Returning to the Sources: Integrating Textual Criticism in the Study of Early Mormon Texts and History

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As historians engage with literary texts, they should ask a few important questions. What is the text that I am using in my research? What is the manuscript tradition from which the manuscript or text evolved? How does that evolution inform the specific period I am studying? Did it evolve orally or in written form? And are there variations that have been handed down through time and through tradition that may provide greater context or clarity to my research? Implicit in these questions is an interest in authenticity and accuracy. As literary texts evolve and are shared over time, there are multiple factors that may lead a text away from its earliest forms, such as when a narrative is orally transmitted over multiple generations and then recorded in writing or when a manuscript is repeatedly copied by hand and errors are introduced into the text. The attempt to ascertain the earliest forms of a text is known as textual criticism. This branch of scholarship started in earnest at the beginning of the European Renaissance from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, and led to the European Enlightenment of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[1] In this article I will argue that scholars of Mormon history have not yet taken advantage of the historical insights that textual

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† This is where you can put the author's attributions.

[1] The scholars of the early Renaissance were called "humanists," and their work was the beginning of the modern study of the humanities. See Jerry H. Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ: New Testament Scholarship in the Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 7.

criticism has to offer, as a means of persuading the academic community to embrace this important methodology.

However, in order to portray the importance of textual criticism in the humanities I will first briefly discuss the history of textual criticism. Humanism of the Renaissance is best exemplified in the work of Desiderius Erasmus and his contemporaries, particularly Erasmus's first attempts at creating a critical text of the New Testament.[2] The work performed by some of his contemporaries who edited the Complutensian Polyglot played a major role shaping the academic study of ancient literature.[3] The Polyglot included the full text of the Christian Bible in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Aramaic, but unlike in Erasmus's work the Polyglot editors were not as open to seeing error in the transmission history of the Bible.[4] This had a particular bearing on the study of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament once European scholars approached the Bible using the same methods they had with classical literature. The Christian Bible had to be understood as a collection of books that had been shaped by human production and as a result was susceptible to errors, akin to any other text produced in antiquity. Scribes were sometimes careless when they made a new copy of a manuscript. Sometimes they revised a text to fit their theological perspective. They also might write the wrong word because they misheard the dictation of the manuscript.[5]

Whatever the exact reasons for error in the textual history, humanist scholars of the Renaissance continued adding to their records all of the textual variants they could find between the manuscripts of the Bible available to them. Rather than being like

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[2] Desiderius Erasmus, *Novum Instrumentum omne* (Basel: Johann Froben, 1516). This work is better known by the name Erasmus gave it in the second edition, *Novum Testamentum*, which it kept in all editions after the second.

[3] See Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ*, 70–111.

[4] Nicholas Hardy, *Criticism and Confession: The Bible in the Seventeenth Century Republic of Letters* (Oxford–Warburg Studies; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 250.

[5] See Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (Updated and with a New Afterword; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 33; and Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ*, 38–39. Sometimes a reader would dictate to a group of scribes in a room and scribal errors were introduced into manuscript copies because scribes heard the wrong word. This is an error that was made in creating some of Mormonism's sacred texts as well.

their scholastic predecessors, humanist scholars focused on establishing the history of the text and explaining the historical and theological difficulties they found in its textual history. That is, rather than allowing theological questions to drive their research.[6] These scholars cared deeply about philology, the study of how words and language change over time and how the earliest audiences understood the lexemes. Establishing the best readings among the textual variants and understanding what the words would have meant in their earliest contexts were essential to ensuring accurate translations of the text into Latin.

Initially, the purpose of the textual criticism of the New Testament was meant to focus on revising and editing the Latin Vulgate, the official Bible of the Catholic Church since Jerome's translation at the end of the fourth century CE. While the Complutensian Polyglot's Latin text did not vary from the Vulgate, Erasmus's Greek New Testament did, and this discrepancy drew heavy criticism to the first two editions of his text.[7] This careful examination of texts became the legacy of the humanists and influenced the works of Enlightenment scholars like Baruch Spinoza,[8] Thomas Hobbes,[9] and Isaac La Peyrère of the seventeenth century were influenced by this approach,[10] and their work became a motivation for future scholars to pursue the same. As the approach was embraced more broadly, scholars expanded their interests to examining the author's intent and historical setting. Following in step with the humanists, scholars

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[6] Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ*, 8.

[7] Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ*, 152.

[8] Benedictus de Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (Hamburg: Henricum Künrath, 1670); and Benedict de Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, ed. Jonathan Israel (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[9] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, or Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill* (London: Andrew Crooke, 1651); and Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Revised Student Edition, ed. Richard Tuck; Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[10] Isaac La Peyrère, *Præ-Adamitæ sive Exercitatio super Versibus duodecimo, decimotertio, & decimoquarto, capitis quinit Epistolæ D. Pauli ad Romanos* (Amsterdam: Louis & Daniel Elzevier, 1655).

began to debate the text's authority based on their understanding of how the text had changed over time.[11]

The scholarship of the humanists and early biblical critics, and the centuries of foundational work establishing the differences between Biblical manuscripts culminated to create the foundation of the field of biblical studies.[12] The same goes for the study of the Classics. As mentioned above, the same methods used by humanists to critique the Bible were first pioneered in the field of Classical Studies and, for the most part, by the same scholars.

Textual criticism has been a significant part of the humanities for centuries. It is tied to the focus in the fields of history and literary studies to the creation of documentary editions of important papers projects. Documentary editing has directed several major projects in early American history such as the *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, published by Princeton University Press (now in its forty-third volume), the *Papers of Alexander Hamilton* by Columbia University Press (completed at twenty-seven volumes), and the *Joseph Smith Papers Project* by the Church Historian's Press (now in its eighteenth volume). Textual criticism incorporates both the data culled together from documentary editing (i.e. the transcriptions of documents that you find in these papers series) and the question of how the same text has changed in shape, form, structure, or wording as manuscripts have been shared and recreated or copied overtime. This tends to include books of scripture, important novels or stories, and historical narratives, rather than more mundane documents like ledgers, diaries, or minute books.[13]

To summarize I will briefly describe how documentary editing leads to textual criticism, and then how these are used in source and historical criticism. First, scholars find individual manuscripts and then create critical transcriptions. We can look to the Joseph Smith Papers Project as an example. Scholars working on the project transcribe and contextualize manuscripts connected to Joseph Smith,

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[11] See J. Samuel Preus, *Spinoza and the Irrelevance of Biblical Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[12] Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ*, 138.

