

“A theory! A theory! We have already got a theory, and there cannot be any more theories!”

Royal Skousen, editor of the Book of Mormon Critical Text Project (1988-present)
14 March 2015

References <to retrieve online go to <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com>>

Evidence can make us change our mind:

Skousen lecture at Book of Mormon Archeological Forum, 19 October 2013

“Hypotheses and Evidences in Book of Mormon Research”

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6mGh1cnvcA>>

6 bona fide witnesses of the translation process:

from spring 1828 through June 1829

2 handwritten accounts:

Joseph Knight Senior, Elizabeth Ann Whitmer Cowdery

4 interviews published within months:

David Whitmer, Emma Smith, Martin Harris, Michael Morse

For the evidence from six witnesses of the translation procedure:

See Royal Skousen’s vita (see pages 43-45):

http://linguistics.byu.edu/media/documents/cv/Skousen_CV_1.pdf

Also see the Church’s recent statement online for additional supporting statements:

<<https://www.lds.org/topics/book-of-mormon-translation?lang=eng>>

For external support from the manuscripts for the translation procedure:

Royal Skousen, “Translating the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript”,

Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins, edited by Noel B. Reynolds, 61-93. Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies: Provo, Utah, 1997.

For how the biblical quotations were translated:

Royal Skousen, “Textual Variants in the Isaiah Quotations in the Book of Mormon”, *Isaiah*

in the Book of Mormon, edited by Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch, 369-390. Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies: Provo, Utah, 1998.

For the online version of *Analysis of Textual Variants* (ATV):

<<http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/books/volume-4-of-the-critical-text-of-the-book-of-mormon-analysis-of-textual-variants-of-the-book-of-mormon/>>

For a 19th century instance of “the pleading bar”, in a legal context:

Julia A. Wood, *My Northern Travels: The Results of Faith and Prayer* (Ashland, Ohio: Brethren Publishing House, 1887), page 75, referring to a courtroom setting in Lewiston, Pennsylvania

Attended the Teachers' Institute, held three days in the court-house at Lewiston. The floor of that building was constructed upon the inclined plane order. No obstructed views. Its ventilation, most scientifically planned, was apparently easily operated by an occasional pull of a cord hanging against the wall, adjacent to **the pleading bar**.

The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text

the original text to the extent it can be determined, based on the findings in ATV conveniently available at amazon.com:

<http://www.amazon.com/Book-Mormon-Earliest-TextText/dp/0300142188/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1425856685&sr=8-1&keywords=royal+skousen+book+of+mormon>

How the Yale text was constructed from the computerized collation:

See Skousen, "The Original Text of the Book of Mormon and its Publication by Yale University Press", *The Interpreter*, 2013

<<http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/the-original-text-of-the-book-of-mormon-and-its-publication-by-yale-university-press/>>

Three lectures by Royal Skousen at BYU, February and March 2013 after 25 years of the Book of Mormon critical text project

(1) The Original and Printer's Manuscripts of the Book of Mormon, 26 February 2013

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bW65LrdubZ0>>

(2) The Printed Editions of the Book of Mormon, 5 March 2013

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zj2KrqPCpOY>>

(3) The Nature of the Original Text, 12 March 2013

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRgAt4PHo_8>

Three articles by Stan Carmack on the grammar and syntax in the Book of Mormon

(1) on the non-standard grammar:

<<http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/a-look-at-some-nonstandard-book-of-mormon-grammar/>>

(2) on *command* structure:

<<http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/what-command-syntax-tells-us-about-book-of-mormon-authorship/>>

(3) on affirmative *did*:

<<http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/carmack-v14-2015-pp119-186-PDF.pdf>>

Three important online databases by subscription only (BYU's Harold B. Lee Library has them)
Oxford English Dictionary (OED)
Literature Online (LION)
Early English Books Online (EEBO)

Here's an example of a difficult case:
the use of *ites* as an isolated morpheme is late, although the suffix is very old

4 Nephi 1:17
there were no robbers nor no murderers
neither were there **Lamanites** nor no manner of **ites**
but they were in one
the children of Christ and heirs to the kingdom of God

OED examples of *ite(s)*, created in the context of actual *-ite* words!

