilde ~, thus [**X ~ Y**], with X and Y both in bold. (For the argument on why Y is the correct reading, see under the appropriate passage in volume 4 of the critical text, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon,* referred to as ATV.) A missing word or phrase is represented by the null symbol ∅. Sometimes the earliest reading X is textually changed to a variant form X′, which does not represent the correct reading Y. This situation is shown as [**X > X′ ~ Y**]. I use the original spellings in ℧ for the citation except for the correct reading Y, which is not in ℧.

So to begin with, I first provide an example of an obvious substantive error for each of the three scribes found in extant portions of ℧:

Christian Whitmer

    1 Nephi 7:5   the lord did soften the hart of ishmael
                   and also his [**hole hole ~ whole household**]

John Whitmer

    1 Nephi 14:27   the name [**& ~ of the**] apostle of the Lamb was John

Oliver Cowdery

1 Nephi 17:30	& notwithstanding they being lead the [**Lead** ~ **Lord**] their God their redeemer going before them

In other words, these are cases where the scribe wrote down impossible sequences of words, incoherent sequences that he never caught, nor did Joseph Smith when the scribe read back some form of the text to Joseph, and—we might add—not by the presumably omniscient instrument that Joseph was using.

There are quite a few different types of substantive errors in 𝓞. In this section, I consider the most important of these. First of all, textual analysis has identified numerous examples in 𝓞 where the scribe misheard what Joseph Smith dictated to him. These errors confirm that the text of 𝓞 was indeed dictated to the scribe:

John Whitmer

1 Nephi 13:24	it contained the fulneſs of the Gospel of the [**Land** ~ **Lamb**]
1 Nephi 13:29	& because of these things which are taken away out of the gosple of the Lamb [**&** ~ **an**] exceeding great many do stumble

Oliver Cowdery

1 Nephi 17:48	& whoso shall lay their hands upon me shall wither even as a dried [**weed** ~ **reed**]
1 Nephi 17:53	streach forth thine hand again unto thy Brethren & they shall not wither before thee but I will [**shock** ~ **shake**] them
1 Nephi 18:2	neither did I build the ship after the manner of [**man** ~ **men**]
1 Nephi 19:20	for [**had** ~ **hath**] not the Lord been merciful to shew unto me concerning them even as he had prophets of old
2 Nephi 7:11	behold all ye that [**kindleth** ~ **kindle a**] fire
2 Nephi 12:9	& the mean man boweth down & the great man humbleth himself therefore forgive [**him** ~ **them**] not
Jacob 5:71	& the servant went . . . & brought other servants & they were few & the Lord of the vineyard saith unto [**him** ~ **them**] go to & labour in the vineyard with your mights
Mosiah 17:13	they took him & bound him & [**scorged** ~ **scorched**] his skin with faggots yea even unto death // & now when the flames began to scorch him he cried unto them saying . . .
Alma 19:6	& the light of everlasting [**light** ~ **life**] was lit up in his soul
Alma 24:5	now when Ammen & his Brethren & all those which had come up with [**him** ~ **them**] saw the preperations of the Lamanites . . .
Alma 32:25	there are some among you which would humble themselves let [**them** ~ **him**] be in whatsoever circumstances he might
Alma 41:14	therefore my [**Sons** ~ **son**] see that ye are merciful unto your Brethren
Alma 56:37	& as we [**suppose** ~ **supposed**] that it was their intent to slay us before Antipus should overtake them
Helaman 13:25	if our days had been in the days of our fathers of old [**ye** ~ **we**] would not have slain the prophets [**ye** ~ **we**] would not have stoned them & cast them out

3 Nephi 7:3	& thus [**they** ~ **there**] became tribes & leaders of tribes
3 Nephi 9:21	behold I have come [**unto** ~ **into**} the world to bring redemption unto the world
Ether 8:3	& he did carry away his father into captivity & did make [**them** ~ **him**] serve in captivity

In this list there are five instances where Oliver Cowdery mixed up *him* and *them*. This result is not surprising since in colloquial speech both pronouns are pronounced identically in unstressed contexts as /əm/.

Occasionally, the scribe may have accidentally written a phrase more than once. Here are two examples in 𝒪 of an original dittography that appears to be an error:

Christian Whitmer

1 Nephi 12:1	& i lookt and beheld the land [**the land** ~ **0**] of promise

Oliver Cowdery

2 Nephi 25:6	& I have made mention [**unto my children** ~ **0**] concerning the Judgments of God which hath come to pass among the Jews **unto my children**

We can also list cases where Oliver Cowdery first emended the printer's manuscript, then made the same correction in the original manuscript, but inevitably with heavier ink flow. In most of these cases the emendation was unnecessary. In one case the original reading in 𝒪 was indeed in error and needed to be emended, but unfortunately Oliver made the wrong correction: he supralinearly inserted *after* before "some years had passed away", but nearby usage in the text shows he should have inserted an ampersand before "there came a man":

Oliver Cowdery's incorrect emendation to his original in 𝒪 (made later when copying 𝒪 into 𝒫)

Jacob 7:1	And now it came to pass that [**0** > **after** ~ **0**] some years had passed away [**0** ~ **and**] there came a man among the People of Nephi whose name was Sherem

In one of these cases, his later emendation from the singular to the plural was correct:

Oliver Cowdery's correct emendation to his original in 𝒪 (made later when copying 𝒪 into 𝒫)

Alma 37:20	therefore I command you my Son Helaman that ye be diligent in fulfiling all my [**word** > **words** ~ **words**]

In the four other cases, however, there was no need to emend the original reading in 𝒪, but Oliver did it anyway, but only later, when he was copying the text from 𝒪 into 𝒫; all of these changes as well as the two previous ones were written with heavier ink flow in 𝒪. All six indicate that Oliver Cowdery never thought that the text in 𝒪 was free from error and could not be emended:

Oliver Cowdery's unnecessary emendations to his own original in 𝒪 (made later when copying 𝒪 into 𝒫)

2 Nephi 1:20	but in as much as ye will not keep [**his** > **my** ~ **his**] commandments ye shall be cut off from [**his** > **my** ~ **his**] presance

Alma 51:31   but behold he met with a disappointment [**of** > **by** ~ **of**] being repulsed
                    by Teancum and his men

Alma 52:37   [**∅** > **now** ~ **∅**] Moroni seeing their confusion he said unto them . . .

Alma 59:9   it was easier to keep the city from falling into the hands of the Lamanites
                    [**∅** > **than to retake it from them** ~ **∅**]

There are also a few places where Oliver Cowdery unnecessarily emended the Whitmers' scribal work, but apparently before he copied the text into 𝒫); in each of these cases, the critical text restores what was originally written by the Whitmers:

Oliver Cowdery's unnecessary emendation to John Whitmer's original

1 Nephi 3:16   & all this he hath done because of the commandment [**∅** > **of the Lord** ~ **∅**]

Oliver Cowdery's unnecessary emendations to Christian Whitmer's original

1 Nephi 11:36   the great and specious bilding was the pride of the world [**∅** > **& it fell** ~ **∅**]

1 Nephi 12:4   and i saw the earth [**that it rent the roks** > **and the rocks that they rent** ~
                    that it rent the rocks]

There is even one place where Oliver emended (with slightly heavier ink flow) a biblical quotation originally written in his own hand (but apparently before he copied it into 𝒫). As with the preceding three examples, this change was again unnecessary; the critical text restores what Oliver originally wrote as the correct reading (which agrees with how the corresponding Isaiah passage reads in the King James Bible):

Oliver Cowdery's unnecessary emendation to his own original

1 Nephi 20:11   for [**how should I** > **I will not** ~ **how should I**] suffer my name to be polluted

For various homophones, the scribes struggled with determining which homophone should be used in any given case. Here we consider three homophone pairs.

□ *straight* versus *strait*

The scribes nearly always spelled both *straight* and *strait,* irrespective of the meaning, as *strait.* So every time there was a case of *straight* 'not crooked', usually in reference to a path or a course, the scribe almost always wrote the anomalous *strait,* with its meaning 'narrow'. We end up with a total of seven examples in extant 𝒪 where the scribe wrote *strait* instead of the correct *straight:*

Christian Whitmer

1 Nephi 8:20   and i also beheld a [**Strait** ~ **straight**] and narrough path
                    which came along by the rod of iron

1 Nephi 10:8   prepare ye the way of the lord and make his paths [**strait** ~ **straight**]

Oliver Cowdery

1 Nephi 16:23   I Nephi did make out of wood a bow & out of a [**strait** ~ **straight**] stick
                    an arrow

2 Nephi 4:33   wilt thou make my path [**strait** ~ **straight**] before me

Alma 37:12   & his paths are [**strait** ~ **straight**] & his course is one Eternal round

| Alma 37:44 | the word of Christ which will point to you a [**strait** ~ **straight**] course to eternal bliss |
| Alma 56:37 | they did not turn to the right nor to the left but persued their march in a [**strait** ~ **straight**] course after us |

□ *rights* versus *rites*

Another difficulty was the plural *rights*. Oliver Cowdery often used the spelling *rites* in passages referring to religion, yet there actually appears to be no example in extant ℧ where /raits/ refers to cultic practices:

Oliver Cowdery

Alma 43:45	but they were fighting for their homes & their liberties . . . yea for their [**Rites** ~ **rights**] of worship & their Church
Alma 43:47	to defend themselves & their families & their lands their Country & their [**Rites** ~ **rights**] & their religion
Alma 44:5	we have gained power over you by our faith by our Religion & by our [**Rites** ~ **rights**] of worship & by our church
Alma 51:6	for the freemen had swoarn or covenanted to maintain their [**rites** ~ **rights**] & the Priveleges of their Religion
Alma 55:28	the Nephites began again to be victorious & to reclaim their [**rites** ~ **rights**] & their privileges

□ *bare* versus *bear*

Finally, there is the tendency in ℧ to write the past-tense *bare* as *bear*. In 3 Nephi there are two examples of this. In each case, ℘ and the 1830 edition, both firsthand copies of ℧, read *bear,* which implies that ℧ also read *bear* (despite the fact that ℧ is not extant in either of these two cases):

Oliver Cowdery

| 3 Nephi 17:21 | & when he had said these words he wept & the multitude [**bear** ~ **bare**] record of it |
| 3 Nephi 18:37 | therefore they did not bear record but the desipels [**bear** ~ **bare**] record that he gave them power to give the Holy Ghost |

We list Oliver as the scribe here in ℧ since nearby fragments of ℧ (in 3 Nephi 19–21) are in his hand.

In numerous cases, Oliver Cowdery did not choose the right word or phrase; instead, he chose one that sounded like the correct one, usually a word or phrase that was more familiar to him:

Oliver Cowdery's lexical and phrasal misinterpretations

1 Nephi 21:11	& I will make all my mountains [**away** ~ **a way**] & my highways shall be exalted
2 Nephi 24:23	& I will sweep it with the [**bosom** ~ **besom**] of destruction
Alma 29:4	he granteth unto men according to their desires [**whither** ~ **whether**] it be unto death or unto life
Alma 40:26	& they drink the [**drugs** ~ **dregs**] of a bitter cup
Alma 41:1	for behold some have [**arested** ~ **wrested**] the scriptures & have gone far astray because of this thing

Alma 56:10   because of the [**numerority** ~ **enormity**] of their forces haveing slain
a vast number of our men

Alma 58:36   behold we fear that there is some [**fraction** ~ **faction**] in the goverment

3 Nephi 9:9   & behold that great city Jacob Ugath which was inhabited
by the people of [**the king of Jacob** ~ **the king Jacob**]
have I caused to be burned with fire

3 Nephi 25:2   but unto you that fear my name shall the [**Son** ~ **Sun**] of righteousness
arise with healing in his wings

These examples are based on mistakes made by the scribe. There are, however, a few examples of apparent visual misreading in 𝒪 that suggest that Joseph Smith misread what he was viewing in his instrument, with the result that the scribe wrote down Joseph's dictation of a visual error:

Joseph Smith's misreading of the text in the instrument

1 Nephi 13:32   neither will the Lord God suffer that the gentiles shall forever remain
in that state of awful [**woundeneſs** ~ **wickedness**]
which thou beholdest that they are in

3 Nephi 21:9   & there shall be [**∅** ~ **many**] among them which will not believe it

3 Nephi 28:36   I knew not whether they were [**cleansed** ~ **changed**] from mortality
to immortality

These examples show that the critical text project seeks to do more than just recover what Joseph Smith dictated to his scribe. Instead, we seek to determine the text that Joseph was actually viewing in his instrument.

Sometimes the reading in 𝒪 is correct, but the misspelling of a key word in 𝒪 can lead Oliver Cowdery or the 1830 typesetter to introduce a crucial error in the reading of the passage when the text is copied:

John Whitmer's misspelling in 𝒪 misinterpreted by Oliver Cowdery in 𝒫

1 Nephi 15:35   & there is a place prepared yea even that awful Hell of which I have spoken
& the devel is the [**prepriator** > **preparator** ~ **proprietor**] of it

Oliver Cowdery's misspelling in 𝒪 and 𝒫 misinterpreted by John Gilbert in typesetting the 1830 edition

Alma 51:15   he sent a petition with the voice of the People unto the Governor of the land
desireing that he should [**head** > **read** ~ **heed**] it

Oliver Cowdery's miswriting in 𝒪 misinterpreted by him when he copied 𝒪 into 𝒫

Alma 56:5   therefore it [**supficeth** > **supposeth** ~ **sufficeth**] me that I tell you
that twothousand of these young men hath taken their weopens of war
& would that I should be their leader

And finally, I list most of all the other substantive errors in 𝒪 that were left uncorrected by the original scribe; some of these are obvious errors, others are detected only by textual analysis; I even include a handful of the interesting scribal slips:

John Whitmer

1 Nephi 3:28   wherefore Laman & lemuel did speak many herd words
unto us their younger [**Brother** ~ **brothers**]

1 Nephi 4:9   & [**∅** ~ **I**] beheld his sword and I drew it forth from the sheath thereof

1 Nephi 4:11   [**∅** ~ **and**] the spirit saith unto me a gain . . .

1 Nephi 12:9   & he saith unto me : thou [**remembereth** ~ **rememberest**] the twelve Apostles of the Lamb

1 Nephi 13:29   it goeth forth unto all the [**Nation** ~ **nations**] of the gentiles

1 Nephi 13:29   yea even acroſs the many [**water** ~ **waters**]

1 Nephi 14:12   & their [**dominion** ~ **dominions**] upon the face of the earth were small

1 Nephi 15:21   what meanth the [**thing** ~ **things**] which our father saw in a dream

1 Nephi 15:28   it was an awful gulph which seperateth the wicked from the tree of life [**∅** ~ **and**] also from the saints of god

1 Nephi 15:30   our father also saw that the [**Justices** ~ **justice**] of god did also divide the wicked from the righteous

1 Nephi 15:33   wherefore they must be brought to stand before god to be Judged of their [**work** ~ **works**]

1 Nephi 15:35   wherefore the final state of the [**souls** ~ **soul**] of man is to dwell in the kingdom of god or to be cast out

Christian Whitmer

1 Nephi 4:33   that he should be a free Man like unto us if he would go down [**in** ~ **into**] the wilderneſs with us

1 Nephi 5:8   yea and [**∅** ~ **I**] also know of a surity that the lord hath protected my sons

1 Nephi 5:18   that these [**plate** ~ **plates**] of braſs Should go forth unto all nations kindreds & tongues and people

1 Nephi 5:18   that these plate of braſs Should go forth unto all nations kindreds [**&** ~ **∅**] tongues and people

1 Nephi 5:19   wherefore he said that these [**plate** ~ **plates**] of braſs should never perrish

1 Nephi 6:6   that they shall not occupy these [**plate** ~ **plates**] with things which Are not of worth unto the children of men