[13] Unless, of course, there were multiple scribes keeping minutes at the same meeting or multiple copies made of these documents over decades or centuries, then textual criticism would become more important for the academic study of these documents.

Jr. Once the project is complete, outside researchers will have access to these crucial manuscripts and the critical transcriptions and will then be able to compile their variants. This will offer clarity to how certain ideas and practices may have evolved.

Source criticism takes into consideration both the data brought together from making scholarly transcriptions of individual manuscripts and the textual criticism of the manuscript tradition. It also takes seriously the surrounding literary world of the text. No text is created in a vacuum and therefore all texts engage with both the language and ideas of the period and geographical location in which they were written. Paying attention to how the text borrows language, ideas, motifs, and images from its surrounding culture helps scholars to understand its words better and at the same time provide important information about when and where it was written. The attempt to bring this latter set of data together is called historical criticism. Most of the time scholars of Mormon history have not produced studies that focus on these questions, but most of the books and articles written on Mormon history engage with them in one way or another since almost every aspect of Mormonism is closely tied to its canonical texts.

Within Mormon Studies, broadly speaking, there has been a surge over the past fifteen years in making available professional editions of historical texts within Mormonism by documentary editors. Editions of transcribed journals,[14] personal letters or correspondence,[15] and other materials have steadily come through the presses. But I would like to focus my attention not on documentary editing, as important as it is to my overall, but instead focus on textual criticism. Mormon textual history is a history like those of the early Founders of the American republic, mentioned previously, in that they also consist of diaries, letters, minute books, histories, account books, etc. Mormon textual history also includes literature like the Bible that must not be

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[14] See especially the Diary Series published by Signature Books and the Journals Series in the Joseph Smith Papers Project.

[15] See Reid L. Neilson, ed., *In the Whirlpool: The Pre-Manifesto Letters of President Wilford Woodruff to the William Atkin Family, 1885-1890* (Norman: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 2011); and Matthew J. Grow and Ronald W. Walker, eds., *The Prophet and the Reformer: The Letters of Brigham Young & Thomas L. Kane* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

ignored, texts that were created by Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, Joseph F. Smith, and others that became scripture to the movement.[16] This aspect of Mormonism's textual history requires special attention and I am not convinced that historians of early Mormonism have yet come close to adequately addressing the issue. I believe that many historians are completely unaware that there are major gaps in this scholarship.

The Current State of Textual Criticism in Mormon Studies

I will highlight these problems by first summarizing the current state of textual criticism as applied to Mormonism's religious texts which, like the biblical texts, is inherently literary. To begin with, the Book of Mormon has received special treatment over the last thirty years, especially since the preliminary publication, but very limited print run, in the early 1980s of a three-volume critical text produced by Robert F. Smith with the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies.[17] Royal Skousen took over the project in 1988 where Smith left off and since then has produced thirteen printed volumes, not including his Yale edition of the text,[18] with several more coming soon. The earliest manuscript of the Book of Mormon, the original manuscript (O), besides images of only a few pages, has been off-limits to scholars outside of Royal Skousen's project during the length of his study. The same was true with the printer's manuscript (P) until it was published in the *Joseph Smith Papers* in 2015.[19]

Unfortunately, this treatment of the text of the Book of Mormon is more akin to the major issues that faced the field of Dead Sea Scrolls

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[16] This is not to mention all of the additions to the Community of Christ's edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, the sister group of the LDS church previously known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Established by Joseph Smith's son Joseph Smith, III, in 1860, the Community of Christ has twenty-seven more sections in their *Doctrine and Covenants* than the LDS version.

[17] Robert F. Smith, ed., *Book of Mormon Critical Text: A Tool for Scholarly Reference* (Second edition, 3 vols.; Provo: F.A.R.M.S., 1984).

[18] Royal Skousen, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

[19] Royal Skousen and Robin Scott Jensen, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers, Revelations and Translations, Volume 3: Parts 1 and 2* (2 vols.; Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press, 2015).

scholarship after their discovery in the late 1940s and the organization of a private team led by Roland de Vaux tasked with editing the manuscripts from the early 1950s to the end of their careers.[20] This limited access to the manuscripts led to the buildup of controversy in the early 1990s and the call for broader availability of the manuscripts for a much larger group of scholars. Royal Skousen has done for the Book of Mormon what de Vaux and his team did for many of the manuscripts found in the caves of the Dead Sea, but the broader field of Dead Sea Scrolls scholarship understood the problems inherent in allowing only a small group access to the manuscripts. There was no one outside of de Vaux's circle allowed to double, triple, and quadruple check the text for error and verify or dispute de Vaux's or his colleagues' readings. Providing greater access to the manuscripts, which began in the 1990s and are now fully accessible today, has revolutionized the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The field has exponentially grown in the number of scholars who specialize in the Scrolls and early Judaism, as well as the number of annual publications that deal with Dead Sea Scrolls scholarship.

Admittedly, working with damaged ancient fragments of Hebrew text in Aramaic script is much more difficult than working with the English cursive hand of Oliver Cowdery and other scribes of the nineteenth century, but there are plenty of places in early American texts where scholars disagree on the rendering of a letter or a word, especially in a manuscript that has deteriorated over time.[21] The main problem is that up to 2015 only Skousen and a very small handful of scholars close to him were able to analyze P and make judgments about the wording of the text. Prior to that, from 2001–2015, almost everyone who wanted to study P had to do it through Skousen's

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[20] Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity* (Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York: Doubleday, 1994), 11; and James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 193.

[21] For a helpful overview of Skousen's work that explains the texts of the *Book of Mormon*, Skousen's critical work, Cowdery and the unidentified scribe, see Grant Hardy, "Textual Criticism and the Book of Mormon," in Mark Ashurst-McGee, Robin Scott Jensen, and Sharalyn D. Howcroft, eds., *Foundational Texts of Mormonism: Examining Major Early Sources* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 37–73.

transcription,[22] and prior to 2001 scholars either had to get access to the manuscript itself or find an archive that housed an almost impossible to read microfilm version.