1852, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*
The right honourable gentleman has shown that he is neither a **Derby-ite** nor a **Russell-ite**. Then what *ite* are you?

What words do Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery know?
use of *wist* 'know(eth)' or 'knew', but not *wit* 'to know' and *wot* 'knew'

Helaman 9:30: "and he shall stand with fear and **wist** not what to say" [know]
3 Nephi 11:8: "and they durst not open their mouths even one to another and **wist** not what it meant" [knew]

familiar King James usage with *wist*:

Exodus 16:15: "it *is* manna / for they **wist** not what it *was*"
Mark 9:6: "for he **wist** not what to say"
Luke 2:49: "**wist** ye not that I must be about my Father's business"
Acts 23:5: "I **wist** not brethren that he was the high priest"

wit 'to know' and *wot* 'knew' also occur biblically but less familiarly:

Genesis 24:21: "to **wit** whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not"
Exodus 2:4: "and his sister stood afar off / to **wit** what would be done to him"
2 Corinthians 8:1: "we do you to **wit** of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia"
Genesis 39:8: "my master **wotteth** not what *is* with me in the house"
Exodus 32:1: "*as for* this Moses ... we **wot** not what *is* become of him"

The vocabulary debate between Tyndale and More and its resolution in the Book of Mormon:
Skousen, "Tyndale versus More in the Book of Mormon", *The Interpreter*, 2015

<<http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/tyndale-versus-more-in-the-book-of-mormon/>>

Nicholas Harpsfield's *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More, Knight* (1550s)
use of *ween* 'to suppose' and *trow* 'to believe'

Alexander Campbell's 1831 review of the Book of Mormon

This prophet Smith, through his stone spectacles, wrote on the plates of Nephi, in his book of Mormon, every error and almost every truth discussed in New York for the last ten years. He decides all the great controversies – infant baptism, ordination, the trinity, regeneration, repentance, justification, the fall of man, the atonement, **transubstantiation**, fasting, **penance**, church government, religious experience, the call to the ministry, the general resurrection, eternal punishment, who may baptize, and even the question of **freemasonry**, republican government, and the rights of man. All these topics are repeatedly alluded to.

An introductory history of the Reformation:

Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (Penguin: New York, 2003)

The eucharist according to Henrich Bullinger (Zwingli's successor), MacCulloch, pages 177-178:

he did indeed regard the taking of bread and wine as a memorial drama,
but affirmed that in parallel to these physical actions with physical objects,
God reaches out to meet his people spiritually and anew.

Baptism, closely connected with the eucharist:

3 Nephi 18:1-11 (especially verse 11)

and this shall ye always do unto those who repent and are baptized in my name
and ye shall do it in remembrance of my blood which I have shed for you
that ye may witness unto the Father that ye do always remember me
and if ye do always remember me / ye shall have my Spirit to be with you

The separation of church and state according to Oecolampadius in Basel (1520s) and Calvin in Geneva (1540s), MacCulloch, page 240:

One constitutional issue ... remained a crucial litmus test in Reformed Churches of where power lay: who possessed the right to excommunicate Church members – the Church's own disciplinary authorities ... or the civil authorities? Calvin obstinately refused to acknowledge that the *Ordinances* delivered the power of excommunication into civic hands.

For a summarizing history of the critical text project:

Skousen, "Restoring the Original Text of the Book of Mormon", *The Interpreter*, 2015

<<http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/restoring-the-original-text-of-the-book-of-mormon/>>

For an article giving the types of changes in the Book of Mormon text and their numbers:

Skousen, "Changes in the Book of Mormon", *The Interpreter*, 2014

<http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/changes-in-the-book-of-mormon/>