1 Nephi 7:1   that his sons should take daughters to wife that [**∅** ~ **they**] Might rais up seed

1 Nephi 7:1   that Might rais up seed unto the lord in the [**lord** ~ **land**] of prommise

1 Nephi 7:13   for all [**thing** ~ **things**] which the lord hath spoken conserning the destruction of jerusalem must be fulfild

1 Nephi 7:20   that i would forgive them of the thing that they had done against [**∅** ~ **me**]

1 Nephi 7:22   and they did offer ſacrifice and [**offer** ~ **∅**] burnt ofrings unto him

1 Nephi 8:7   and it came to paſs that [**As** ~ **∅**] i followed him and after i had followed him i beheld myself that i was in a dark and dreary waste

1 Nephi 8:21   And i saw numberleſs concorses of people many of whome [**are** ~ **were**] presing forward

1 Nephi 10:12   that they should be compared like unto an ollive tree whose branches should be broken of and should be [**scatter** ~ **scattered**] uppon All the fase of the earth

1 Nephi 11:9   i behold thou hast [**shew** ~ **shewn**] unto me the tree which is most precious above all

1 Nephi 11:10   and he saith unto me : what [**desireth** ~ **desirest**] thou

1 Nephi 11:25   i beheld that the rod of iron which my father had [**sees** ~ **seen**]
                    was the word of god

1 Nephi 11:32   & it came to [**piſs** ~ **pass**] that the angel spake unto me again saying . . .

Oliver Cowdery

1 Nephi 2:5   & he did [**traveld** ~ **travel**] in the wilderness with his family

1 Nephi 16:7   & also Zoram took the [**elder** ~ **eldest**] daughter of Ishmael to wife

1 Nephi 18:15   & behold they had [**much** ~ **0**] swolen excedingly & also mine ancles
                    were much swolen

1 Nephi 19:1   & upon the plates which I made I did engraven the Record
                    of [**0** ~ **my**] father

1 Nephi 19:10   & to be buried in a supulchar [**&** ~ **0**] according to the words of Zenos

1 Nephi 21:7   thus saith the Lord the redeemer of Israel his holy one to him whom man
                    despiseth to him whom the Nation abhoreth to [**0** ~ **a**] servant of rulers

1 Nephi 21:20   the children which thou shalt have after thou hast lost the other
                    shall [**0** ~ **say**] again in thine ears [**say** ~ **0**] the place is to strait for me

Mosiah 27:13   for why [**persecuteth** ~ **persecutest**] thou the church of God

Alma 11:23   [**knoweth** ~ **knowest**] thou that the righteous yieldeth to no such temptations

Alma 22:32   the distance of a day & a halfs journey for a Nephite on the line
                    [**0** ~ **between the land**] bountiful and the land desolation

Alma 23:2   neither should they Spit upon them nor smite them nor cast them out
                    of their [**Synagogue** ~ **synagogues**]

Alma 23:18   & the [**cures** ~ **curse**] of God did no more follow them

Alma 25:4   & among the Lamanites which were slain were [**amost** ~ **almost**] all
                    the seed of Amulon & his Brethren

Alma 27:23   because of their sore repentance which they had on account
                    of [**the** ~ **their**] many murders & their awful wickedness

Alma 28:2   & thus [**0** ~ **there was**] a tremendeeous Battle

Alma 29:11   the Lord did deliver them out of bondage & by [**then** ~ **them**]
                    did establish his Church

Alma 32:4   there came a great multitude unto him which were those of which
                    we have been speaking [**of** ~ **0**]

Alma 34:12   there can [**0** ~ **be**] nothing which is short of an infinate atonement
                    which will suffise for the sins of the world

Alma 41:13   good for that which is good / righteous for that which [**0** ~ **is**] righteous

Alma 43:6   therefore Zerahemnah appointed Chief Captains over the Lamanites
                    & they were all [**0** ~ **of**] the Amelekites & the Zoramites

Alma 43:13   to withstand against the Lamanites which were a [**compounds** ~ **compound**]
                    of Laman & Lemuel & the Sons of Ishmael & all those which had
                    desented from the Nephites

Alma 44:11   or ye shall submit to the Conditions [**to** ~ **0**] which I have proposed

Alma 44:13–14   [**saying** ~ **crying**] unto them with a loud voice saying : even as this scalp
                    hath fallen to the earth which is the Scalp of your Chief
                    so shall ye fall to the earth

Alma 45:2   Alma came unto his Son Helaman & [**sayest** ~ **sayeth**] unto him
                   believest thou the words which I spake unto thee
                   concerning those [**Reckord** ~ **records**] which have been kept

Alma 46:29   therefore fearing that he should not gain the point [**Ø** ~ **he**] took those
                   of his People which would & departed into the land of Nephi

Alma 50:23   there never was a happyer time among the People of Nephi
                   since the [**day** ~ **days**] of Nephi then in the days of Moroni

Alma 50:28   & it came to pass that [**Ø** ~ **when**] the People of Morionton . . .
                   found that the People of Lehi had fled to the camp of Moroni
                   they were exceding fearful lest . . .

Alma 51:4   therefore there arose a warm [**disputes** ~ **dispute**] concerning the matter

Alma 51:26   & thus he went on takeing possession of many cities : the City of
                   [**Nephihah** ~ **Moroni**] & the city of Lehi & the City of Morionton & . . .

Alma 52:15   who had established armies to protect the South & the West borders
                   of the land [**Ø** ~ **and**] had began his march towards the land of Bountiful

Alma 53:6   which was one of the strongest holds of the Lamanites in the land
                   of [**Nephi** ~ **the Nephites**]

Alma 55:7   therefore Moroni caused that Laman & a small number of men
                   which was appointed to go with him [**Ø** ~ **should go to the city of Gid**]

Alma 56:7   but in the twenty & [**six** ~ **sixth**] year when they saw our afflictions
                   & our tribulations for them they were about to brake the covenant
                   which they had made & take up their weopons of war

Alma 56:9   for behold in the twenty & [**six** ~ **sixth**] year I Helaman did march
                   at the head of these two thousand young men

Alma 56:20   & thus ended the twenty & [**six** ~ **sixth**] year

Alma 57:11   that we should take those provisions & send [**then** ~ **them**] to Judeah

Alma 58:33   but behold we trust that [**Ø** ~ **it is**] our God who hath given us victory
                   over those lands

Alma 59:8   & they came [**even** ~ **over**] & joined the army of Moroni

Alma 60:12   do ye suppose that because so many of your Brethren have been Killed
                   [**Ø** ~ **it is**] because of their wickedness

Helaman 3:3   & it came to pass in the forty & sixth [**yea** ~ **year**] thhere were
                   much contentions & many dissensions

Helaman 3:5   in whatsoever parts it had not been rendered [**desolates** ~ **desolate**]
                   & without timber

Helaman 3:6   & now no part of the land was [**desolates** ~ **desolate**] save it were
                   for timber &.C

Helaman 14:22   & in broken fragments upon the face of the whole earth
                   yea both above the earth & [**both** ~ **Ø**] beneath

3 Nephi 2:12   to maintain their rights & [**their** ~ **the**] privileges of their church
                   & of their worship & their freedom & their liberty

3 Nephi 4:1   & began to take possession of all the lands which had been deserted
                   by the Nephites & the cities which had been left [**desolates** ~ **desolate**]

3 Nephi 12:42   give to him that asketh thee & [**to** ~ **from**] him that would borrow of thee
                   turn thou not away

3 Nephi 20:45	for that which had [∅ ~ **not**] been told them shall they see & that which they had not heard shall they consider
Mormon 3:20	yea every soul which [**belong** ~ **belongeth**] to the whole human family of Adam
Mormon 5:5	& thus [**the** ~ ∅] three hundred & seventy & nine years passed away
Mormon 8:28	yea even in a day when leaders of churches & teachers [∅ ~ **shall be lifted up**] in the pride of their hearts
Mormon 8:37	for behold ye do love money & your [**substances** ~ **substance**] & your fine apparel

What we see from all of this is that the original manuscript is full of errors and they are persistent, no matter who the scribe was. Moreover, these errors are the typical human errors that we would expect in the oral transmission of a text. In fact, thus far it seems that there is no evidence of God's direct intervention in this stage of the transmission of the text, from Joseph Smith's mentally reading off of the text that appears in his instrument, then speaking out loud that text to his scribe (in other words, the dictation of the text), then the scribe hearing Joseph's dictation, and finally the scribe's writing down the text (thus creating the original manuscript). Both seer and scribe are doing their best, but it is clear that errors are being made. In the next section, however, we will consider what Joseph Smith and his scribe specifically did to make sure the spelling of the Book of Mormon names was as accurate as possible.

What then is the source for the notion of ironclad control? There seems to be only one significant possibility, namely, the spelling out of names by Joseph Smith to his scribe. We turn to that now in the following section, first with citations of what the witnesses claimed and then the evidence from the original manuscript that this is precisely what took place.

Correcting names in the original manuscript

Some of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon translation process claimed that Joseph Smith would spell out the "strange Book of Mormon" names to his scribe. We have several witness statements from Emma Smith and David Whitmer characterizing the general procedure, but without giving any specific examples:

□ Emma Smith, interviewed by Edmund C. Briggs, 8 December 1856, published in 1916 [Vogel 1:530, Welch 141–142]

When my husband was translating the Book of Mormon, I wrote a part of it, as he dictated each sentence, word for word, and when he came to proper names he could not pronounce, or long words, he spelled them out, and while I was writing them, if I made any mistake in spelling, he would stop me and correct my spelling, although it was impossible for him to see how I was writing them down at the time.

□ David Whitmer, interviewed by a reporter for the *Chicago Times,* August 1875 [Vogel 5:21]

and he was utterly unable to pronounce many of the names which the magic power of the Urim and Thummim revealed, and therefore spelled them out in syllables, and the more erudite scribe put them together.

The question here is whether *syllable* has the same meaning as in today's English (that is, Joseph pronounced the names syllable by syllable) or does it have the meaning 'the least portion or detail of speech or writing', definition 2 under *syllable* in the Oxford English Dictionary (in other words, Joseph spelled out the name letter by letter). Evidence from Oliver Cowdery's correction of *Coriantummer* to *Coriantumr* must have been done letter by letter. Oliver's correction of *Zenock* to *Zenoch* could have been done by re-pronouncing *Zenoch* as /zi.nəč/ (that is, as ZEE-nuch) or, more probably, by spelling it out letter by letter.

▫ David Whitmer, interviewed by Edmund C. Briggs and Rudolph Etzenhouser, 25 April 1884 [Cook 128, Vogel 5:122, Welch 169]

"How did it appear in them?" we asked. His answer was: "The letters appeared on them in light, and would not go off until they were written correctly by Oliver. When Joseph could not pronounce the words he spelled them out letter by letter."

▫ David Whitmer, purportedly interviewed by a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune,* 15 December 1885 [Cook 174, Vogel 5:154, Welch 172]

In translating the characters Smith, who was illiterate and but little versed in Biblical lore, was ofttimes compelled to spell the words out, not knowing the correct pronunciation, . . .

To these general statements we can add a few statements dealing with the unexpected name *Sariah.* According to Emma Smith, Joseph Smith couldn't pronounce *Sariah* correctly. The problem, we may surmise, was that he tended to pronounce the name as *Sarah,* the common biblical name, also common in English. In order to get *Sariah* correctly dictated to the scribe, he had to spell it out. It's interesting to note that the published versions of these statements can't get the name right either and tend to replace *Sariah* with *Sarah.* This difficulty would have occurred in early 1828 when Joseph was dictating the beginning of the book of Lehi to Emma, his wife, as part of the 116 pages. Martin Harris also seems to have been aware of this same difficulty with *Sariah,* from either his own experience as scribe for the 116 pages or because he heard it from Emma.

▫ Emma Smith Bidamon, interviewed by Edmund C. Briggs, 8 December 1856, mentioned in Briggs and Etzenhouser's 1884 published interview of David Whitmer [Cook 126, Vogel 5:120]

And in the same conversation, she remarked of her husband Joseph's limited education while he was translating the Book of Mormon, and she was scribe at the time, "He could not pronounce the word Sariah."

▫ Emma Smith Bidamon, interviewed by Edmund C. Briggs, 8 December 1856, published in 1916 [Vogel 1:530, Welch 141–142]

When my husband was translating the Book of Mormon, I wrote a part of it, as he dictated each sentence, word for word, and when he came to proper names he could not pronounce, or long words, he spelled them out, . . . Even the word *Sarah* he could not pronounce at first, but had to spell it, and I would pronounce it for him.

This version is not in E. C. Briggs' 1884 published account of the Briggs and Etzenhouser 1856 interview of David Whitmer, but instead this quotation referring to the spelling of *Sariah* was first published much later, in 1916. Of course, the name that was causing him difficulty was *Sariah,* not *Sarah.*

☐ Martin Harris, reminiscence recollected by Reuben P. Harmon around 1885 [Vogel 2:385, Welch 150]

He said it was impossible for the prophet Joseph to get up the "Book of Mormon," for he could not spell the word Sarah. He had him repeat the letters of the word. He was a very illiterate man.

Harmon was a resident of Kirtland. His recollection, published in Arthur Deming's 1888 *Naked Truths About Mormonism,* refers to Joseph's difficulty with *Sariah.* Harmon's account of what Martin Harris told him seems to be independent of Emma's. It provides another indication that Joseph had to spell out this strange Book of Mormon name to his scribe.

It seems unlikely that Joseph would have had difficulty with the name *Sariah* when he got to it a second time, in June 1829, when he translated the small plates of Nephi at the Peter Whitmer home. The original manuscript (𝕆) shows no sign of misspelling *Sariah* as *Sarah,* although it seems likely that Joseph would have had to respell the name for Oliver Cowdery and Christian Whitmer, his two scribes for 1 Nephi since they had not been involved in the earlier translation of the book of Lehi (in the 116 pages that were lost in June 1828). The name *Sariah* occurs four times in extant portions of 1 Nephi, in the small plates, and in every case the scribe got it down correctly the first time, with no rewriting or other indication that Joseph had first read it off as *Sarah:*

Oliver Cowdery (consistently wrote *Sariah* in 𝕆)

1 Nephi 2:5
& he did travel|d| in the wilderness with his family which consisted of
my mother **Sariah** & my elder brethren which were Laman Lemuel & Sam

Christian Whitmer (consistently wrote *sariah* in 𝕆)

1 Nephi 5:1
and also my mother **sariah** was exceding glad

1 Nephi 5:6
and after this manner ^ \ of language / did My father Lehi comfort my mother **sariah**

1 Nephi 8:14
and at the head thereof I beheld your Mother **sariah** and Sam and nephi

These four instances of *Sariah* in 𝕆 imply that Joseph Smith had no problem with this name the second time around, over a year later, in June 1829. It turns out that 𝕆 is not extant for the first instance of *Sariah* in the text (in the preface to 1 Nephi), nor for the only instance of the name *Sarah* (the wife of Abraham). In those two cases, Oliver Cowdery wrote the name correctly in the printer's manuscript (𝕇) without any mix-up, just as he did for the four cases listed above:

Oliver Cowdery (consistently wrote *Sariah* and *Sarah* in 𝒫)

    1 Nephi preface

        An account of Lehi & his Wife **Sariah** & his four Sons

    1 Nephi 2:5

        & he did travel in the wilderness with his family which consisted of
        my Mother **Sariah** & my elder Brothres|s| which were Laman Lemuel & Sam

    1 Nephi 5:1

        & also my Mother **Sariah** was exceding glad

    1 Nephi 5:6

        & after this manner of language did my father Lehi comfort my Mother **Sariah**

    1 Nephi 8:14

        & at the head thereof I beheld your Mother **Sariah** & Sam & nephi

    2 Nephi 8:2 (quoting Isaiah 51:2)

        look unto Abraham your father & unto **Sarah** she that bear you

The claim that Joseph Smith spelled out certain names has several implications: First, we should be able to find evidence in 𝒪 of the scribe initially misspelling the first occurrence of a name, but then correcting it, perhaps immediately. Second, misspellings of subsequent occurrences of a name could occur since a later scribe (when copying the text from 𝒪 into 𝒫) or the compositor for the 1830 edition (when setting the type from the manuscript) could correct a misspelled name by following its first occurrence, namely, the correctly spelled first occurrence of the name. Third, common biblical names or words (misspelled as *Isauh* or *Pharro*) would not need to be corrected. Fourth, an uncommon biblical name, such as *Amoz* or *Rezin,* would very likely need to be spelled out, especially whenever that uncommon biblical name was used to refer to a Book of Mormon person or place, such as *Antipas* or *Gilgal.* And finally, nouns found only in the Book of Mormon, such as *neas* and *cureloms,* would undoubtedly need to be spelled out, especially the first time.