Recognizing the need for scholars and laypersons alike to get back to the sources of Mormon history, the Joseph Smith Papers Project has been working for well over a decade to make all of the papers of Joseph Smith available in either electronic form on their website or in printed format. The Papers project made high quality full color images of P available in the Revelations and Translations series, and the project plans to release O in the same series in 2021.[23] It will only be once both P and O are available to all scholars that an actual sub-field of text-critical studies on the Book of Mormon can really begin to grow underneath the field of Mormon Studies, but that will be reliant on scholars of early Mormon history examining Skousen's transcription of both O and P to see if they agree with the readings he has provided. This is a crucial part of having a healthy and lively field, and it would be unfortunate if scholars of early Mormonism did not take advantage of this level of access. The textual criticism of the Book of Mormon is crucial to more than just literary studies of Mormon texts. It informs the historical development of early Mormonism and can help ensure that historians do not make any unnecessary errors when making scholarly claims about early Mormon history.

Unfortunately, Skousen's Yale edition of the Book of Mormon does not constitute a text-critical edition of the book. Traditional published critical texts include scholarly introductions to the rules the editor(s) have followed in comparing manuscripts and creating their critical texts, lists of the manuscripts they consulted, the body of the critical text, and a text-critical apparatus in footnotes throughout the volume.[24] The apparatus is crucial and marks where the manuscripts

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[22] Royal Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Entire Text in Two Parts* (Provo: The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies and Brigham Young University, 2001).

[23] Robin Jensen, editor of the Joseph Smith Papers volume, correspondence with the author, November 25, 2019.

[24] This is found in the text-critical editions of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, for example. See K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997); and Eberhard and Erwin Nestle and Barbara and Kurt Aland, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27th edition; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993).

that were consulted vary in wording; they also provide brief information about the substance of the variant and which manuscripts or manuscript families have a given reading.

Skousen's Yale edition itself does not constitute a traditional critical text but rather only includes the text Skousen has created through analysis of the manuscripts and printed editions. The volume excludes the essential text-critical apparatus, the need for which is not replaced by the appendix at the back of the book suggesting changes the LDS Church should make to future printings of their version of the Book of Mormon. A text-critical apparatus allows those engaging with the text to see the major variants between textual families on the same page as the text and make decisions about what textual variants to follow.[25]

As important as the Yale edition is it still does not provide the field of Mormon studies with a complete, traditional critical text of the Book of Mormon. Skousen's six-volume series analyzing the textual variants is crucial, and can act as a very large text-critical apparatus to a certain extent, but the analysis in those volumes goes beyond what is necessary for a text-critical apparatus to explaining why Skousen decided to follow one variant over others or emend the text a certain way. At the moment if a scholar or translator wants to utilize a critical text of the Book of Mormon, they have to bring together both Skousen's Yale edition and the six-volumes during their study. However, combined they still do not make a single volume critical text, and the majority of scholars are still dependent solely on Skousen's reading of O and potentially P. The public now has access to P in the Joseph Smith Papers Project, however, it is highly unlikely that scholars are examining the images of P themselves or comparing Skousen's transcription on the right hand side of the page with the images of the manuscript on the left hand. It is time for scholars to

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[25] The recent publication by Signature Books of John S. Dinger, ed., *Significant Textual Changes in the Book of Mormon: The First Printed Edition Compared to the Manuscripts and to the Subsequent Major LDS English Printed Editions* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2013), does not count as a critical text, either. While it utilizes text from the 1830 *Book of Mormon* and numerous textual variants in the footnotes, it does not have the modern chapter and verse numbering system, making it difficult to navigate. The editor was also not able to examine the full manuscripts of O or P in order to create the text, but relied on Skousen's work, especially his six-volume *Analysis of Textual Variants* for his comparison of the 1830 text to O and P.

return to the primary sources and make sure that more scholarly eyes are on the manuscripts than before.

The critical text project is also regrettably incomplete because of Skousen's decision to ignore certain early textual witnesses of the Book of Mormon, including Abner Cole's early printing and publication of parts of the Book of Mormon in his newspaper *The Reflector*. Robin Scott Jensen has recently done important preliminary work on this issue in the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*,[26] but Jensen's main focus was on situating the date of the publication of the 1830 *Book of Mormon* and not on the text Cole published in his paper. Skousen also ignores some potential fragments of O, particularly a small group of fragments that the LDS church purchased in the 1980s from the University of Chicago.[27] Along with Abner Cole's excerpts of the Book of Mormon in *The Reflector*, those fragments are not found in Skousen's volume on O, and are likely not included in his estimation that 28% of the original text is still extant.[28]

More scholars of early Mormon history need to explore firsthand the textual witnesses of the Book of Mormon. Relying on one scholar's rendering of the Book of Mormon manuscript, without further check or debate, is a disservice to the field of Mormon studies. If the field of Mormon studies is going to have a serious presence in the academy, then its scholars must have ready access to the historical development and textual history of the texts of the field.

This shift in focus can also invite further work in preparing academic commentaries on the entire text of the Book of Mormon. Currently, Brant Gardner's six-volume commentary is the most up to date on the Book of Mormon, but it too suffers from several major

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[26] Robin Scott Jensen, "Abner Cole and *The Reflector*: Another Clue to the Timing of the 1830 Book of Mormon Printing," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 24 (2015): 238-247.

[27] According to the finding aid provided by the Church History Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints's, these fragments are part of the original draft of Alma 3:5–4:2 and Alma 4:20–5:23 of the *Book of Mormon*. See https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/record?id=cad69254-d053-4bd8-89a7-04ad4941f63c&compId=390513c3-6d59-4b56-9010-cd89208d6f6d&view=browse (Last accessed November 13, 2019).

[28] Royal Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typological Facsimile of the Extant Text* (Provo: The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 2001), 18.

problems, not least the fact that it is inconsistent in several respects and glosses over important aspects of the text that are internally problematic.[29] It was also produced prior to the availability of the important documents now available in the Joseph Smith Papers Project. If further work is going to be done to advance our understanding of the text and reception of the Book of Mormon, then Mormon studies needs to incorporate a model where textual criticism is valued within the field and produce a single-volume critical edition of the text.

While the state of the textual criticism of the Book of Mormon could use improvement, it has enjoyed the fruits of Royal Skousen's labor. Very little has been done in comparison for the rest of Mormonism's sacred texts. Many people involved directly and indirectly in Mormon studies might assume that the individual dictated revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants have a substantial amount of work done on them but unfortunately there is a major need for improvement here as well. When discussing textual criticism and the sections of the Doctrine and Covenants many people tend to think of Robert J. Woodford's 1974 three-volume doctoral dissertation, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants."[30] While this is an important source to include in any study of the individual sections, Woodford's sources were rather limited compared to the manuscripts Mormon historians have access to today. With the publication of the earliest versions of these texts in the Revelations and Translations series of the *Joseph Smith Papers*,[31] as well as the original manuscripts for a few individual texts,[32] scholars can now take advantage of a

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[29] Brant A. Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical & Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon* (6 vols.; Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2007). I addressed some of these inconsistencies in my recent essay, Colby Townsend, "'Behold, Other Scriptures I Would that Ye Should Write': Malachi in the Book of Mormon," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (Summer 2018): 103–137.

[30] Robert J. Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants, Volumes I-III" (PhD Dissertation; Provo: Brigham Young University, 1974).

[31] Robin Scott Jensen, et al, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers, Revelations and Translations, Volume 1: Manuscript Revelation Books* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2009).

[32] For example, see https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-may-1829-a-dc-11-in-handwriting-of-hyrum-smith/1 (Last accessed November 13, 2019).

much broader perspective and better understand the development of this important textual tradition. Woodford's earlier study did most of the legwork of comparing the 1833 *Book of Commandments*, 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*, and the ensuing editions of the LDS *Doctrine and Covenants* up to 1921. Woodford's work needs to be updated with comparisons of all of the documents that have been edited and made available by the Joseph Smith Papers Project team and collected into a more accessible and easier to read format than Woodford's previous study.

Some may assume that the LDS Pearl of Great Price, an important part of the LDS canonical works, have received thorough treatment, but this assumption only applies to the Book of Abraham—thanks to the work of Brian M. Hauglid;[33] although, further work can and should be done on the text of the Book of Abraham as well. As thorough and important as Hauglid's work is scholars need to further compare the variants between the manuscripts and printed editions of the Book of Abraham. Hauglid's book provides a model forward.

Even more work is needed on the text-critical history of the manuscripts of Smith's revision of Genesis 1–6. Robert J. Matthews is known for a lifetime of work on Smith's revision of the Bible,[34] which culminated in the extended work of Scott Faulring, and the late addition of Kent P. Jackson as a co-editor to the project,[35] in preparing and editing a documentary edition of the original manuscripts.[36] Soon

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[33] Brian M. Hauglid, *A Textual History of the Book of Abraham: Manuscripts and Editions* (Studies in the Book of Abraham Series, issue 5; Provo: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship and Brigham Young University, 2010). See also the most recent volume in the Joseph Smith Papers Project, Robin Scott Jensen and Brian M. Hauglid, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers, Revelations and Translations, Volume 4: Book of Abraham and Related Manuscripts* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2018).

[34] See especially Robert J. Matthews, "A Study of the Text of the Inspired Revision of the Bible" (PhD Dissertation; Provo: Brigham Young University, 1968); and Robert J. Matthews, *"A Plainer Translation": Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, a History and Commentary* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1975).

[35] Kent P. Jackson letter to Scott Faulring, October 4, 1999, Scott H. Faulring Papers, Box 46, Folder 4, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

[36] Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo: Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University, 2004). The manuscripts included in this volume

after that volume was in print Jackson published a shorter book on the history of the Bible revision project, the relationship between the manuscripts, and the way that Smith might have published the Book of Moses text if he had not been killed in 1844.[37] Jackson and Faulring also published a transcription of the almost forgotten manuscript, Old Testament 3 (OT3), in *Mormon Historical Studies* in 2004.[38] Since then publications on the text of the Book of Moses have been few.[39]

These volumes and published documents provide important clues to understanding the textual criticism of the Book of Moses, but they are limited to examining a very small number of manuscripts and therefore fail to include all manuscripts. These documents have a bearing on several key readings in Smith's revision of Genesis 1–6. There are points where the transcriptions include significant errors as well. For example, in their essay in *Mormon Historical Studies* Jackson and Faulring accidentally omitted an entire line in the published edition of OT3 on page 133 of the relevant issue.[40] The line was silently added in the CD-ROM edition of OT3. However, it is possible that the transcribers made similar mistakes when they worked on the other manuscripts of Smith's revision of the Bible that have not yet come to light.

Like previous copyists that have transmitted the text of the Book of Moses, Jackson and Faulring have made errors in their transcription. This implies that caution should be used when utilizing

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appear in the following order: Old Testament 1, New Testament 1, New Testament 2, and Old Testament 2.

[37] Kent P. Jackson, *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts* (Provo: Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University, 2005).

[38] Kent P. Jackson and Scott H. Faulring, "Old Testament Manuscript 3: An Early Transcript of the Book of Moses," *Mormon Historical Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Fall, 2004): 113-144.

[39] Thomas A. Wayment published two volumes on Joseph Smith's revision of the Bible. See Thomas A. Wayment, *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the New Testament: A Side-By-Side Comparison with the King James Version* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2004); and Thomas A. Wayment, *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the Old Testament* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2009).

[40] The editors, Kent P. Jackson and Scott H. Faulring, left out the line, "Enos prophesied also & seth lived after he begot Enos 807 years & begot man[y]." This line should have been included between the last two lines on the page. As it currently stands the text reads, "& taught Enos in the ways of God wherefore Sons & daughters & the Children of me were numerous…"

the printed and electronic transcripts of the manuscripts of Smith's Bible revision, and new publications should improve upon the significant previous work of these scholars. A group of scholars within Mormon studies should, just like in related fields, always be comparing the current critical or documentary editions of texts with the manuscripts to ensure the accuracy and quality of the transcripts of the texts that lie at the heart of their field. In the future I hope that scholars will have more reliable sources for the study of the Book of Moses, that they will be less expensive and easier to use in order to help move scholarship on this important text forward.

To be clear, the text-critical work done up to this point in the study of Mormon history has been significant. The work by scholars like Royal Skousen, Brian Hauglid, Robert Matthews, Scott Faulring, Robert Woodford, and others has contributed enormously to a growing field's better understanding of its foundational texts. Thousands of hours have been contributed to locating and preserving manuscripts, transcribing all of the relevant documents, exploring the historical contexts in which the manuscripts were created, and comparing different copies of the same text to help establish the best version of it possible and to clarify its meaning.

If I were to compare the textual criticism of the sacred texts of Mormonism to biblical studies, however, I would argue that the field is comparable to Erasmus and his contemporaries as situated in the mid-sixteenth century. Erasmus worked with far fewer manuscripts of the New Testament than scholars have available today. And yet, it is astounding to see all of the textual issues of the New Testament that he was grappling with in sophisticated ways so early on. Erasmus's work, and the work of his contemporaries like Lorenzo Valla, foreshadowed the methods and tools used by modern scholarship. Skousen's publications are similar to Erasmus's text-critical work, even if he does not incorporate historical-critical observations to even the limited degree that Erasmus had some hundred years previous.