1. The first occurrence (for a given scribe) of a Book of Mormon name was corrected

In these examples, the scribe first wrote out the name in some phonetic fashion, then crossed it out and wrote the correct spelling, sometimes supralinearly, but other times inline. Subsequent spellings of corrected names would then be spelled correctly, but not always. In the following, I list the corrected names in the order that they occurred in the dictation, with the large plates of Nephi preceding the small plates of Nephi (that is, Mosiah through Moroni first, then 1 Nephi through the Words of Mormon). There are two examples of inline correction, *Zenoch* and *Coriantumr.* For each one of these, the initial spelling of the name was phonetically based but was incorrect, and thus it was crossed out and the correct spelling was immediately supplied inline, right after the crossed-out misspelling. In each case, evidence argues that Joseph Smith spelled out the name letter by letter to his scribe, Oliver Cowdery.

■ *shilum* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 11:16 (lines 8−9 on page 226′ of 𝓞)

```
& a shi<{b|l}>lum i(                    )
                 S A HALF OF A SHIBLON
```

This reading in 𝓞 comes from the fragmented (and hard to read) Andrew Jenson acquisition. The name was originally written by Oliver Cowdery as *shiblum.* Oliver first overwrote the *b* with an *l,* giving *shillum;* and then he finally reduced the double *l* to a single *l* by crossing out the first *l,* thus *shilum.* On the next line of 𝓞, in verse 17, he wrote *shilum* without correction. For this part of the text, the corresponding scribe in 𝓟 was Martin Harris; and he correctly copied both instances of this name as *shilum,* but the typesetter for the 1830 edition changed *shilum* to *shiblum,* which is what Oliver had originally written for the first instance in 𝓞. This gives us the following sequence of manuscript spellings for *shilum:*

𝓞	Alma 11:16	shi**bl**um > shi**ll**um > shi**l**um
	Alma 11:17	shi**l**um
𝓟	Alma 11:16	shi**l**um
	Alma 11:17	shi**l**um

The intrusive *shiblum* is a natural error that comes from the surrounding use of a very similar sounding monetary unit, the shiblon:

Alma 11:14−18
    now this is the value of the lesser numbers of their reckoning :
    a **shiblon** is half of a senum
    therefore a **shiblon** for a half a measure of barley
    and a **shilum** is a half of a **shiblon**
    and a leah is the half of a **shilum**
    now an antion of gold is equal to three **shiblons**

■ *Zenoch* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 33:15 (line 18 on page 288′ of 𝓞)

```
but <Zenock> Zenoch also spake of these things
```

Here in Alma 33:15, Oliver Cowdery first wrote this name phonetically, as *Zenock,* but then he crossed out the whole name and rewrote it inline as *Zenoch.* There is no change in the ink flow. Joseph Smith probably spelled out the name *Zenoch* this first time, either vocally or (less plausibly) by writing it out on a slip of paper. There are other possibilities, but less likely: (1) Joseph could have told Oliver that it was spelled like the biblical *Enoch,* or (2) he could have said that the name was written as if it were pronounced /zinəč/. The next occurrence of *Zenoch* (in Alma 34:7) was correctly spelled. The third and fourth occurrences are not extant, but for the fifth and final occurrence, in 1 Nephi 19:10 (in the small plates of Nephi), Oliver reverted to his phonetic spelling, *Zenock.* Unfortunately, this now means that when the translation of the small plates (from 1 Nephi through Omni) ended up preceding the translation of the large plates (from Mosiah through Moroni), then the first occurrence of this name in the final standard text was the incorrectly spelled *Zenock.* As a result, in his copywork from 𝓞 into 𝓟, Oliver used this misspelling throughout 𝓟:

℧	Alma 33:15	Zeno**ck** > Zeno**ch**
	Alma 34:7	Zeno**ch**
	Helaman 8:20	——
	3 Nephi 10:16	——
	1 Nephi 19:10	Zeno**ck**
℗	1 Nephi 19:10	Zeno**ck**
	Alma 33:15	Zeno**ck**
	Alma 34:7	Zeno**ck**
	Helaman 8:20	Zeno**c**[**k**|**h**]
	3 Nephi 10:16	Zeno**ck**

For Helaman 8:20 of ℗, Oliver intended to write *Zenock,* but his *k* looks almost like an *h.* The result was that the 1830 typesetter set *Zenoch* in Helaman 8:20, but otherwise *Zenock.* For 3 Nephi 10:16, the typesetter's copytext was ℧, not ℗, and he set *Zenock,* which argues that ℧ read *Zenock* at 3 Nephi 10:16; in other words, by 3 Nephi Oliver had already reverted to using the phonetic spelling *Zenock* in ℧.

■ *Antipas* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

   Alma 47:7 (line 28 on page 319′ of ℧)

```
   the top of the Mount which was called Antipa{<%h(-)%>|s}
```

Here Oliver Cowdery started to write the name of the mount as *Antipah.* He erased the unfinished *h* at the end of the name and then rewrote the letter as an *s,* giving *Antipas.* For the two following occurrences of the name of the mount, Oliver spelled the name as *Antipus,* but corrected only the third one to *Antipas.* When he copied the name into ℗, Oliver ended up with *Antipas* all three times, although in the second case he first wrote *Antipus,* and then he had to correct the *u* to an *a:*

℧	Alma 47:7	Antip**ah** >% Antip**as**
	Alma 47:9	Antip**us**
	Alma 47:10	Antip**us** > Antip**as**
℗	Alma 47:7	Antip**as**
	Alma 47:9	Antip**us** > Antip**as**
	Alma 47:10	Antip**as**

The 1830 typesetter consistently set *Antipas* as the name for this mount. It turns out that *Antipas* is a biblical name. It occurs only once, and it is very unlikely that either Joseph Smith or Oliver Cowdery would have recognized its Book of Mormon use as a biblical name:

   Revelation 2:13
      and thou holdest fast my name and hast not denied my faith
      even in those days wherein **Antipas** *was* my faithful martyr
      who was slain among you where Satan dwelleth

In the Book of Mormon, the name refers to a mount, not a person. But there is also a personal name in the Book of Mormon, *Antipus,* which is considered below.

■ *Teancum* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 50:35 (line 26 on page 329′ of ℧)

```
whose name was T{an|ea}nc{o|u}m
```

The first time Oliver Cowdery wrote this name, he started to write *Tan,* but then he corrected the *an* to *ea* and then added inline the *n* and the final syllable, *cum* (although that was initially written with an *o* as *com*). Of special interest here is Oliver's initial spelling of the first syllable, *Tan,* which implies that Joseph Smith pronounced the name either as /tænkəm/ or, more likely, as /teinkəm/. It is possible that Joseph read off the name *Teancum* as if the first syllable was pronounced like the noun *tea,* which was commonly pronounced in dialects as /tei/ in the late 1700s and into the 1800s, as indicated in the discussion regarding the pronunciation for the noun *tea* in the Oxford English Dictionary:

> The original English pronunciation /teː/, sometimes indicated by [the] spelling *tay,* is found in rhymes down to 1762, and remains in many dialects; but the current /tiː/ is found already in the 17th century, shown in rhymes and by the spelling *tee.*

The tendency for Oliver to initially misspell this name as *Tancum* (or *Tanecum*) is found twice more in ℧ (for the 18th and 20th occurrences of this name):

Alma 52:22 (lines 18–19 on page 335′ of ℧)

```
when the guards of the Lamanites had descovered T{an|ea}ncum
```

Alma 52:23 (lines 20–21 on page 335′ of ℧)

```
supposeing by their numbers to overpower T{an(-)|ea}ncum
```

But all the other extant instances of this name in ℧ (23 of them) are spelled without correction, as *Teancum.* This persistent error in writing *Teancum* argues that Joseph was not pronouncing the name as we do today, as /tiænkəm/.

■ *Ammonites* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 56:57 (line 21 on page 347′ of ℧)

```
& the remainder I took & joined them to my striplin Am{o|m}onites
```

This is the first instance of the name for the people of Ammon, that is, *Ammonites.* Oliver Cowdery started to write the word with one *m,* as *Amo,* but then he caught his error midway through the word and over-wrote the *o* with an *m,* and thus ended up with the correct spelling, *Ammonites.* In this case, of course, Joseph Smith did not have to spell out *Ammonites* to Oliver since Oliver had already encountered the name *Ammon* and knew how to spell it correctly. The only other instance of *Ammonites* occurs at the very end of this page in ℧, and there it is spelled correctly. Oliver consistently spelled the name *Ammon* with two *m*'s, never as *Amon.* The first instance of *Ammon* (in Mosiah 7:3) is not extant in ℧, but we do have one example where Oliver miswrote the name in ℧ as *Ammen* (in Alma 24:5) as well as one case where he initially wrote it as *Ammen* and then corrected it to *Ammon* (in Alma 31:32).

■ *Paanchi* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Helaman 1:3 (lines 31–32 on page 365′ of 𝒪)

```
                        n
    (Pah     ) Paa^chi & Pacumeni
         ORON
```

Here the text introduces the names of the three sons of Parhoron who contended for the judgment seat. The name for the second son is first given as *Paachi,* but Oliver Cowdery, the scribe here in 𝒪, corrected that to *Paanchi* by supralinearly inserting the *n.* The correction appears to be virtually immediate since there is no change in the level of the ink flow for the *n.* 𝒪 is not extant for this name when it appears a little later in the text, in Helaman 1:7.

■ *Coriantumr* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Helaman 1:15 (lines 27–28 on page 366′ of 𝒪)

```
    & they were lead by (   ma)n whose name was <Coriantummer> Coriantumr(+)
                      A
```

This is the first time Oliver Cowdery, the scribe here in 𝒪, had encountered the name *Coriantumr,* and he initially spelled the name phonetically, as *Coriantummer.* Then Oliver crossed out the entire name and immediately rewrote it inline with a spelling that is impossible in English, *Coriantumr.* The only way Joseph Smith could have conveyed the correct spelling to Oliver would have been to spell it out, letter for letter, probably vocally, as ending in *t-u-m-r.* It is also theoretically possible that Joseph could have written out the correct spelling on a slip of paper, but this seems rather unlikely. Oliver wrote the final *r* with a pronounced flourish that occurs nowhere else in Oliver's scribal work in 𝒪 and 𝒫, as if to say "How can you expect me to spell this?" And there is no doubt that Oliver ever forgot how to spell *Coriantumr.* The final *mr* in the name is extant for 13 more instances of *Coriantumr* (6 times in Helaman and 7 times in Ether), and it is never again miswritten as *Coriantummer* (or *Coriantumer* or anything like it). Once, in 𝒪 for Ether 12:2, he initially miswrote the name as *Coriantum,* but then he immediately corrected it to *Coriantumr.* (In Ether 9–10 there are seven instances of *Coriantum* that would have primed Oliver to initially write *Coriantum* instead of *Coriantumr* in Ether 12.) And in 𝒫, Oliver wrote out 76 instances of *Coriantumr,* and none were written with error or correction (this includes two instances in Omni, in the small plates of Nephi, which were translated last).

■ *Gilgal* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Ether 13:27 (line 17′ on page 470′ of 𝒪)

```
    (             m)eet in the vally of Gilgal<l>
      & THEY DID
```

This is the first instance in the text for the valley with the name *Gilgal.* It was initially spelled by Oliver Cowdery with two *l*'s at the end, but then with heavy ink flow he crossed out the final *l.* In this case, the correction does not appear to be immediate but later, perhaps when Oliver read the text back to Joseph Smith and the question of the spelling for *Gilgal* had come up. There are two other instances of "the valley of Gilgal" on this page of 𝒪 (in verses 29 and 30), but in neither case is the last part of the name extant in 𝒪. There are two other instances of *Gilgal* in the Book of Mormon text, in 3 Nephi 9:6 (for the name

of a city) and in Mormon 6:14 (for a leader of ten thousand who fell in the last battle at Cumorah). Note that *Gilgal* is a biblical name, but the three Book of Mormon uses of the name do not refer to the biblical Gilgal, which describes various places in Israel (but not specifically to any city or valley or person).

■ *Irreantum* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

1 Nephi 17:5 (line 39 on page 32 of 𝒪 and line 1 on page 33 of 𝒪)

```
                                                      <a>
    & we beheld the sea which we callee( ) Irrea^ntum
                                              D
```

This name occurs only once in the text. Oliver Cowdery originally wrote it correctly, as *Irreantum,* but then he corrected it by supralinearly inserting an extra *a,* giving *Irreaantum.* The level of ink flow for the inserted *a* seems to be unchanged, implying that this first correction was immediate. But later the supralinear *a* was lightly crossed out in ink, thus restoring the original *Irreantum.* This second correction may have been done when Oliver read the text back to Joseph Smith, and only then did they once more take up the spelling for this name.

2. The first occurrence (for a given scribe) of a Book of Mormon name was written without correction

Despite the nine examples just listed, the normal situation in 𝒪 was that when a Book of Mormon name occurred for the first time, the scribe must have waited for Joseph Smith to spell out the name, which then allowed the scribe to get the name down without error right from the start. This meant that subsequent spellings of that name could vary providing the scribe and the 1830 typesetter remembered that the first spelling was the correct one. We end up with two subcases, here listed under 2a and 2b:

2a. *The Book of Mormon name shows no variation for its extant instances in 𝒪*

■ *Anti-Nephi-Lehies* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 23:17 (line 20 on page 264′ of 𝒪)

```
    (        c)alled their name AntiNephiLehies
      THEY
```

There is only this one instance in the text for the plural of *Anti-Nephi-Lehi* (the name for the converted people of king Lamoni), and the plural form ends in *-ies* rather than the expected *-ites* (that is, *Anti-Nephi-Lehies* instead of *Anti-Nephi-Lehites*). As a result, *Anti-Nephi-Lehites* does not occur within the text proper, although this is the form that Oliver Cowdery himself used in one of the page headers:

header for page 338′ of 𝒪 [covering Alma 53:10−22]

```
    (              h)ites take up arms in defence [  f    ]
      ANTI-NEPHI-LE                                  O    THE

        (      t)es &C
          NEPHI
```

And this is the form commonly used by today's speakers in referring to "the Anti-Nephi-Lehites".