The Importance of Textual Criticism to Historical Interpretation

To reinforce my argument I will provide examples of where textual criticism could have helped historians of Mormonism to avoid some of the mistakes that they have made in their publications, which

I hope will deter errors in the future. These mistakes are largely predicated by a lack of access to primary source materials and up to date secondary resources. If textual criticism had been more of a central concern in Mormon studies in the wake of Robert Woodford's dissertation, or some of the early work done by Robert Matthews, it is possible that these mistakes never would have happened. The examples provide tangible evidence of the impact that the publication of critical texts of the literature of Mormonism can make on the field.

   Michael Homer's 2014 book *Joseph's Temples* is a clear example. The book analyzes the relationship between Freemasonry and Mormonism in the religion's early history.[41] Near the end, Homer claims that there were several phrases in the text of the Book of Moses in the 1878 *Pearl of Great Price*––"Cain was called Master Mahan," "the master of this great secret," that Lamech "entered into a covenant with Satan, after the manner of Cain, wherein he became Master Mahan," and that "the seed of Cain were black and had not place among them"––that were not in the earlier 1851 printing.[42] Of the four phrases noted by Homer the first two are from the same verse in the current LDS numbering system, Moses 5:31. The verse about Lamech is found later in Moses 5:49. Homer was correct in identifying these three phrases as not being found in the 1851 printing of the *Pearl of Great Price*, since the sources that the editor, Franklin Richards, used in creating the book did not include that section of the text.[43] The issue is more about the last phrase, which is specifically tied to Homer's claim.

   The phrase "the seed of Cain were black and had not place among them" was in the 1851 edition on page 5, corresponding to Moses 7:22 in the modern LDS numbering system, so Homer's claim is historically inaccurate. According to Homer, after the publication of the 1878 edition of the *Pearl of Great Price* the leaders of the LDS church "shrouded the Mormon exclusionary policy" pertaining to people of African descent and the Mormon priesthood "with this new scriptural

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[41] Michael Homer, *Joseph's Temples: The Dynamic Relationship Between Freemasonry and Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2014).

[42] Homer, *Joseph's Temples*, 381.

[43] The 1851 *Pearl of Great Price* included text from the Book of Moses in the following order: Moses 6:43-7:69; 1:1-4:7, 9, 11-19, 22-25; 5:1-16, 19-23, 32-40; and 8:13-30.

authority."[44] Besides this error in representing the textual history of the Book of Moses, Homer did not specify who exactly he claimed was using the *Pearl of Great Price* this way post-1878. This serves as a cautionary tale to scholars of Mormon history who make strong claims about the textual record of Mormon history without going back to the manuscripts or printed editions themselves. No reprints or digital copies of the 1851 *Pearl of Great Price* inform the reader that the text of the Book of Moses starts at Moses 6:43, not Moses 1:1.

Homer's mistake was due to the broader issue of a lack of text-critical resources. It is apparent in footnote 82 on page 381 of *Joseph's Temples* that Homer was only looking at pages 11, 12 and 19 of the 1851 *Pearl of Great Price*, not at page 5 where this phrase is found. He would probably not have known that the structure of the 1851 edition begins toward the end of the book, not at Moses 1:1, and therefore did not have the resources at hand to save him from this mistake. Critical editions of the hand written and printed versions of the Book of Moses, from the earliest manuscripts in 1830 until the beginning of the twentieth century when apostle James Talmage's 1902 edition stabilized the text, would provide exactly the kind of resource to stop these kinds of mistakes from happening.

More recently, Thomas Wayment has published an important essay in a new volume of collected essays on the history of Mormonism's texts.[45] His essay is written in two parts, the first of which argues that Moses 1 was written on a now lost manuscript before it was copied onto OT1.[46] The second part argues that Smith Christianized the Old Testament in his revision of the Bible. The second part of the essay is well supported by the evidence of Smith's harmonizational methods, but the evidence in part one is not as persuasive, due partially to a misreading of the earliest manuscript of Smith's revision of Genesis 1–6, OT1.

On page 84 of his essay Wayment argues that the scribe, Oliver Cowdery, made a visual copying error when copying Moses 1 from the

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[44] Homer, *Joseph's Temples*, 381.

[45] Mark Ashurst-McGee, Robin Scott Jensen, and Sharalyn D. Howcroft, eds., *Foundational Texts of Mormonism: Examining Major Early Sources* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[46] Thomas A. Wayment, "Intertextuality and the Purpose of Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible," in Ashurst-McGee, Jensen, Howcroft, eds., *Foundational Texts of Mormonism*, 74–100.

original manuscript to OT1.[47] According to Wayment Cowdery mistakenly saw "them" on the original manuscript, wrote that word on OT1 and then realized it was wrong and crossed it out and penned the correct "thee" next to it on the same line. The problem is the manuscript clearly reads "theee," not "them." Wayment notes the accurate transcription from Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews in footnote 21 on the same page. In OT1 on the line above what Wayment transcribes as "~~them~~" and over three words to the left you find an example of the scribe's handwriting for "them." After the "e" the handwriting arcs vertically to the right to make the first upward hook of the "m," and the letter has three rounded upward hooks altogether. The example of the error is not similar to the uncontested example of "them" at all. After the initial "e" in the error Wayment describes there are only two upward hooks, not three. Unlike the curved and unconnected hook, these two upward hooks are looped to the left exactly like two cursive letter e's. The reading that Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews offered was correct, the scribe wrote "~~theee~~ them."

Some of the other textual examples that Wayment provides in support of his argument are similarly problematic, making it difficult to accept the idea that Moses 1 was originally dictated on a separate manuscript page from OT1. The main issue, though, is that the argument was based on an inaccurate reading of the manuscript. In this case, unlike Homer's error, Wayment had access to recent transcriptions of OT1 and high-resolution images of it as well.

I will highlight a few more examples that have been noted previously and others that have to my knowledge not been discussed previously. The focus in the secondary literature has rarely been on the significance of the contribution of textual criticism to these crucial historical observations. I hope to shift attention to the centrality of text-critical data for historically sound observations on the writing of early Mormon history.