■ *Zenos* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 33:3 (line 31 on page 287′ of 𝔒)

```
do ye remember to have read what Zenos the prophet of old hath said
```

This name for an ancient prophet in Israel occurs 12 times in the text; it is extant in 𝔒 for all four instances in Alma 33–34, once in Helaman 15, and three times in 1 Nephi 19 (for a total of eight times). All are spelled as *Zenos,* without variation. When Oliver Cowdery copied this name into 𝔓, he consistently wrote it as *Zenos,* again without variation. The 1830 typesetter, however, misspelled one instance of *Zenos* as *Zenas* (in Helaman 8:19); in this case, his copytext, the printer's manuscript, clearly read *Zenos.*

■ *Siron* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 39:3 (line 24 on page 300′ of 𝔒)

```
into the land of Siron among the borders of the Lamanites
```

This is the only instance of the name *Siron* in the text, and it refers to a land.

■ *Zerahemnah* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 43:5 (lines 21–22 on page 307′ of 𝔒)

```
& a man by the name of Zerahemnah was their leader
```

The name for the Lamanite military leader Zerahemnah is extant 16 times in 𝔒 and is ultimately spelled correctly every time. But in three instances, Oliver Cowdery initially wrote the name incorrectly but then immediately corrected it. In Alma 43:20, he first wrote *Zeramnah,* then supralinearly inserted the missing *he.* In two other cases, he let the similar name *Zarahemla* influence the initial spelling: in Alma 44:10, Oliver first wrote *Zarahemnah,* then he corrected the first *a* to an *e;* and in Alma 44:12, he first wrote *Zerahemlah,* then he corrected the *l* to an *n.*

■ *Oneidah* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 47:5 (line 22 on page 319′ of 𝔒)

```
to the place which was called Oneidah
```

This name for the place of arms occurs a second time two lines below in 𝔒 (also in Alma 47:5); and like the first one, it too is spelled as *Oneidah* in 𝔒 and without correction. Oliver Cowdery copied this name correctly into 𝔓, but the 1830 typesetter replaced it with *Onidah,* thus merging it with a separate name, *Onidah,* which refers to a hill (in Alma 32:4) that Alma was preaching to the Zoramites from. The hill *Onidah* was definitely not the place of arms that the Lamanites opposing Amalickiah gathered to in the land of Nephi. Here the 1830 typesetter was influenced by the preceding instance of *Onidah* in Alma 32:4, which prompted him to replace the two instances of *Oneidah* in Alma 47:5 with *Onidah.*

■ *Lehonti* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 47:10 (line 1 on page 320′ of 𝒪)

```
(                                    ) the Mount whose name was Lehonti
   THE LEADER OF THOSE WHICH WERE UPON
```

The initial vowel in *Lehonti* is spelled without error for the first nine extant instances, but for the tenth one (in Alma 47:19) Oliver Cowdery initially miswrote the first vowel as an *a*, but then immediately overwrote the *a* with the correct *e*. (Here he probably wrote *La* in anticipation of the following *Lamanites:* "now when **Lehonti** was dead the **Lamanites** appointed Amalickiah to be their leader".) One other spelling variant deals with the possessive form for *Lehonti:* in Alma 47:12 Oliver wrote it as *Lehontis* ("nearly to Lehonti's camp"), but in Alma 47:13 he wrote it as *Lehonties* ("into Lehonti's hands").

■ *Morionton* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 50:25 (lines 33−34 on page 328′ of 𝒪)

```
   & the land of Morionton which joined upon the borders of Lehi
```

The name *Morionton* (used for a land as well as for the leader of the people who inhabited that land) occurs 20 times in the text (from Alma 50 through Alma 59), of which 13 are extant in 𝒪 for at least the middle part of the name; and each of these reads as *ion* rather than *ian*. When Oliver Cowdery copied the text from 𝒪 into 𝒫, he changed all the instances of *Morionton* to *Morianton*. In 𝒫, he may have been influenced by the spelling *Morianton* for the name of a king in the book of Ether, which occurs four times there (of which none are extant in 𝒪). It is clear that Oliver ignored the fact that the spelling of the name in 𝒪 for Alma 50−59 was the consistent (and invariant) *Morionton*.

■ *Antipus* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 56:9 (line 4 on page 344′ of 𝒪)

```
   (              pu)s whom ye had appointed a leader
     TO ASSIST ANTI
```

The basic issue here is the spelling for the last vowel of *Antipus* (a Nephite military leader): should it be a *u* or an *a*? As discussed earlier, there is a name *Antipas,* which refers to a mount. There are 15 extant instances in 𝒪 of the personal name *Antipus,* and in two cases Oliver Cowdery's *u* looks a lot like an *a*, in Alma 56:18 and Alma 56:57. For this name, there is really no intended variation in the spelling *Antipus*.

■ *Cumeni* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 56:14 (line 16 on page 344′ of 𝒪)

```
   & the city of Zeezrum & the city of Cumeni
```

This name for a city occurs six more times in the text (all of these are nearby, in Alma 57); all but the last instance are extant in 𝒪 and read *Cumeni,* without variation.

■ *Kishcumen* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Helaman 1:9 (line 10 on page 366′ of 𝒪)

```
(              on)e Kishc[u|a]men even to the Judgment seat
  THEY SENT FORTH
```

There are 13 extant instances of *Kishcumen* (the assassin for Gaddianton's secret combination), and for each instance the consonant after *Kish* is a *c*. For two out of the 13 extant instances of the name, Oliver's *u* after the *c* looks somewhat like an *a* (the first instance, here in Helaman 1:9, and the second of two instances in Helaman 2:7). It is clear that the name here in 𝒪 is an invariant one, *Kishcumen*. When Oliver Cowdery copied this name into 𝒫, he changed every instance to *Kishkumen,* with a *k* after *Kish*. There is no good textual reason for Oliver to have made this change. He may have been influenced by the initial *k* in the name *Kishcumen* or by the two disciples' names in 3 Nephi 19:4, *Kumen* and *Kumenonhi* (= *Kumen* + *onhi*). However, the text also has similar names beginning with *c:* seven instances of *Cumeni* (nearby in Alma 56−57) as well as one instance of *Cumenihah* (in Mormon 6:14).

■ *Pagag* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Ether 6:25 (line 20′ on page 460′ of 𝒪)

```
  & his name was Pagag
```

The second instance of this name for the first born of the brother of Jared is not extant in 𝒪.

■ *Nimrah* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Ether 9:8 (lines 19′−20′ on page 463′ of 𝒪)

```
(                    )rah
  & HIS NAME WAS NIM
```

We can see from this partially extant spelling for the son of Akish that the final *h* was included in the first spelling of his name. This name is fully extant in the next verse, in line 21′, and reads as *Nimrah*. This name is a biblical one, occurring once in Numbers 32:3 in a list of cities east of the Jordan river. It is doubtful that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery knew that the personal name *Nimrah* used here in Ether 9 was biblical in origin.

2b. *Some of the extant later instances of the Book of Mormon name show variation in the spelling*

■ *Jershon* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 27:22 (line 26 on page 273′ of 𝒪)

```
  behold we will gi(v              o)f Jershon
                    E UP THE LAND
```

For the second instance of the name *Jershon* (the Nephite land that the people of Ammon settled in), Oliver Cowdery initially wrote the name as *Jeshur* (here he may have been influenced by the biblical name *Geshur,* the land where Absalom fled to, cited several times in 2 Samuel 13−15). In any event, Oliver immediately overwrote the final *ur* in *Jeshur* with *on*. For all other extant instances of *Jershon* in the text (21 of them), Oliver wrote the name correctly, without variation.

■ *Moroni* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 43:16 (line 17 on page 308′ of 𝓞)

```
& his name was M[o|e]roni
```

Except for one case, Oliver Cowdery always ended up spelling the name *Moroni* correctly in 𝓞 (there are 120 extant cases of *Moroni* in the text proper as well as 9 cases in page headers). In a few cases, his first vowel, the *o,* was written hurriedly, so that it looked somewhat like an *e,* as in the first instance here in Alma 43:16. There are four other unintentional cases where Oliver's *Moroni* looks somewhat like *Meroni:* Alma 43:23, Alma 43:28, Alma 53:8, and Alma 55:33. But in all these cases, Oliver intended to write *Moroni.* More substantive are two instances of *Maroni:* an initial error in Alma 50:35 that Oliver immediately corrected to *Moroni;* and a strange case in Alma 58:41 where Oliver corrected his original *Moroni* to *Maroni,* the only truly exceptional spelling for this name in 𝓞.

■ *Amalickiah* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 46:3 (lines 28–29 on page 315′ of 𝓞)

```
& his name was Amalickiah
```

The first two instances of *Amalickiah* are written without correction, but after this we get variation for most instances of this name (see the list on pages 422–425 of *Spelling in the Manuscripts and Editions,* part 6 of volume 3). Counting all forms of the name that are extant for the second and third vowels, we get the following statistics for four variants (here I include the statistics for the name in four page headers of 𝓞):

Ameleckiah	41 times
Amelickiah	23 times
Amaleckiah	9 times
Amalickiah	13 times

■ *Parhoron* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 50:40 (line 9 on page 330′ of 𝓞)

```
(                        a)s Par(-)horon
   NOW BEHOLD HIS NAME W
```

The first instance of the name for a Nephite chief judge (also the name of one of his sons) is written defectively. There appears to be an attempt to write an *r* before the *h,* but it is incomplete. One could interpret this extra stroke as an error and that the name is *Pahoron.* In any event, it is clear that the last vowel is an *o,* not an *a,* not only here but in all but two other extant instances of the name in 𝓞 (this includes one page header in 𝓞). Here is a list of the variant spellings in extant 𝓞 for this name and their order of appearance in the text:

Par(–)hor**on**	2 times	1, 2
Pa**r**hor**on**	2 times	3, 9
Pa{**r**(–)h|**r**}or**on**	1 time	4
Pa(+)hor**on**	1 time	5
Pahor**on**	7 times	6, 25, 26, 27, 29, 34, 36
Pa**r**hor**an**	2 times	7, 8

When Oliver Cowdery copied the text into 𝒫, for the first 14 instances he wrote the last vowel as an *a,* but then he systematically switched to writing the last vowel as an *o* (24 times). (See under Alma 50:40 in *Analysis of Textual Variants* for a complete listing of this name in 𝒪 and 𝒫.) The 1830 compositor consistently set the name as *Pahoran.*

■ *Ammoron* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

　Alma 52:3 (line 24 on page 333′ of 𝒪)

```
& his nane was Ammoron
```

Nearly all the instances of the name *Ammoron* (the brother of Amalickiah) are spelled correctly. The only significant case of variation deals with the question of whether the *m* should be doubled or not. Of the 19 extant instances of the name, only two read *Amoron:* (1) an improper correction of *Amamoron* to *Amoron* in Alma 54:1, and (2) an initial error in Alma 55:1 where Oliver Cowdery started to write *Amoron* but immediately corrected it to *Ammoron.*

■ *Laban* [scribe: Christian Whitmer]

　1 Nephi 4:20 (line 1 on page 7 of 𝒪)

```
And i commanded him in the voice of laban
```

Here we have the first time that Christian Whitmer wrote the name *Laban,* and except for the capitalization, he spelled it correctly. In all, this scribe wrote the name 12 times, and all instances except one were spelled as *laban.* The exception was one case with the misspelled *laben:*

　　1 Nephi 4:21 (lines 2–3 on page 7 of 𝒪)

```
and he soposing me to Be his Master laben
```

Oliver Cowdery's two spellings and John Whitmer's six spellings of the name are all extant in 𝒪, and each is spelled correctly, as *Laban* (or *laban*). The name *Laban* is, of course, biblical and is the name of the father of Leah and Rachel (Genesis 29–31) as well as the brother of Rebecca (Genesis 24).

■ *Laman* [scribe: Christian Whitmer]

　1 Nephi 4:28 (lines 17–18 on page 7 of 𝒪)

```
when laman Saw me he was Exceedingly frightend
```

This is the first time Christian Whitmer wrote the name *Laman,* and he got it down correctly (although the initial *l* is not capitalized). Then in chapters 7 and 8, he wrote this name six more times, and half the time he wrote it incorrectly, as *lamen.* John Whitmer (scribe 2 of 𝒪) wrote the name down seven times in 1 Nephi 3 and each one was correct (except technically for one instance of lower-case *laman* in 1 Nephi 3:14). For Oliver Cowdery, his first instance would have been at Mosiah 7:21, which is not extant, but generally he wrote the name correctly except for one time at Alma 24:29 in 𝒪 where he appears to have accidentally written the name as *Lamaan* (see lines 19–20 on page 267′ of 𝒪). Also, Oliver initially wrote *Laman* as *Lamman* twice in Alma 55:4–5, but he supralinearly rewrote both these instances of the name so they each had one *m.* Oliver also once wrote *Lamanites* as *Lemanites* (in Alma 37:19) and left it uncorrected. He

made the same error a couple more times, but in those cases he corrected the initial *e* to an *a* (in Alma 43:38 and Alma 47:4).

■ *Lemuel* [scribe: Christian Whitmer]

1 Nephi 4:28 (lines 18–19 on page 7 of ℗)

```
he was Excedingly frightend and also Lemuel and Sam
```

This is the first time that Christian Whitmer wrote the name *Lemuel,* and he did it correctly. When he got to chapters 7–10 of 1 Nephi, he wrote the name eight more times; for the first of these, he used the correct spelling (although without the capital *L,* as *lemuel*), but then for six of the following seven cases he wrote the name as *lemual* (and only once as *lemuel,* in 1 Nephi 9:1). It seems reasonable to assume that a new scribe would require earlier names to be re-spelled. John Whitmer (scribe 2 of ℗) wrote his three instances of the name correctly (in 1 Nephi 3), the first as *Lemuel,* then the next two as *lemuel.* On the other hand, Oliver Cowdery's first use of the name *Lemuel* would have been in Alma 3:7, and it is not extant. It should be noted that the name *Lemuel* is biblical: it occurs twice in Proverbs 31. Of course, in the Book of Mormon the referent is different than the biblical one, and it is very unlikely that Joseph Smith or any of his scribes knew that *Lemuel* occurred in the King James Bible.

■ *Zoram* [scribe: Christian Whitmer]

1 Nephi 4:35 (lines 42–43 on page 7 of ℗)

```
Zoram did take Courrage at the words which i spake
```

When Christian Whitmer first wrote the name *Zoram,* he got the spelling correct, but for the subsequent three instances (two in verse 35 and one in verse 37) he misspelled it as *Zorum.* For Oliver Cowdery, the first occurrence of this name would have been in Alma 16:5, but this is not extant. For five extant instances of the name in ℗, Oliver Cowdery consistently wrote *Zoram.* In addition, Oliver always spelled *Zoramite*(*s*) correctly for 26 extant instances.

3. The first occurrence (for a given scribe) of a biblical name was misspelled and not corrected

For well-known biblical names, there seems to have been no attempt at making sure the spelling was correct. In such cases, Joseph Smith and his scribe simply assumed that the typesetter would be able to provide the correct spelling, just as if the biblical name were a common noun.

■ *pharaoh* [scribe: John Whitmer]

1 Nephi 4:2 (lines 1–2 on page 6 of ℗)

```
& the armies of Pharro did follow & were drownded
```

Here we have the only time the word *pharaoh* was written by John Whitmer (scribe 2 of ℗), and he wrote it phonetically as *Pharro.* This noun only occurs twice in the text of the Book of Mormon. The other instance was written down in ℗ by Oliver Cowdery, and he too misspelled it (for Oliver's error, see below under 1 Nephi 17:27).