Aaron's Divining Sprout

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[47] According to Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, Cowdery was the scribe for all of Moses 1 on OT1. See Faulring, Jackson, Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo: Deseret Book and Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University, 2004), 63.

In their 1916 commentary on the LDS Doctrine and Covenants, Hyrum Smith and Janne Sjodahl briefly described "the gift of Aaron" in Doctrine and Covenants 8:6. Aaron worked as a catalyst and a spokesman for Moses, so this role was given to Oliver Cowdery in helping Smith to produce the Book of Mormon.[48] Smith and Sjodahl came to this explanation by only reading the edition of the text they had available to them in the contemporary printing of the LDS scriptural canon. Just over six decades after this publication Robert Woodford, a PhD student at Brigham Young University, and Lyndon Cook, a professor in Religious Education at the same school, would both note the variant between the then earliest extant text of Doctrine and Covenants 8, the 1833 *Book of Commandments*, and the canonized text as they knew it. In the 1833 text the verse said that in helping Smith with the Book of Mormon Cowdery had "the gift of working with the rod," and in later editions the wording was changed to "the gift of Aaron."[49] Neither of these scholars noted, however, that the text was changed to this reading in the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*, as H. Michael Marquardt would in 1999.[50]

In a 2008 publication Steven Harper, dependent on Mark Ashurst-McGee, noted the gift was in Cowdery's ability to use a divining rod.[51] The publication of the earliest extant version of Doctrine and Covenants 8 supports this position by showing further the fact that Cowdery and Smith viewed divining rods as being tied to Aaron's rod and that this was removed from the text in later editions. In Revelation Manuscript Book 1, the text originally said, "the gift of working with the sprout." Sidney Rigdon edited the manuscript for the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants* and crossed out "sprout" and

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[48] Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, *The Doctrine and Covenants Containing the Revelations Given to Joseph Smith, Jr., the Prophet, with an Introduction and Historical and Exegetical Notes* (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News Press, 1923), 72–73.

[49] See Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants, Volumes I-III," I: 185–191; and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith: A Historical and Biographical Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981), 16.

[50] H. Michael Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Texts & Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 36–37.

[51] Steven C. Harper, *Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants: A Guided Tour through Modern Revelation* (Sale Lake City: Desret Book, 2008), 42–43.

inserted "rod,"[52] thus distancing the text from the magic worldview inherent in a divining sprout and connecting it more explicitly to the world of the Bible.[53] Without the original version and revisions of Doctrine and Covenants 8 in Revelation Book 1 and the *Book of Commandments* historians would be unaware of the text's original context and the historical implications for understanding the earliest conceptions of revelation in Mormonism.

The Weeping ~~God~~^Enoch of Mormonism

Eugene England and Terryl and Fiona Givens have popularized the description of a weeping God as found in in Moses 7:28.[54] This seemingly straightforward theological notion has a far more complicated textual history, however. In the earliest manuscript of Smith's revision of Genesis 1–6, OT1, the text of Moses 7:28 reads: "and it came to pass that the ~~g~~ God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people and he wept and Enoch bore record of it saying how is it the heavens weep and shed fourth her tears as the rain upon the mountains."[55] It appears that sometime after this text was copied onto OT2 Smith realized that there were some difficulties in making sense of this verse. In particular, the use of the masculine pronoun for both God and Enoch, as well as the fact that God is made synonymous with the female divine heavens in the sentence, "the ~~g~~ God of heaven looked…and he wept…how is it the heavens weep and shed fourth her tears."

In order to avoid confusion Smith edited the verse in OT2 to read: "And it came to pass that ~~the God of Heaven~~^Enoch looked upon the residue of the people & wept. And ~~Enoch bore~~^he beheld and ^lo the heavens wept also,^~~record of it saying how is it the heavens weep~~ & shed forth

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[52] Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Manuscript Revelation Books* (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press, 2009), 17.

[53] Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic Worldview*, 36–39.

[54] Eugene England, "The Weeping God of Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* (Spring 2002): 63–80; and Terryl Givens and Fiona Givens, *The God Who Weeps: How Mormonism Makes Sense of Life* (Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain, 2012).

[55] Old Testament 1, page 16. See https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/old-testament-revision-1/18 (Last accessed November 13, 2019).

<t>h{er/eir} tears as the rain upon the Mountains."[56] These are significant revisions in OT2. Enoch replaces God as the one who weeps and the feminine heavens lose their pronoun for a neutral pronoun "their." This alteration changes the meaning of the text. It shifts the action of weeping from God to Enoch in the first part of the verse and removes the gendered pronoun that previously defined the heavens. As historian Kent Jackson has noted, these changes represent the text as Joseph Smith edited, revised, and left it but were never adopted into the canon.[57] So why did the revisions Smith made to the text not become a part of the received text within Mormonism?

The answer is in a series of historical accidents. The first occurred within the reception history of Smith's Bible revision manuscripts in the RLDS church, now the Community of Christ. Scholars now identify three major early manuscripts in the textual history of the Book of Moses: OT1, OT2, and OT3. These are named for their place in the chronology of the manuscript tradition. OT1 was the original manuscript, and OT2 and OT3 were both copied from OT1 early in 1831. OT2 became the working manuscript of the project, and OT3 became John Whitmer's, an early Mormon leader, personal copy. Over thirty years later the manuscript history was not so well understood. OT3 was assumed to be the earliest manuscript, so in the published edition of *The Holy Scriptures* from 1867 onwards the text of this passage, Gen. 7:35, was based on OT3 and read almost the same as OT1 without the revisions found in OT2.[58] The feminine pronoun was likewise changed to "their" for that publication and because of this has been a part of the Utah-based LDS Church's textual history since the late nineteenth century.

As far as I have been able to tell, when Franklin Richards, Orson Pratt, and their committee revised and republished the *Pearl of Great*

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[56] Old Testament 2, page 21. See https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/old-testament-revision-2/26 (Last accessed November 13, 2019). All references to OT1 and OT2 hereafter will be to the images on the Joseph Smith Papers website.

[57] Kent P. Jackson, *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts* (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2005), 143–144, 166.

[58] *The Holy Scriptures, Translated and Corrected by the Spirit of Revelation, by Joseph Smith, Jr., the Seer* (Plano: Joseph Smith, I. L. Rogers, E. Robinson, Publishing Committee, 1867), 23.