■ *Zedekiah* [scribe: Christian Whitmer]

> 1 Nephi 5:12 (lines 44–45 on page 8 of 𝒪)
>
> > even down to the commencement of the Rein of Zedeciah

Christian Whitmer twice spelled the name of king Zedekiah, the first time incorrectly (with a *c* rather than a *k*) but the second time correctly:

> > 1 Nephi 5:13 (lines 46–47 on page 8 of 𝒪)
> >
> > > even down to the Commncement of the rein of Zedekiah

All other instances of *Zedekiah* are not extant in 𝒪 (seven of them), but these would have been in Oliver Cowdery's hand. Since he always wrote *Zedekiah* correctly in 𝒫, he probably also wrote it correctly in 𝒪. (The last instance of this name, in 3 Nephi 19:4, refers to one of the twelve disciples.)

■ *Judah* [scribe: Christian Whitmer]

> 1 Nephi 5:12 (line 45 on page 8 of 𝒪)
>
> > the Rein of Zedeciah king of juda

This is the only time Christian Whitmer wrote *Judah,* and here he omitted the final *h.* There is one extant instance of *Judah* written by Oliver Cowdery in 𝒪, and that one is spelled correctly (in 1 Nephi 20:1).

■ *Jeremiah* [scribe: Christian Whitmer]

> 1 Nephi 5:13 (line 48 on page 8 of 𝒪)
>
> > which have been spoken by the mouth of jeramiah

Christian Whitmer misspelled this first instance of *Jeremiah* as *jeramiah.* He also spelled this name a little later, and in that case he used the correct spelling:

> > 1 Nephi 7:14 (lines 38–39 on page 10 of 𝒪)
> >
> > > and jeremiah have they cast into prisen

There are four other instances of this name in the text, but none are extant in 𝒪, although Oliver Cowdery would have probably been the scribe, for three instances in Helaman 8:20 and one in 3 Nephi 19:4 (the last of these is the name of one of the twelve disciples). In 𝒫, he consistently used the correct spelling, *Jeremiah,* which argues that in 𝒪 he also probably used that spelling.

■ *Egypt* [scribe: Christian Whitmer]

> 1 Nephi 5:14 (lines 51–52 on page 8 of 𝒪)
>
> > joseph which Was the son of jacob which was sold into egipt

Christian Whitmer misspelled his first instance of *Egypt* as *egipt.* But for the next instance of this name, he spelled it correctly (except for the lack of capitalization):

> > 1 Nephi 5:15 (lines 2–3 on page 9 of 𝒪)
> >
> > > and out Of the land of egypt

Oliver Cowdery always spelled *Egypt* and *Egyptian*(*s*) with the *y*, although sometimes he accidentally omitted the following *p*. Otherwise, he did not misspell either *Egypt* or *Egyptian*(*s*).

■ *Babylon* [scribe: Christian Whitmer]

1 Nephi 10:3 (lines 19–20 on page 14 of 𝒪)

```
                         a
many ware carried awy captive int babalon
```

This is the only time Christian Whitmer wrote down *Babylon.* On the other hand, we have three fully extant cases where Oliver Cowdery wrote down *Babylon* in 𝒪, and each is spelled correctly (in 1 Nephi 20:14, 2 Nephi 23:1, and 2 Nephi 24:22).

■ *Messiah* [scribe: Christian Whitmer]

1 Nephi 10:4 (line 26 on page 14 of 𝒪)

```
yea even a masiah
```

Christian Whitmer consistently misspelled *Messiah* as *masiah* (8 times), from 1 Nephi 10:4 through 1 Nephi 10:17. So did his brother John Whitmer (see below under 1 Nephi 15:13). On the other hand, Oliver Cowdery appears to have always spelled *Messiah* correctly.

■ *Bethabara* [scribe: Christian Whitmer]

1 Nephi 10:9 (lines 40–41 on page 14 of 𝒪)

```
that he sould baptise in bethebara beyond jordan
```

This biblical name occurs only once in the text, and in the hand of Christian Whitmer. The language here follows John 1:28: "these things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan where John was baptizing" (according to the King James text). Oliver Cowdery copied this misspelling into 𝒫, but the 1830 typesetter replaced it with the correct *Bethabara.*

■ *hosanna* [scribe: Christian Whitmer]

1 Nephi 11:6 (lines 10–11 on page 16 of 𝒪)

```
hosana to the lord the most high god
```

Here Christian Whitmer wrote *hosanna* with a single *n* (but correctly without an *h* at the end). The only other instance of the word would have been written by Oliver Cowdery in 3 Nephi 4:32, but 𝒪 is not extant for that example. It was probably misspelled there in 3 Nephi given that Oliver misspelled it as *Hozannah* when he copied the word into 𝒫.

■ *Nazareth* [scribe: Christian Whitmer]

1 Nephi 11:13 (lines 41–42 on page 16 of 𝒪)

```
and i be held the citty of nathareth
```

And in the following clause, Christian Whitmer repeated this spelling for *Nazareth:*

1 Nephi 11:13 (lines 42–43 on page 16 of ☾)

```
and in the city of nathareth i be held a virgin
```

These are the only two cases of *Nazareth* in the Book of Mormon text. Both times, Christian wrote his own idiosyncratic pronunciation, /nædərəθ/, in place of the standard /næzərəθ/. Evidence for his pronunciation can be found occasionally in American English.

- ■ *Messiah* [scribe: John Whitmer]

   1 Nephi 15:13 (line 26 on page 27 of ☾)

   ```
   after that the masiah hath manifested himself
   ```

John Whitmer's first spelling of *Messiah* is incorrect, as is his second, which immediately follows:

   1 Nephi 15:13 (lines 27–28 on page 27 of ☾)

   ```
   then shall the fulneſs of the gospel of the masiah come
   ```

We got the same consistent misspelling earlier under 1 Nephi 10:4–17 for his brother Christian Whitmer. On the other hand, Oliver Cowdery seems to have always spelled the name correctly.

- ■ *Isaiah* [scribe: John Whitmer]

   1 Nephi 15:20 (line 21 on page 28 of ☾)

   ```
   (              r)se unto them the words of Isauh
     & I DID REHEA
   ```

This is the only instance where John Whitmer wrote *Isaiah,* and he misspelled it (quite phonetically, in fact). All other extant instances in ☾ are in Oliver Cowdery's hand (two of them, in 1 Nephi 19:23 and 2 Nephi 25:6), and they are spelled correctly. Oliver also consistently spelled this name as *Isaiah* in ℗. (In 3 Nephi 19:4, the name refers to one of the twelve disciples.)

- ■ *pharaoh* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

   1 Nephi 17:27 (lines 24–25 on page 34 of ☾)

   ```
   which were the armies of Pharough
   ```

Here is the only instance where Oliver Cowdery spelled *pharaoh* in ☾, and he misspelled it; nor was there any attempt to get it down correctly, according to standard spelling. (See above under 1 Nephi 4:2 for John Whitmer's single instance of writing down this word in ☾.)

- ■ *Jordan* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

   1 Nephi 17:32 (lines 34–35 on page 34 of ☾)

   ```
   & after they had crossed the river Jorden
   ```

This is the first time Oliver Cowdery wrote this name with its biblical referent, and he misspelled it as *Jorden.* He also wrote the biblical name in 2 Nephi 19:1, but this instance is not extant. He was the probable scribe in ☾ for Mormon 5:3 when *Jordan* was earlier written by him, but this example refers to a Nephite city, not

the river Jordan in the land of Israel. In 𝓟, Oliver typically misspelled *Jordan* as *Jordon* (initially in 1 Nephi 17:32, without correction in 2 Nephi 19:1, and as a correction to Martin Harris's *Jordan* in Mormon 5:3).

4. The first occurrence (for a given scribe) of a biblical name is not extant, but later, extant occurrences are correctly spelled

■ *Amoz* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

2 Nephi 23:1 (line 30 on page 77 of 𝒪)

```
(         n) of Babylon wh(   ) Isaiah the Son of Amo(z did   )
  THE  BURDE             ICH                        SEE
```

The name *Amoz* is sufficiently extant here at the end so that we can read the final letter as a *z* and not as an *s*. Here the Book of Mormon is quoting from Isaiah 13:1. The first instance of this name occurs in 2 Nephi 12:1 (there the text is quoting from Isaiah 2:1), but in this case 𝒪 is not at all extant. There has been a natural tendency in the history of the text to spell this rare biblical name with the more familiar *Amos.* For instance, the 1981 edition originally had both instances spelled as *Amos,* and then both were corrected to *Amoz* in 1983. More significantly for both of these instances of *Amoz,* Oliver Cowdery initially wrote the name in 𝓟 as *Amos,* which he immediately corrected both times to *Amoz* (there is no change in the level of ink flow). These two corrections suggest that 𝒪 read *Amoz* in both places; and most likely, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery made sure of the correct spelling for this rare biblical name during the dictation.

5. The first occurrence (for a given scribe) of a biblical name is not extant, but later, extant occurrences are sometimes incorrectly spelled

■ *Eden* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 42:2 (lines 8–9 on page 305′ of 𝒪)

```
(a                          ) Eaden
  T THE EAST END OF THE GARDEN OF
```

This is the only extant instance of *Eden* in 𝒪, and it is in Oliver Cowdery's hand. There are five other examples of *Eden* in the text, but none of them are extant in 𝒪 (they were all apparently in Oliver's hand). In 𝓟 itself, Oliver consistently used the spelling *Eden.* The spelling for this common biblical name was probably not controlled for in 𝒪.

■ *Sidon* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 43:22 (line 34 on page 308′ of 𝒪)

```
by the head of the River Sidon
```

The biblical name *Sidon* always refers to the river Sidon in the Book of Mormon (sometimes in the phrase "the waters of Sidon"). The biblical name refers to a person's name (in Genesis 10:15), to a place (in Genesis 10:19), or to the city Sidon (typically conjoined in New Testament phrases with the city Tyre). Its first occurrence in the Book of Mormon text is found at Alma 2:15, which is not extant. Overall *Sidon* occurs 37 times

in the text. The first extant occurrence is in Alma 43:22, and in all there are 15 fully or partially extant instances of the name. The *o* vowel in the name sometimes looks like an *e* (3 times), and in one case (in Alma 43:51) Oliver Cowdery initially wrote the name as *Siden,* then corrected the *e* to an *o.*

■ *Judea* [scribe: Oliver Cowdery]

Alma 56:18 (lines 25−26 on page 344′ of 𝒪)

```
to not come against the city of Judeah
```

The earliest fully extant example of *Judea* (here in Alma 56:18) is spelled *Judeah.* The two following instances are also spelled as *Judeah:*

Alma 56:57 (lines 21−22 on page 347′ of 𝒪)

```
& took our ma(   )h back to the City of <Jewd> Judeah
             RC
```

Alma 57:11 (lines 15−16 on page 348′ of 𝒪)

```
& (      the)n to Judeah
   SEND
```

An earlier instance in Alma 56:15 is only partially extant and it ends in *-ah,* which means that it too was spelled *Judeah:*

Alma 56:15 (lines 17−18 on page 344′ of 𝒪)

```
when I arived at the City <off> (         a)h
                               OF  JUDE
```

However, the very first instance (in Alma 56:9) is not at all extant, so we cannot be sure whether it read as *Judea* or *Judeah.* However, Oliver Cowdery copied all five instances into 𝒫 as *Judeah,* which argues that even the first one (in Alma 56:9) read as *Judeah.* The 1830 typesetter interpreted all of these instances of *Judeah* as misspellings of the common biblical word *Judea,* although in the Book of Mormon this *Judea* does not refer to the land of Judea in Israel, but to a Nephite city. The assumption here is that *Judeah* is a consistent spelling error that Oliver Cowdery made under the influence of the related word *Judah,* which does end in an *h.* It is worth noting that as such the name *Judea* appears only once in the King James Bible, in Ezra 5:8, yet that is actually a translation error and should read *Judah.* In the New Testament, *Judea* takes the form *Judaea* and occurs there 43 times.

Thus, numerous examples provide convincing evidence that Joseph Smith spelled out "the strange Book of Mormon names" to his scribe, at least the first time they occurred. He also seems to have spelled out rare and difficult-to-spell biblical names (but not always). On the other hand, the spelling for common biblical names was not controlled for, just as there seems to have been no control over the spelling of ordinary words of English, as we shall now see.

Spelling out difficult words and names

Emma Smith claimed that Joseph Smith had difficulty pronouncing long words, perhaps the more literate words, to her when she acted as scribe, and so he spelled them out to her. Of course, this would have been when he was dictating the first 116 pages or perhaps some of the early pages in the book of Mosiah. None of these pages are extant, so we have no direct evidence of what Emma was referring to.

The question we may ask, however, is whether there is evidence in extant ℧ for Joseph Smith spelling out the more difficult words of English to the other scribes, Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer, and Christian Whitmer. For the most part, the evidence argues that the scribes often misspelled these words, which shows that there was generally no control over the spelling of English words (unlike the case of the strange Book of Mormon names, which were often spelled out).

Long words of English

We first consider whether Joseph Smith might have controlled the spelling for longer words. Here we list various multi-syllable words (lexical words with three or more syllables) and their (mis)spellings in extant ℧. All of these are misspelled at some place in ℧ by at least one of the scribes (usually Oliver Cowdery since most of extant ℧ is in his hand), and in virtually every case the error is left uncorrected. Just as with the spelling of recognizable biblical names, Joseph Smith and his scribes left the correct spelling to the typesetter. In the following, I list the (mis)spellings for each scribe according to the words' order of occurrence in ℧; the number after a (mis)spelling indicates how many times this particular (mis)spelling for this scribe is extant in ℧. In this analysis, inflectional forms are combined: thus *descendant* includes plural as well as singular cases; *consecrate* includes the past-tense form *consecrated;* and *exceeding* includes the adverbial form *exceedingly.* Finally, derivationally constructed words having three or more syllables, unlike inflectional word forms, are listed here even though they may derive from two-syllable words (thus we include examples like *acceptable, conqueror,* and *descendant*).

STANDARD SPELLING	SPELLING(S) IN EXTANT ℧		
	Oliver Cowdery	*John Whitmer*	*Christian Whitmer*
acceptable	exceptable 1		
accomplish	accomplish 6	accomplish 1 acconplish 1	accomplish 2
advantage	advantage 4 advatage 1		
aggravating	agravating 1		
animal	animel 1		
anxiety	anxciety 1 anxiety 1		
apostle		apostle 6	apostel 3

STANDARD SPELLING	SPELLING(S) IN EXTANT ☉		
	Oliver Cowdery	*John Whitmer*	*Christian Whitmer*
apparel	apparrel 2 apparrell 1		
ascension	assension 1		
assurance	assureance 2		
authority	authority 13		authoraty 1
burial	buriel 1		
capable	capible 1		
capital	capatal 1 capital 1		
concerning	concerning 77 comcerning 2 concening 2 concerming 1	conserning 2 concerning 4	conserning 21
condescension			condesension 2
conqueror	conquerer 1		
consecrate	consecrate 3 concecrate 1		
contention	contention 15 comtntion 1 comtention 1 contension 3		contenton 1 contention 2
continually	continually 11		continualy 1
contrary	conterary 2 conterrary 2		
correspondence	corrispondence 1 corrispondance 1		
covenant	covenant 30 coveenant 1 covanent 1	covanant 7 covenant 1	
delicious	delisous 1		
descendant	desendant 4		desendant 3
desirable		desireable 1	desirable 3 desirabel 1
desirous	desireous 18		desirus 6

STANDARD SPELLING	SPELLING(S) IN EXTANT ☿		
	Oliver Cowdery	*John Whitmer*	*Christian Whitmer*
destruction	destruction 30 distruction 2	distruction 2	destruction 3
diligence	diligence 13	dilligence 1	dilagence 1
diligent	diligent 5		dilligent 3
disappointment	disapointment 1 disappointment 1		
discernible	desernable 1		
disciple	desiple 1		desiple 1
discover	discover 4 descover 1		discover 2
disobedience	disobediance 2		
dissension	desension 6 dissension 7 dessension 1		
dissenter	desenter 3 dessenter 1 dissenter 2		
disturbance	disterbence 2		
drunkenness	drunkeness 1		
Egyptians	Egytians 2	Egyptians 1	
encircle	ensercle 6 encercle 2 insercle 1 encecle 1 encercel 1 ensircle 1		
engravings	engraveings 2	engraveings 1	ingravings 1
enormity	enormity 2 numerority 1		
especially	especially 1 espesially 1		
everlasting	everlasting 9 everlastiong 1		ever lasting 1
example	example 1		exempel 1

STANDARD SPELLING	SPELLING(S) IN EXTANT ☿		
	Oliver Cowdery	*John Whitmer*	*Christian Whitmer*
exceeding	exceding 83 excedeing 1	exceding 1 exceeding 6	exceding 9 exeding 2 exeeding 1 eceding 1
excellent	excelent 1		
exercise	exercise 9		exersise 1
existence	existance 1		
expedient	expediant 15 expedient 5 expedant 2 expedent 1		expedient 1
exquisite	exquisit 2		
families	families 7		famales 1
family	family 3		fammaly 3 family 1
filthiness	filthiness 1	filthyneſs 4	
forever	forever 19	forever 2 for ever 2	for ever 2
forgiveness	forgiveness 2		forgivneſs 1
fortieth	fortyeth 2		
government	goverment 5		
governor	governor 6 govenor 1		
grievious	grieveous 2 grievious 2		
happier	happyer 1		
hosanna			hosana 1
idolatry	idoletry 2		
ignorance	ignorence 1		
ignorant	ignorent 1		
imagination	immagionation 1 imagionation 1	immagionation 1	
inasmuch	in as much 14 inasmuch 1	in as much 1	

STANDARD SPELLING	SPELLING(S) IN EXTANT ☿		
	Oliver Cowdery	*John Whitmer*	*Christian Whitmer*
infinite	infinite 3 infinate 2		
infirmities	infermaties 1		
inhabitant	inhabitent 1 inhabitant 2		
inheritance	inheritance 8 in heritance 2 inheratance 1	inheritence 1 inheritance 3	inherritance 2
iniquity	iniquity 34 iniquitiy 1 eniquity 1	iniquity 1	
innocent	inocent 1		
insomuch	insomuch 46 inso much 1	in so much 1 in somuch 1 insomuch 1	insomuch 5 in so much 2
intention	intention 3 intension 2		
interpreted	interpeted 2 interpreted 1		
lasciviousness	licivesness 1		
manifest	manifest 7	manifest 2	manafest 1 manifest 1
merciful	merciful 17	mercyful 2	mersyfull 1
mightier		mighter 1 mighteer 1	mightyer 1
minister	minister 3	minister 4	minister 2 minester 1
miracle	miracle 3 miricle 1		
miraculous	marackelous 1 maraculous 1 marackulous 1		
misery	miseary 7		
murderous	murderous 1 merderous 1		

STANDARD SPELLING	SPELLING(S) IN EXTANT ☽		
	Oliver Cowdery	*John Whitmer*	*Christian Whitmer*
mysteries	mysteries 7		misteries 1
never-ending	neverending 1		
nevertheless	nevertheless 40 neverless 1	nevertheleſs 5	never the leſs 2 nevertheleſs 1
notwithstanding	notwithstanding 15 not withstanding 1 notwithstonding 1		
obedience	obiediance 1		
obedient	obediant 5		
offering	offering 1		ofring 2
oppressor	oppressor 2 oppresser 1		
overlook	over look 1		
overpower	overpower 6 over power 3	over power 2	
overtake(n)	overtake 5 over taken 2	overtake 1	
pacify		paſsify 1	
particle	partacle 1		
particular(ly)	particular 4 particually 1		particular 1
penitent	penitent 5 penitant 1		
peradventure	paradventure 1		
period	period 4		peried 1
persuasion	perswasion 1		
possession	possession 35 posession 7 possesion 1		
possible	possible 6	posible 1	
preparation	preperation 11 preparation 3		
preparatory	preperatory 1 preparatory 2		

STANDARD SPELLING	SPELLING(S) IN EXTANT ♂		
	Oliver Cowdery	*John Whitmer*	*Christian Whitmer*
privilege	privilege 4 privilidge 1 privelege 1		
privily	privelly 2		
prophecy [noun]	prophesy 12 propesy 5 prophecy 1	prophesy 1	prophasy 1 prophesy 2
prophesy [verb]	propesy 1 prophesy 9		prophesy 5
proprietor		prepriator 1	
rebellion	rebellion 5		rebelion 1
redeemer	redeemer 11	redeemer 2	redemer 4
religion	religion 7 reeligion 1		
remember	remember 36	remember 3 remembr 1	remember 2
remembrance	rememberance 4		
repentance	repentance 20 repentence 1		
restoration	restoration 11	restoreation 1 restoration 1	
reverence	reverance 1		
sacrifice	sacrifise 1 sacrifice 6		sacrafice 1 sacrifice 1
scimitar	simetar 2 simetre 1 simeter 3		
separate	separate 2	seperate 4	
sepulchre ~ sepulcher	supulchar 1		
serviceable	servisable 1		
sorrowful	sorrowful 8	sorrowful 1	sorraful 1
steadiness	stediness 2		
stubbornness	stuborness 3 stoberness 1		

STANDARD SPELLING	SPELLING(S) IN EXTANT ↻		
	Oliver Cowdery	*John Whitmer*	*Christian Whitmer*
stratagem	stratigem 4		
subtlety	subtelty 1		
supplication	suplication 1		
temporal	temporal 9 tempral 1	temperal 2 temporal 2	
terrible	terrible 3	terable 1	terble 1
testify	testify 11		testafy 1
thanksgiving	thanks giving 1 thanks giveing 1		
thirtieth	thirtyeth 2 thirteth 1		
together	together 34 to gather 1 to gether 2	to gether 8 to gethr 1	to geather 5 to gether 2
treasury	treasurey 3		treashury 1
tremendious	tremendeeous 1 tremendeeos 1		
tumultuous	tumultuous 1		tumultius 1
twentieth	twentyeth 2		
undertakings	undertakeings 1		
unworthiness	unworthyness 1		
verified	verryfied 1 verrified 1		
whithersoever	whitheersoever 1 whithersoever 1 whither soever 1		
whomsoever	whomesoever 1 whomsoever 1		
wilderness	wilderness 90 wildernness 1	wilderneſs 5	wilderneſs 21
workmanship	workmanship 3 workmenship 1	workmanship 1	
worthiness	worthyness 1		

Of course, some common biblical words are spelled correctly throughout extant ☉, as in these examples: *generation, resurrection,* and *revelation.*

Only one well-known word shows potential spelling out of the word for the scribe, namely *genealogy.* Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer spelled this word correctly each time they wrote the word in ☉ (at least in extant ☉ as we have it), Oliver three times and John once. But Christian Whitmer first misspelled the word (in 1 Nephi 5:14) in the most bizarre way, *jenealeja.* This misspelling shows that either Christian did not recognize the word when Joseph Smith read it off or that he had no idea how to spell it. Yet two verses later (in 1 Nephi 5:16), the word is spelled correctly and then once more correctly (in 1 Nephi 6:1). We could take this as evidence that Joseph spelled out the word the second time he dictated it to Christian.

Although it is difficult to find explicit evidence, it is also worth considering the spellings in the manuscripts of the King James words. Of course, most of the King James words are quite well-known in modern English, but here I shall pay special attention to the words that would have been rare or unknown to speakers of English in Joseph Smith's time (and our time). In addition, I will list more common King James words that we might have expected the scribes to have misspelled, but in fact they did not (in either 𝒫 or in ☉, where extant). My list of words will be derived from the vocabulary list in section 14 of *The King James Quotations in the Book of Mormon* (part 5 of volume 3 of the critical text).

The main strategy is as follows: When the King James spelling for a rare or unknown word with an unusual spelling is faithfully reproduced in 𝒫 without correction, it suggests that the spelling in ☉ was also the same. In such a case, I would argue that when Joseph Smith dictated the text, he spelled out the spelling for that word to the scribe. (The other possibility is that the scribe—or even Joseph—could have referred at some time, in either ☉ or 𝒫, to a King James Bible to get the correct spelling. But as we shall see later on, the first explicit evidence of anyone actually using a King James Bible to correct the Book of Mormon text comes from John Gilbert, the typesetter for the 1830 edition.)

In the following list, I include specific words that occur in King James quotations (including paraphrastic quotations). I list the spellings in ☉ and 𝒫, and group them according to the quotations they occur in. Non-extant cases in ☉ are marked with a long dash (—). If a word is set in bold, it means that there is some kind of error, usually a misspelling of the correct word. These examples generally show that the scribe's copywork is not being controlled for. Sometimes ☉ is extant and shows the correct spelling (such as *exalted* in 1 Nephi 21:11, but misspelled as *exhalted* in 𝒫). Yet in most cases ☉ will not be extant. Most importantly, there are a few correct spellings of unusual, rare words that Joseph Smith very likely needed to spell out to his scribe, namely, *ephah, tabret, seraphims, teil, cockatrice, reins, cherubims,* and *Raca;* these are each marked below with an arrow (→). Sometimes the first instance was misspelled, but the second was correct (*cherubims, reins*). Other times the first instance was correct (*cockatrice*), but a later one misspelled (*cocketrice*). In the last column, I will provide, when needed, a brief comment on the item listed. In some cases, a number will refer the reader to additional information on this comment at the end of the list.

PASSAGE	☉ SPELLING	𝒫 SPELLING	1830 SPELLING	COMMENT
1n1008	**unloos**	unloose	unloose	CW's misspelling in ☉
1n1755	**honnour**	honour	honor	KJB: *honour*
1n2005	**moulton**	**moulton**	molten	OC's misspelling for *molten*
1n2013	**spaned**	**spaned**	spanned	

PASSAGE	𝓞 SPELLING	𝓟 SPELLING	1830 SPELLING	COMMENT
1n2021	**claved** >+ clave	**cleaved**	**cleaved**	KJB: *clave*
1n2108	heritages	heritages	heritages	
1n2111	exalted	**exhalted**	exalted	OC's misspelling in 𝓟 for *exalted*[1]
2n0701	——	**divorsement**	divorcement	first time: spelled incorrectly
2n0706	——	smiter	smiter	KJB: *smiters*
2n0813	oppressor	oppressor	oppressor	
2n0813	oppressor	oppressor	oppressor	
2n0817	——	**rung**	**rung**	KJB: *wrung*
2n1202	——	**exhalted**	exalted	𝓞 probably read *exalted*[1]
2n1204	——	plow	plough	in *plowshares*
2n1204	——	**pruneing**	pruning	in *pruning hooks*
2n1206	——	soothsayers	soothsayers	
2n1211	——	**exhalted**	exalted	𝓞 probably read *exalted*[1]
2n1213	——	**ceders**	cedars	
2n1217	——	exalted	exalted	
2n1302	——	ancient	ancient	'an old person'
2n1303	——	honourable	honorable	KJB: *honourable*
2n1303	——	**atificer**	artificer	in 𝓞, /ɑr/ misheard as /ɑ/[2]
2n1305	——	ancient	ancient	
2n1305	——	honourable	honorable	KJB: *honourable*
2n1312	——	oppressors	oppressors	
2n1314	——	ancients	ancients	
2n1316	——	**minceing**	mincing	
2n1318	——	cauls	cauls	
2n1322	——	wimples	wimples	
2n1324	——	stomacher	stomacher	
2n1327	——	**cubet** >+ cubit	cubit	spelling in 𝓟 corrected later
2n1406	——	**covet**	covert	in 𝓞, /ɚ/ misheard as /ə/[2]
2n1506	——	briers	briers	KJB: *briers*[3]
2n1510	——	homer	**horner**	*homer* restored in the 1837 edition
→ 2n1510	——	ephah	ephah	
2n1512	——	viol	viol	cf. *viola, violin*
→ 2n1512	——	tabret	tabret	
2n1512	——	**opperation**	operation	
2n1513	——	honourable	honorable	KJB: *honourable*
2n1516	——	exalted	exalted	
→ 2n1602	——	Seraphims	seraphims	
2n1606	——	seraphims	seraphims	
→ 2n1613	——	teil	teil	in *teil tree*
2n1703	——	**fullers** field	fuller's field	

PASSAGE	𝒪 SPELLING	𝒫 SPELLING	1830 SPELLING	COMMENT
2n1704	——	**smokeing**	smoking	
2n1711	——	**hights**	heights	cf. *high*
2n1723	——	silverlings	silverlings	
2n1723	——	briars	briers	
2n1724	——	briars	briers	
2n1725	——	mattock	mattock	a tool for digging and grubbing
2n1725	——	briars	briers	
2n1806	——	**for as much**	forasmuch	KJB: *forasmuch*
2n1814	——	gin	gin	a trap for catching game
2n1821	——	bestead	bestead	cf. *instead*
2n1904	——	oppressor	oppressor	
2n1910	——	Sycamores	sycamores	
2n1910	——	**Ceders**	cedars	
2n1915	——	ancient	ancient	
2n1918	——	briars	briers	
2n2017	——	briars	briers	
2n2105	——	**reigns**	reins	
2n2108	——	asp	asp	
→ 2n2108	——	cockatrices	cockatrice's	1st time: spelled correctly[4]
2n2204	——	exalted	exalted	
2n2302	exalt	exalt	exalt	
2n2307	——	**feint**	faint	as an adjective
2n2310	——	**constelations**	constellations	
2n2314	——	**chaste** > chased	chased	homophone spelling corrected[5]
2n2314	——	roe	roe	cf. *doe*
2n2321	——	**Satyres**	satyrs	
2n2401	cleave	cleave	cleave	'to cling'
2n2402	**oppressers**	oppressors	oppressors	elsewhere in 𝒪: only *oppressor*[6]
2n2404	——	oppressor	oppressor	
2n2405	——	Sceptres	sceptres	KJB: *sceptre*[7]
2n2408	——	**Ceders**	cedars	
2n2408	——	feller	feller	'one who fells trees'
2n2411	——	viols	viols	cf. *viola, violin*
2n2413	——	exalt	exalt	
2n2414	——	heights	heights	
2n2420	——	**renouned**	renowned	
2n2423	——	**bitern**	bittern	
2n2423	**bosom**	**bosom**	besom	*besom* 'broom'[8]
2n2429	——	cockatrice	cockatrice	2nd time: also spelled correctly
2n2431	——	**desolved**	dissolved	

PASSAGE	𝒪 SPELLING	𝒫 SPELLING	1830 SPELLING	COMMENT
2n2725	——	**for as much**	forasmuch	KJB: *forasmuch*
2n2725	——	honour	honor	KJB: *honour*
→ 2n3011	——	reins	reins	2nd time: now spelled correctly[9]
2n3014	——	asp	asp	
2n3014	——	**cocketrices**	cockatrice's	3rd time: now misspelled
mh1320	——	honour	honor	KJB: *honour*
mh1402	——	**comliness**	comeliness	
aa1221	——	**Cherabims**	Cherubims	*Cherabs* initially in 𝒫
→ aa4202	Cherubims	Cherubims	Cherubims	2nd time: now spelled correctly[10]
aa4203	——	Cherubims	Cherubims	
3n1213	——	**saviour** > savour	savor	KJB: *savour*
→ 3n1222	——	Raca	Raca	
3n1231	——	divorcement	divorcement	2nd time: now spelled correctly
3n1244	——	**dispitefully**	despitefully	
3n1324	——	Mammon	mammon	"God and mammon" (KJB)
3n1325	——	meat	meat	'food'
3n1402	——	mete	mete	'to measure'
3n1615	——	savour > savor	savour	KJB: *savour*
3n2042	——	**reward** > rearward	rereward	KJB: *rereward*[11]
3n2043	——	exalted	exalted	
3n2043	——	**extalled**	extolled	MH's scribal slip in 𝒫
3n2044	——	visage	visage	'appearance' or 'face'
3n2116	——	soothsayers	soothsayers	
3n2129	——	rearward	rereward	paraphrase of Isaiah 52:12
3n2206	——	**rfused** >+ refused	refused	'rejected'
3n2211	——	**saphires**	sapphires	
3n2212	——	**Carbunckles**	carbuncles	
3n2216	——	**water** > waster	waster	'one who lays waste'
3n2402	——	**fullers** soap	fullers' soap	*fuller's soap* is incorrect
3n2403	——	purifier	**purifyer**	1830 edition set from 𝒪[12]
3n2405	——	swearers	swearers	
3n2405	——	hireling	hireling	
3n2410	——	meat	meat	'food'
3n2502	——	**Cedars** > Calves	calves	initial *cedars* in 𝒫[13]

1. In 1 Nephi 21:11, Oliver Cowdery wrote *exalted* in 𝒪, but copied it as *exhalted* in 𝒫. Later in 2 Nephi 12:2 and 12:11, he also wrote *exhalted* in 𝒫. In these two cases, however, 𝒪 is not extant, but it is probably the case that he correctly wrote the word as *exalted* in 𝒪, just as he did in 1 Nephi 21:11.