Price in 1878 they lifted the text for the Book of Moses from the RLDS *Holy Scriptures*, and when the book was canonized in 1880 the new canonical text did not include the changes that Smith made in OT2. It was not until the work of Robert J. Matthews and Richard P. Howard in the last half of the twentieth century that the manuscripts would be understood in their proper order again and scholarly attention could refocus on the final revisions that Smith made to his text. Unfortunately, up to today historians and theologians of Mormonism have largely ignored these changes. The weeping Enoch of Mormonism will forever live on in the manuscript of OT2 and it will be up to historians of Mormonism to take notice of him.[59]

Joseph Smith Supplies Biblical Language, "&c"

In the earliest extant copy of Doctrine and Covenants 4, found in chapter 3 of the 1833 *Book of Commandments*, Smith incorporated numerous biblical phrases in a revelation directed at his father.[60] Because Smith used the placeholder "&c." at the end of an informal quotation of 2 Pet. 1:5–7 it is apparent that he was the active agent providing the biblical language for the composition of the new revelation.[61] The inclusion of "&c." worked only as a placeholder in the earliest text until it was removed and a more complete quotation of 2 Pet. 1:5–7 was added in the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*.[62] This is supported by Oliver Cowdery's editor's marks in his personal copy of the 1833 *Book of Commandments*, where the paragraph with "&c." is

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[59] Terryl Givens fails to appreciate the details of this issue in Terryl Givens, *The Pearl of Greatest Price: Mormonism's Most Controversial Scripture* (with Brian M. Hauglid; New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 49.

[60] The earliest extant textual witness for Doctrine and Covenants 4 is only partially preserved. See Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Manuscript Revelation Books,* 11.

[61] Robin Scott Jensen, Richard E. Turley, Jr., Riley M. Lorimer, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Volume 2: Published Revelations* (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press, 2011), 21.

[62] Jensen, Turley, and Lorimer, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Volume 2: Published Revelations*, 468.

crossed out in pencil and "see" is written below the paragraph, denoting a correction, not a deletion, was needed.[63]

At the time of dictation Smith could not bring to memory the full list of virtues in 2 Pet. 1:5–7. It seems that he attempted to list these virtues and could only recall some of them, particularly "temperance, patience, humility, diligence, &c." While most of these are found in 2 Pet. 1:5–6 they are out of order and humility is not found in the source text. Rather than fix the informal quotation at the moment of dictation Smith dictated "&c." and moved on. He provided the biblical language in Doctrine and Covenants 4 as he composed and dictated the revelation for his father. This piece of the text-critical history of the Doctrine and Covenants has important implications for how scholars today might approach the concept of revelation in early Mormonism.

Mahijah/Mahujah or Mahujah/Mahujah?

The final example I will share is a case study in how textual criticism complicates Mormon exegetical history and invites historians to return to the sources and further analyze what we know about Mormon history. In this case I examine how the late Brigham Young University professor Hugh Nibley, one of Mormonism's most popular scholars, mistook two names and, through a lack of rigorous transcriptions methods, presented an error in the textual history of early Jewish and early Mormon texts.

In the final installment of his "A Strange Thing in the Land" series on the connections between the Book of Moses and ancient traditions about Enoch, Nibley argued that there was an undeniable connection between the names Mahijah and Mahujah in the Book of Moses and Mahawai found in the Aramaic *Book of Giants* in the Dead Sea Scrolls.[64] This has been slightly popularized through an account of one of Nibley's students, Gordon Thomasson, who was studying at Cornell University in the late 1970s and spoke with Matthew Black, one of the

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[63] Jensen, Turley, and Lorimer, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Volume 2: Published Revelations*, 601.

[64] Hugh Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet* (The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley: Volume 2; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1986), 277–281.

major scholars on Enoch at the time,[65] about Nibley's work on Mahijah and Mahujah. The idea that this example is an objective piece of data that argues for the antiquity of the Book of Moses becomes complicated as the sources are more closely analyzed.[66]

First, the names in the two traditions are not the same, contra Nibley's argument. The tri-literal roots for both names are in fact different, making the two different names altogether. The biblical tradition that the Book of Moses is dependent on, as Nibley notes, in Gen. 4:18 has two spellings for the same name, minus the theophoric element present in the names -el: מחוי ("Mahujah") and מחיי ("Mahijah"). It is likely that Mahujah is the misspelling, caused by the similarity between a vav (ו) and a yod (י).[67] In the 4QEnGiants fragments we do not find this name but a different one: מהוי ("Mahawai").[68] The fact that there is a letter difference between a he (ה) and a chet (ח) moves us from one etymological study and meaning of the name to another name entirely. Mahijah/Mahujah, which are the same name, come from the root מחה, "destroyed" or "smitten" one,[69] and Mahawai from the *Book of Giants* comes from the root היה, "to be," "to happen," "to occur," or "to come to pass."[70] These are two completely separate names that are easily confused when

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[65] A transcription of his account is found in Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and Ryan Dahle, "Could Joseph Smith Have Drawn on Ancient Manuscripts When He Translated the Story of Enoch?: Recent Updates on a Persistent Question," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* Vol. 33 (2019): 318–319.

Bradshaw and Dahle provide an inaccurate link that goes to the wrong video on YouTube in endnote 74 on page 354. The correct address is https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acL7ktQTZ2E (Last accessed November 14, 2019).

[66] Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet*, 277.

[67] Ronald S. Hendel, *The Text of Genesis I–II: Textual Studies and Critical Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 48.

[68] J. T. Milik, ed., *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1976), 305.

[69] See Hendel, *The Text of Genesis I–II*, 47; and Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, Study Edition, Volume 1: א – ע* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 567–568.

[70] Koehler and Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, Study Edition, Volume 1:* 243, א – ע. This is a different word than חיו, "to be alive," "preserve," etc., which is related to Mahijah/Mahujah. Koehler and Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, Study Edition, Volume 1:* 309, א – ע.

transliterated into English from the Hebrew.[71] Nibley relied too heavily on his English transcription of both names—MHWY—and failed to recognize that the H represents two distinct letters.

Besides the difficulties and confusion of the two names Nibley faced when transliterating the text, there is also the question about creating a reliable transcription of this passage in OT1. The passage in question, corresponding to Moses 6:40, is found on page 13 of OT1 and is in the hand of Emma Smith.[72] At first reading the text looks like it clearly reads "Mahijah," but a closer look reveals some difficulty in coming to a definitive conclusion. The i in Mahijah is irregular once you compare it to other examples in Emma's hand, particularly in the way that there are two points of hesitation in the writing where the smooth flow is broken by hook-like movements, almost the same as when creating the top of an i. It is possible that the i is actually a u, and Emma mistakenly added the dot over the i as she wrote to keep up with Smith's dictation. A closer examination of OT1 highlights how Emma made mistakes in punctuation while scribing for the manuscript. There are not many examples of Emma's handwriting outside of OT1, but there are enough in this manuscript to make a set of observations.