2. In two cases of spelling in 𝒫, Oliver Cowdery omitted the syllable-final *r,* namely, *atificer* for *artificer* in 2 Nephi 13:3 and *covet* for *covert* in 2 Nephi 14:6. 𝒪 is not extant for either of these, but it is possible they also read as in 𝒫, without the *r.* For each case in 𝒪, Oliver Cowdery may have misheard the syllable as lacking the *r,* especially since neither of these two words would have been familiar.

3. The first time *briers* occurs in the text (at 2 Nephi 15:6), Oliver Cowdery seems to have written this word as it is spelled in the King James Bible, as *briers* (𝒪 is not extant here, but in 𝒫 the spelling is *briers*). For five subsequent occurrences of the word, written shortly thereafter, Oliver spelled the word as *briars* (an alternative spelling for the word, one that Oliver apparently preferred). This suggests that the first instance of this word in 𝒪 could have been spelled out to him, but that subsequent ones were not. Thus we get *briars* in 𝒫 (again 𝒪 is not extant) in 2 Nephi 17:23, 24, 25; 19:18; and 20:17. The 1830 typesetter changed the spelling for each of these instances of *briars* to *briers.*

4. Oliver Cowdery spelled *cockatrice* correctly in 𝒫 the first two times (in 2 Nephi 21:8 and 24:29). But for the third time, he misspelled it, as *cocketrice,* in 2 Nephi 30:14). Here Joseph Smith may have initially spelled out the word to Oliver, but not later.

5. For 2 Nephi 23:14, Oliver Cowdery probably wrote in 𝒪 the homophone *chaste* in place of the correct *chased* ("and it shall be as the chased roe"). When he copied the text here into 𝒫, he initially wrote *chaste roe,* then emended *chaste* to the correct *chased.*

6. Oliver Cowdery usually wrote *oppressor* correctly, with *or* at the end, but in one instance in 𝒪 he wrote the word as *oppresser* (at 2 Nephi 24:2); for two other extant instances in 𝒪 (both in 2 Nephi 8:13), he correctly wrote the word. Similarly, all instances in 𝒫 of *oppressor* were spelled correctly.

7. Oliver Cowdery used the King James spelling for *sceptres* in 2 Nephi 24:5, not the more standard American spelling *scepters.* In this case, Joseph Smith may have spelled out the word to him when Oliver took down Joseph's dictation. This could be taken as evidence that the text Joseph was viewing in the instrument had the King James spellings. We see evidence elsewhere in the list of Oliver writing down King James spellings in 𝒫 (and in extant 𝒪): *honour* (2 Nephi 27:25 and Mosiah 13:20), *plow* (2 Nephi 12:4), *honourable* (2 Nephi 13:3, 5, and 15:13), *briers* (2 Nephi 15:6), *savour* (3 Nephi 12:13 and 3 Nephi 16:15 initially).

8. It appears that neither Joseph Smith nor Oliver Cowdery had any idea what a besom was. In fact, they seem to have simply replaced the word with the more familiar *bosom,* in both 𝒪 and 𝒫. The 1830 typesetter, John Gilbert, restored the correct *besom,* probably by referring to his own King James Bible.

9. It appears that for the second occurrence of *reins* 'kidneys', Joseph Smith spelled out the word for Oliver Cowdery, since it is spelled that way in 𝒫 (𝒪 is not extant). For the first instance, Oliver spelled the word in 𝒫 with its much more frequent homophone form, *reigns* (again, 𝒪 is not extant, but may have also read as *reigns*).

10. Like *reins,* the first instance of *cherubims* (at Alma 12:21) is misspelled in 𝒫, as *cherabims* (𝒪 is not extant). Later, for the second instance (at Alma 42:2), we get the correct *cherubims* in both 𝒪 and 𝒫,

which suggests that here Joseph Smith spelled out the word for Oliver Cowdery. The immediately fol-lowing instance (at Alma 42:2) is also spelled correctly in 𝒫 (this instance is not extant in 𝒪).

11. In 𝒫 at 3 Nephi 20:42, Martin Harris (the scribe here in 𝒫) initially wrote *rearward* as *reward,* which Oliver Cowdery later corrected to *rearward.* The 1830 compositor set the word with the King James spelling, *rereward.* For this part of the text, both 𝒫 and the 1830 edition were firsthand copies of 𝒪. It is quite possible that 𝒪 (which is not extant here) read *rereward,* with the King James spelling. This would explain why Martin misread *rereward* and wrote in 𝒫 the visually similar *reward.*

12. The 1830 typesetter set *purifier* in 3 Nephi 24:3 as *purifyer* while Martin Harris, the scribe in 𝒫, wrote it correctly. For this part of the text, the 1830 edition was set from 𝒪. Oliver Cowdery would have been the scribe here in 𝒪, and we have evidence that he sometimes spelled the *-ier* ending as *-yer* (thus *mightyer* and *happyer,* as discussed on pages 304–305 in *Spelling in the Manuscripts and Editions,* part 6 of vol-ume 3 of the critical text); thus he could have written *purifier* at 3 Nephi 24:3 in 𝒪 as *purifyer.*

13. Here in 𝒫, Martin Harris is the scribe for 3 Nephi 25:2 and he initially wrote *Cedars* instead of the cor-rect *Calves.* His spelling for *cedars* is correct, unlike Oliver Cowdery who spelled every instance of *cedars* in the list as *ceders* (2 Nephi 12:13, 19:10, and 24:8).

Like the King James words, we may also consider King James names, that is, biblical names that appear only in the King James quotations (or almost always). These are typically not extant in 𝒪, so we generally have to depend on the spellings in 𝒫 in order to determine whether Joseph Smith spelled out these names to his scribe when they first encountered the name in the dictation. The correct spelling in 𝒫 of the most difficult King James names argues that they were very likely spelled out originally in 𝒪, names such as *Aiath, Anathoth, Gallim, Gibeah, Gomorrah, Laish, Madmenah, Ophir, Pekah, Rezin, Uzziah,* and especially the two sentence-names *Shear-jashub* and *Maher-shalal-hash-baz*! All of these are spelled correctly in 𝒪. Sometimes a name is spelled correctly the first time it appears in 𝒫 (such as *Remaliah* in 2 Nephi 17:1) but then incorrectly afterwards (thus *Remeliah,* 4 times, from 2 Nephi 17:4 through 2 Nephi 18:6). This pattern suggests that Joseph spelled out *Remaliah* the first time it occurred in the dictation, but then left it to his scribe (in this case, Oliver Cowdery) to spell the subsequent occurrences of the name in 𝒪. Only a few familiar names may not have been spelled out in 𝒪, as suggested by their misspellings in 𝒫 (*Gallilee, Mannassah, Mideon,* and *Zebulon* in place of *Galilee, Manasseh, Midian,* and *Zebulun*); yet these could be simply copying errors from 𝒪 into 𝒫. On the other hand, the remaining misspellings in 𝒫 very likely occurred when Oliver Cowdery copied the text from 𝒪 into 𝒫 (*Jerebechiah, Mishmash, Ramath,* and *Razin* in place of *Jeberechiah, Michmash, Ramah,* and *Rezin*).

In the following list, the most familiar names are excluded: *Arabian, Assyria(n), Damascus, Elijah, Lucifer, Philistine, Samaria, Sarah,* and *Syria(n).* These are always spelled correctly in the manuscripts. As before, misspellings and other errors are set in bold, and a comment may have a note at the end providing additional explanation.

PASSAGE	𝒪 SPELLING	𝒫 SPELLING	1830 SPELLING	COMMENT
1n2014	Chaldeans	Chaldeans	Chaldeans	
1n2020	Chaldeans	Chaldeans	Chaldeans	
1n2112	Sinim	Sinim	Sinim	

PASSAGE	𝒪 SPELLING	𝒫 SPELLING	1830 SPELLING	COMMENT
2n0809	Rahab	Rahab	Rahab	
2n1201	——	**Amos** > Amoz	Amoz	𝒪 probably read *Amoz*[1]
2n1213	——	Lebanon	Lebanon	
2n1213	——	Bashan	Bashan	
2n1216	——	Tarshish	Tarshish	
2n1309	——	Sodom	Sodom	
2n1601	——	Uzziah	Uzziah	
2n1701	——	Ahaz	Ahaz	
2n1701	——	Jotham	Jotham	
2n1701	——	Uzziah	Uzziah	
2n1701	——	Rezin	Rezin	
2n1701	——	Pekah	Pekah	
2n1701	——	Remaliah	Remaliah	the 1st spelling in 𝒫 is correct
2n1702	——	Ephraim	Ephraim	
2n1703	——	Ahaz	Ahaz	
2n1703	——	Shear Jashub	Shearjashub	hyphens in 𝒫 added later[2]
2n1704	——	Rezin	Rezin	
2n1704	——	**Remeliah**	Remaliah	
2n1705	——	Ephraim	Ephraim	
2n1705	——	**Remeliah**	Remaliah	
2n1706	——	Tabeal	Tabeal	
2n1708	——	Rezin	Rezin	
2n1708	——	Ephraim	Ephraim	
2n1709	——	Ephraim	Ephraim	
2n1709	——	**Remeliahs**	Remaliah's	
2n1710	——	Ahaz	Ahaz	
2n1712	——	Ahaz	Ahaz	
2n1714	——	Immanuel	Immanuel	
2n1717	——	Ephraim	Ephraim	
2n1801	——	Maher shalal hash baz	Maher-shalal-hash-baz	hyphens in 𝒫 added later[2]
2n1802	——	Uriah	Uriah	
2n1802	——	Zechariah	Zechariah	
2n1802	——	**Jerebechiah**	Jeberechiah	metathesis in 𝒫[3]
2n1803	——	Mahershalal hash baz	Maher-shalal-hash-baz	hyphens in 𝒫 added later[2]
2n1806	——	Shiloah	Shiloah	
2n1806	——	**Razin**	Rezin	cf. earlier *razor*[4]
2n1806	——	**Remeliahs**	Remaliah's	
2n1808	——	Immanuel	Immanuel	
2n1901	——	**Zebulon**	Zebulun	pronounced as *Zebulon*[5]
2n1901	——	Naphtali	Naphtali	
2n1901	——	**Gallilee**	Galilee	

PASSAGE	𝒪 SPELLING	𝒫 SPELLING	1830 SPELLING	COMMENT
2n1909	——	Ephraim	Ephraim	
2n1911	——	Rezin	Rezin	
2n1921	——	**Mannassah**	Manasseh	*Manassah* in Alma 10:3[6]
2n1921	——	Ephraim	Ephraim	
2n1921	——	Ephraim	Ephraim	
2n1921	——	**Mannassah**	Manasseh	
2n2009	——	Calno	Calno	
2n2009	——	Carchemish	Carchemish	
2n2009	——	Hamath	Hamath	
2n2009	——	Arpad	Arpad	
2n2026	——	**Mideon**	Midian	cf. the name *Gideon*
2n2026	——	Oreb	Oreb	
2n2028	——	Aiath	Aiath	
2n2028	——	Migron	Migron	
2n2028	——	**Mishmash**	Michmash	cf. the word *mishmash*
2n2029	——	Geba	Geba	
2n2029	——	**Ramath**	**Ramath**	original reading *Ramah*[7]
2n2029	——	Gibeah	Gibeah	
2n2029	——	Saul	Saul	
2n2030	——	Gallim	Gallim	
2n2030	——	Laish	Laish	
2n2030	——	Anathoth	Anathoth	
2n2031	——	Madmenah	Madmenah	
2n2031	——	Gebim	Gebim	
2n2032	——	Nob	Nob	
2n2034	——	Lebanon	Lebanon	
2n2101	——	**Jeſsee** >% Jeſse	Jesse	
2n2110	——	Jeſse	Jesse	
2n2111	——	Pathros	Pathros	
2n2111	——	Cush	Cush	
2n2111	——	Elam	Elam	
2n2111	——	Shinar	Shinar	
2n2111	——	Hamath	Hamath	
2n2113	——	Ephraim	Ephraim	
2n2113	——	Ephraim	Ephraim	
2n2113	——	Ephraim	Ephraim	
2n2114	——	Edom	Edom	
2n2114	——	Moab	Moab	
2n2114	——	Ammon	Ammon	
2n2301	Amoz	**Amos** > Amoz	Amoz	
2n2312	——	Ophir	Ophir	

PASSAGE	𝓞 SPELLING	𝓟 SPELLING	1830 SPELLING	COMMENT
2n2317	——	Medes	Medes	
2n2319	——	Chaldees	Chaldees'	
2n2319	——	Sodom	Sodom	
2n2319	——	Gomorrah	Gomorrah	
2n2408	——	Lebanon	Lebanon	
2n2428	——	Ahaz	Ahaz	
2n2429	——	Palestina	Palestina	
2n2431	——	Palestina	Palestina	
2n2728	——	Lebanon	Lebanon	

1. In 2 Nephi 23:1, 𝓞 is extant and reads *Amoz.* For both 2 Nephi 12:1 and 23:1, Oliver Cowdery initially wrote *Amos* in 𝓟 instead of *Amoz,* but he then immediately caught his error and corrected it.

2. In 𝓞, the two sentence-names were most likely originally written with spaces, as *Shear Jashub* and *Maher shalal hash baz.* Later (in 𝓟 at least), with either heavier or lighter ink flow, Oliver Cowdery inserted hyphens between the word forms in these two names, thus *Shear-Jashub* and *Maher-shalal-hash-baz.*

3. Oliver Cowdery very likely wrote *Jeberechiah* correctly in 𝓞; but when he copied this name from 𝓞 into 𝓟, he seems to have switched the order of the *b* and the *r.* His spelling in 𝓟 is otherwise identical to the correct spelling, which argues that Joseph Smith originally spelled out this name to him during the dictation. The preceding name in the list, *Zechariah,* was correctly copied from 𝓞 into 𝓟, and Joseph undoubtedly spelled out that name as well when he dictated the text to Oliver.