One of the first letters to analyze is Emma's j. There are only four examples of j in her writing on OT1, and two of them begin with a smooth curve up to the top of the j. The other two, of which "Mahijah" is one, start with a smooth curve, hook once, and then curve again up to the top of the j. This irregular example is only made more difficult by the fact that the extant examples are 50/50, highlighting how the possibility of that first hook on the j in "Mahijah" is not going to help in deciding whether or not the vowel is an i or a u.

Emma's u's are far more numerous and consistent. When Emma wrote the letter u her form was the same as her writing two i's consecutively, although the second part of the letter was often weak and not written as high as the first. On page 12 Emma wrote "mouth," and the second upward stroke is cut short in order to hook back down and begin the base of the t. On the same page she wrote "mouths," and

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[71] I thank Ryan Thomas for assisting me with several questions related to this section.

[72] Emma was the scribe for most of pages 12–14 on OT1. Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible*, 63.

the second part of the u was so low that the letter had to be fixed with an extra dark line, making it clear that the letter was a u and not an i. In all of the examples of Emma's i's except the one found in "Mahijah" the final curve of the downward stroke from the i to the new letter is smooth with no hesitation or stopping. The i in "Mahijah" is the only example that documents a deviation from her typical penmanship.

And finally, Emma made punctuation mistakes in OT1. It is apparent when closely reading the manuscript that Emma was hurrying. In some examples she shares the cross of a t between two words, suggesting that she had to quickly write both words before she could provide the punctuation. In one irregular example on page 12 Emma crossed the l in "councils," so a far too literal transcription would read "councits." Clearly, she meant "councils," but this suggests that Emma's writing for this manuscript was prone to error. The punctuation she added for the i in Mahijah could have been hastily added as a mistake as she added the dot for the j, and a weak u would have looked like an i next to a j that needed its dot.

It is also possible that the name in Emma's hand should be read Mahujah since the place name is Mahujah on page 15 in OT1, but this is complicated by the fact that it is in John Whitmer's hand. As is common in the Book of Mormon, places were often named after significant men.[73] It is likely that the place Mahujah was named after the person in the previous chapter and that person should be read as Mahujah rather than Mahijah. Especially since the generations of Enoch were the first men to inhabit creation.

In any case, the idea that if Smith intended the two separate names Mahijah and Mahujah that he would need to be dependent on an ancient manuscript or source is also unlikely. In his commentary on the Bible Adam Clarke, whose commentary was known to Smith while he worked on his revision of the Bible,[74] created a table he called "Same Names Differing in the Hebrew," and the first examples he

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[73] There are dozens of examples of this practices throughout the Book of Mormon, but Alma 8:7 provides the clearest statement about it.

[74] Thomas A. Wayment and Haley Wilson Lemmon, "A Recently Recovered Source: The Use of Adam Clark's Bible Commentary in Joseph Smith's Bible Translation," in Michael Hubbard MacKay, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Brian M. Hauglid, eds., *Producing Ancient Scripture: Joseph Smith's Translation Projects in the Development of Mormon Christianity* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, forthcoming).

shared were from Gen. 4:18: "Mehujael" and "Mehijael."[75] It was possible, contrary to recent opinion, that Smith and his contemporaries were aware of the spelling difference of the name found in Genesis 4.[76] English speaking Americans living in New York during the early national period had access to important scholarship such as Clark's, which requires that scholars consider the broader literary texts available at the time and their relationship to the Mormon canon.

Conclusion

Scholars of the Classics, biblical texts, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and early American history, to name only a few, have understood the importance of first establishing the texts of the field. This has been a mainstay of the humanities since the beginning of the Renaissance. While in Mormon studies much has been done in monographs, dissertations, and other forms to move the text-critical study of early Mormonism's texts forward, there remains a major gap in the field. One does not need to study early Mormonism of the 1830s to understand how providing text-critical resources can strengthen the field.

While one might erroneously assume that Homer did not need these resources on the scriptural text and their variants for his history on the relationship of Mormonism and Freemasonry—it being predominantly positioned in the late nineteenth century—the fact is that Mormons in the 1870s and 1880s were affected by the transmission and printing of the Book of Moses in early Mormon periodicals and the *Pearl of Great Price* during the 1830s and 1850s. Other scholarly projects might focus on a period later in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and still be affected by the earlier transmission history or by the unique textual versions that they used in their day.

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[75] Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments* (New York: Published by N. Bangs and J. Emory, 1825), 151.

[76] Bradshaw and Dahle, "Could Joseph Smith Have Drawn on Ancient Manuscripts When He Translated the Story of Enoch?: Recent Updates on a Persistent Question," 315–317.

Whatever the exact era in Mormon history that a scholar is researching, textual criticism will provide crucial resources to the field that have been previously absent, overlooked, or simply crucial to future studies on any given period in Mormon history. In order to adequately understand the subjects of their research, scholars cannot turn to the current canonized editions of Mormonism's texts to accurately understand how the subjects of their study engaged with the Mormon canon. Not all the transcriptions that have been published are equally reliable either, although they are an important beginning to the project of making Mormonism's earliest texts available for research. The field of Mormon studies needs to understand how crucial these kinds of reference materials are to the establishment of an actual field of Mormon studies. After this, scholars need to produce these materials. Without textual criticism historians of Mormonism will continue to make mistakes in their publications. This can lead to the awkward realization for scholars of Mormon history that, to take one significant example, in the *Book of Moses* Smith's final revisions to OT1 in OT2 changed the "weeping God of Mormonism" to Enoch weeping with the feminine—and then neutered—heavens.

It is exactly these kinds of textual notes that need to be more readily available and used in the ongoing discourses in Mormon studies. The Joseph Smith Papers Project has revolutionized the study of early Mormonism, and these kinds of observations will continue to be drawn from the religion's earliest manuscripts. It is now up to those scholars involved in the study of early Mormon history to ensure that textual criticism becomes a central focus in the social, theological, political, or cultural study of Mormon history. It is time for scholars of Mormon history to return to the sources.