4. Except for this instance of *Razin* in 2 Nephi 18:6, all instances of *Rezin* are spelled correctly in 𝓟 (in 2 Nephi 17:1, 4, 8; and 19:11). This one instance was preceded by the word *razor* in 2 Nephi 17:20, and that spelling seems to have influenced Oliver Cowdery to write the following instance of *Rezin* as *Razin.*

5. *Zebulon* is an alternative spelling for *Zebulun.* Note especially the King James spelling *Zebulonite* in Judges 12:11–12. Even so, *Zebulon* is probably a misspelling here in 𝓟. Many speakers of English pronounce the name as *Zebulon* rather than *Zebulun.*

6. The biblical Manasseh is also referred to once within the Book of Mormon text proper (rather than within a King James quotation), in a genealogical list in Alma 10:3: "and Aminadi was a descendant of Nephi who was the son of Lehi . . . who was a descendant of **Manasseh** who was the son of Joseph".

7. *Ramath* in 2 Nephi 20:29 is very likely an error for *Ramah.* This misreading probably occurred when Oliver Cowdery copied the text from 𝓞 into 𝓟, although there is a possibility that Joseph Smith himself dictated *Ramath* instead of the correct *Ramah.* Preceding this name are two names ending in *-ath,* namely *Aiath* in verse 28 and the very similar *Hamath* in verse 9. This error is the only misreading or misspelling of a King James name that the 1830 typesetter, John Gilbert, missed, undoubtedly because he too was primed to think nothing was wrong with *Ramath,* so he didn't check his King James Bible for this error. For further discussion, see under this passage in *Analysis of Textual Variants.*

Finally, we consider Oliver Cowdery's shifts in the spelling of English words in the original manuscript. The question we wish to consider is whether Joseph Smith could have been responsible for Oliver learning how to spell words of English, by indicating the correct spelling from what he was viewing with his instrument, presuming of course that the instrument had standard English spellings! In any event, we discover that this possibility is highly unlikely, mainly because Oliver often decides to replace a correct spelling with an incorrect one.

Spelling shifts in the original manuscript

In this section, I list all the examples of Oliver Cowdery's spelling shifts in the original manuscript (𝒪). For the most part, these shifts do not represent him learning how to spell these words, mainly because he shifts more often than not from a correct spelling to an incorrect one: there are 17 shifts indicated here, and 9 of them have him taking up an incorrect spelling. I mark with a large ✕ these cases where Oliver takes up an incorrect spelling. Normally these shifts indicate that he does not know the correct spelling, even when he just happens to switch to a correct spelling. (Note that the order for 𝒪 puts the large plates of Nephi before the small plates of Nephi, which means that instances from 1 Nephi through Enos come last in the ordering.)

Each of the following cases is more fully described in part 6 of volume 3, *Spelling in the Manuscripts and the Editions* (SPL). In this section, I repeat from SPL the spelling sequencing in the extant portions of 𝒪, but I put the incorrect or variant spelling in bold. I also indicate where in the printer's manuscript (𝒫) Oliver Cowdery appears to have learned the correct spelling. On pages 39–41 of SPL, I list 37 words that he clearly learned to spell as he copied the text from 𝒪 into 𝒫. The vast majority of his spelling shifts in 𝒫 were the result of his proofing the 1830 typeset sheets against his copytext (which was 𝒫, for the most part).

(1) For the word *body* (and its plural *bodies*), Oliver first uses the incorrect spelling with a double *d,* then switches for a brief interval in Alma where he has the correct spelling, but then in Helaman switches back to the double-*d* spelling. In 𝒫, he has the correct spelling beginning with his second instance (in 1 Nephi 15).

▫ SPL, 145–146   *boddy/boddies > body/bodies*   𝒪   Alma 36 | Alma 40
                     body/bodies > boddy/boddies   ✕   𝒪   Alma 56 | Helaman 1

     boddy/boddies > body/bodies (from 7–1 to 0–15, then back to 5–1)

𝒪	Alma 11	**dd dd dd**
	Alma 26, 28	**dd dd**
	Alma 34, 36	d **dd dd**
		〰〰〰
	Alma 40	d d d d d d d
	Alma 41–56	d d d d d d d d
		〰〰〰
	Helaman 1, 3	**dd dd**
	Ether 14	d

1 Nephi 4, 19	**dd dd**	
2 Nephi 1	**dd**	

(2) The word *record(s)* is misspelled as *reckord(s)* beginning in Alma 44 and continuing through 1 Nephi 4. Then in 1 Nephi 19 Oliver switches back to the correct spelling. Finally, with only one exceptional case of *reckords* in 𝒫 (at Alma 45), he uses the *c* spelling in 𝒫, from the title page on.

□ SPL, 152−154   *record(s) > reckord(s)*   ×   Ꝺ   Alma 37 | Alma 44

                      reckord(s) > record(s)   Ꝺ   1 Nephi 4 | 1 Nephi 19

      record(s) > reckord(s) > record(s)   (from 4−0 to 0−10 to 5−1)

Ꝺ Alma 37	c	c	c	c

                         ‿‿‿‿‿‿

Alma 44−47	**ck**	**ck**	**ck**	**ck**
Helaman 1−3	**ck**	**ck**	**ck**	
1 Nephi 3−4	**ck**	**ck**	**ck**	

                         ‿‿‿‿‿‿

1 Nephi 19	c	c	c	c
2 Nephi 5	**ck**			
Jacob 7	c			

(3) In Alma 24, we see Oliver's first instance in extant Ꝺ of his odd spelling *cept* for *kept*. In this case, with heavier ink flow, he corrects that spelling to the standard *kept*. This same correction of *cept* to *kept* returns for two instances of the word in Ether 8−9; then in the small plates of Nephi, 4 out of 6 instances of *kept* are misspelled as *cept* and without correction. But in 𝒫, he almost always uses *kept* (65 out of 67 times).

□ SPL, 155−156   *kept > cept*   ×   Ꝺ   Helaman 3 | Ether 8

      kept > cept   (from 21−1 to 4−7)

Ꝺ Alma 24	**c** >+ k								
Alma 36−37	k	k	k	k	k	k	k	k	
Alma 44−63	k	k	k	k	k	k	k	k	k
Helaman 1, 3	k	k	k						

                         ‿‿‿‿‿‿

Ether 8, 9	**c** >+ k		**c** >+ k	
1 Nephi 19	c	c		
2 Nephi 1, 5	k	c	c	c
Jacob 7	k			

(4) The base form *need* is almost always misspelled for extant instances in Ꝺ, at least initially. We first have the spelling *kneed* for 4 out of 5 cases in Alma 32−46, but this is usually corrected to *need*. From Alma 56 into 1 Nephi 17, *(k)need* is followed by *knead*, and finally, from 1 Nephi 18 through 2 Nephi 25, we generally get *nead* (7 times) rather than the standard *need* (only 2 times). In 𝒫, every instance is correctly spelled as *need*, 80 times, from 1 Nephi 3 on.

□ SPL, 275–277   *kneed/need > knead*   ✕   Ơ   Alma 46 | Alma 56
                 knead > nead/need   ✕   Ơ   1 Nephi 17 | 1 Nephi 18

kneed/need (5) > *knead* (3) > *nead/need* (9)

Ơ	Alma 32	kneeds >+ needs	**k** > ∅	ee	
	Alma 32	needs	∅	ee	
	Alma 34	kneedy > needy	**k** > ∅	ee	
	Alma 34	kneed > need	**k** > ∅	ee	
	Alma 46	kneeds	**k**	ee	
		〰〰〰〰〰			
	Alma 56	knead	**k**	**ea**	
	Alma 60	k[ ]	**k**	—	[the vowel was probably *ea*]
	1 Nephi 17	kneads	**k**	**ea**	
		〰〰〰〰〰			
	1 Nephi 18	nead	∅	**ea**	
	1 Nephi 19	needs	∅	ee	
	1 Nephi 22	nead	∅	**ea**	
	1 Nephi 22	neads	∅	**ea**	
	1 Nephi 22	nead	∅	**ea**	
	1 Nephi 22	nead	∅	**ea**	
	1 Nephi 22	nead	∅	**ea**	
	2 Nephi 1	neads	∅	**ea**	
	2 Nephi 25	need	∅	ee	

(5) In the early 1800s, both *saith* and *sayeth* were acceptable variant spellings. In Ơ, we have examples of Oliver switching between these two possibilities. In most cases the spelling in Ƥ follows the spelling in Ơ, which means that Oliver never adopted either of the two spellings as his main spelling in Ƥ.

□ SPL, 331–336   *saith > sayeth*   Ơ   Alma 11 | Alma 26
                 sayeth > saith   Ơ   Alma 55 | 3 Nephi 19

saith > sayeth > saith (from 8–0 to 3–33, then 28–6)

Ơ	Alma 11	ai	ai	ai	ai	ai	ai	ai	ai	
		〰〰〰								
	Alma 26–27	**aye**	**aye**	**aye**	**aye**	**aye**	ai	**aye**	**aye**	
	Alma 30	**aye**	**aye**	ai	**aye**	**aye**	**aye**	**aye**		
	Alma 32–33	**aye**	**aye**	**aye**	**aye**	**aye**	**aye**	**aye**		
	Alma 37	**aye**	**aye**							
	Alma 44–46	**aye**	**aye**	**aye**	**aye**	**aye**	ai	**aye**	**aye**	**aye**
	Alma 55	**aye**	**aye**	**aye**						
		〰〰〰								
	3 Nephi 19–20	ai	ai							
	1 Nephi 16–17	ai	ai	**aye**	**aye**	**aye**	**aye**	ai		

1 Nephi 19	ai	ai	ai	ai	ai	ai	ai		
1 Nephi 20–21	ai	ai	ai	ai	ai	ai	ai	ai	ai
1 Nephi 22	**aye**	ai							
2 Nephi 1, 7	ai	ai	ai						
2 Nephi 24	ai	ai	ai						
Jacob 7	**aye**								

(6) In Alma 30–43, Oliver generally spells the past-tense form *led* correctly, but beginning in Alma 46 he adopts the incorrect *lead*. He continues in 𝒫 with *lead* (with only a couple instances of the correct *led*) until he gets to Alma 34, when he basically switches back to the correct spelling, *led* (with 31 instances of *led* and 5 of *lead*).

▫ SPL, 337–339   *led > lead*   ✕ 𝒪   Alma 43 | Alma 46

    led > lead > led (from 7–2 to 0–33)

𝒪 Alma 30–43	e	e	e	**ea** > e	e	**ea**	e	e					
Alma 46–63	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**					
Helaman 1	**ea**												
Ether 12	**ea**												
1 Nephi 2	**ea**	**ea**											
1 Nephi 16–17	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**
1 Nephi 19–22	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**							
2 Nephi 1	**ea**	**ea**											

(7) From Alma 26 through Helaman 2, Oliver nearly always spells *lest* correctly (with only two instances of the misspelling *least*). But then in the small plates of Nephi, he switches to *least* and allows for no instances of the correct *lest*. The misspelling *least* continues for much of the first part of 𝒫 until he reaches 2 Nephi 16, where he switches to the correct *lest* and maintains that spelling for the rest of his copywork (with only one instance of *least*).

▫ SPL, 339–340   *lest > least*   ✕ 𝒪   Helaman 2 | 1 Nephi 17

    lest > least (from 16–2 to 0–10)

𝒪 Alma 26–37	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
Alma 42–51	e	e	e	**ea**	e	e	
Alma 56–58	e	e	e	**ea**			
Helaman 2	e						
1 Nephi 17–20	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	
2 Nephi 1, 5	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**	**ea**			

(8) Oliver switches from *fought* to *faught* at Alma 52 and then back to *fought* at Alma 62 for the remaining extant portions of ꝺ and for the beginning of ꝑ. And in ꝑ as well, there is a section where he reverts to *faught,* in Mosiah 9–20, but then returns to the correct *fought* (26 times), all the way to the end of ꝑ.

☐ SPL, 372–373   *fought > faught*   ✕ ꝺ   Alma 49 | Alma 52
                  faught > fought   ꝺ   Alma 60 | Alma 62

  fought > faught > fought (from 3–0 to 0–7 to 3–0)

ꝺ	Alma 43	ou				
	Alma 49	ou	ou			
		︶︶︶︶︶				
	Alma 52, 54	**au**	**au**			
	Alma 56, 60	**au**	**au**	**au**	**au**	**au**
		︶︶︶︶︶				
	Alma 62	ou				
	Ether 13–15	ou	ou			

(9) For Alma 31–47, Oliver normally spells the first syllable of *dissent(er)* and *dissension(s)* as *des-*, but then from Alma 51 on he generally uses the correct spelling, but with some variation. The same general use of the correct spelling continues in ꝑ; there Oliver usually uses the initial *diss-* in ꝑ (45 times), but there are 11 exceptions (which means that he never fully learned how to spell these words while working on the Book of Mormon manuscripts).

☐ SPL, 413–414   *desent(er)/desension(s) > dissent(er)/dissension(s)*   ꝺ   Alma 47 | Alma 51

  desent, desenter, desension > dissent, dissenter, dissension (from 9–1 to 3–8)

ꝺ	Alma 31, 34	**es**		**es**					
	Alma 43–47	**es**	**es**	**es**	**es**	**es**	iss	**ess**	**es**
		︶︶︶︶︶							
	Alma 51–53	iss	iss	iss	**ess**	**es**			
	Alma 62	iss							
	Helaman 1–3	**es**	iss	iss	iss	iss			

(10) Oliver never spells *angry* correctly in ꝺ. He starts out with the three-syllable *angary* and switches to the three-syllable *angery* in Ether 9. He continues with *angery* in ꝑ until he gets to Mosiah 13, and there he finally learns the correct two-syllable spelling, *angry* (with 48 instances and only one exceptional *angery*).

☐ SPL, 506–507   *angary > angery*   ✕ ꝺ   Helaman 1 | Ether 9

  angary > angery (from 14–1 to 1–5)

ꝺ	Alma 19, 27	**a**	**a**		
	Alma 33, 35	e > **a**	**a**	**a**	
	Alma 44–49	**a**	**a**	**a**	**a**

Alma 50–59	**a**	**a**	**a**	**a**
Helaman 1	**a**			

~~~~~~~~~~~~

Ether 9	e			
1 Nephi 16–18	e	e	e	**a**
2 Nephi 1	e			

(11) Oliver seems to have taken a little longer to learn the correct spelling *anger* (in 1 Nephi 20) than it took him to switch from *angary* to *angery* (in Ether 9). Once he learned *anger* in 𝒪, he maintained it in 𝒫 (84 times, with only two cases of *angar,* one of which he corrected to *anger*).

▫ SPL, 511–512   *angar > anger*   𝒪   1 Nephi 16 | 1 Nephi 20

   angar > anger (from 14–0 to 0–3)

𝒪	Alma 24–27	**ar**	**ar**	**ar**	**ar**
	Alma 35	**ar**	**ar**		
	Alma 43, 48	**ar**	**ar**	**ar**	**ar**
	Alma 51	**ar**			
	Helaman 1	**ar**			
	1 Nephi 16	**ar**	**ar**		

   ~~~~~~~~~~~~

1 Nephi 20	er		
2 Nephi 1, 23	er	er	

(12) From Alma 29 through Ether 12, Oliver used the phonetic spelling *exort* in 𝒪, but then in 1 Nephi 16 of 𝒪 he switched to the highly exceptional but correct spelling *exhort*. It seems that this is one case where he actually learned the correct spelling while taking down Joseph Smith's dictation. In 𝒫, he continued using the correct spelling *exhort* and without exception (27 times).

▫ SPL, 537   *exort > exhort*   𝒪   Ether 12 | 1 Nephi 16

   exort > exhort (from 5–0 to 0–2)

𝒪	Alma 29	x		
	Alma 34	x	x	x
	Ether 12	x		

   ~~~~~~~~~~~~

1 Nephi 16–17	xh	xh