

# Introduction

This source book examines the chronology or temporal foundation on which a rational understanding of events recorded in the *Book of Mormon*<sup>1</sup> may be built. The chronology presented in this source book is a work in progress, just like every chronology and the histories that depend on them. Of course, some chronologies are more settled than others, but every chronology may be revised as new sources of information surface or established sources are understood better.

This source book is intended to consist of the ten divisions identified in the Table of Contents. Within the divisions, various studies and related tables and charts appear in separate PDF files. The contents of the PDF files, while subject to copyright protection, may without further permission be reproduced and used, without alteration, addition or deletion, for any non-pecuniary or non-publishing purpose. The studies, tables and charts are the result of nearly three decades of reading and analysis directed toward understanding the key chronological texts of the *Book of Mormon*.

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Quotations from the *Book of Mormon* published in this source book prior to 2019 usually relied on the diction, punctuation and spelling of the 1981 edition published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the “Church of Jesus Christ” or just the “Church”). *Book of Mormon* quotations in the studies placed in this source book after 2018 use the diction, punctuation and spelling in *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text*,<sup>2</sup> unless otherwise expressly noted. This text represents the most accurate reconstruction of the original text yet available. In this reconstruction (often referred to in this source book as the “Yale text”), Royal Skousen usually modified the nonstandard spelling of the various scribes who wrote the book’s manuscripts, so that the spelling agrees with modern conventions; however, he kept the nonstandard diction and grammar that appear in the extant original and printer’s manuscripts.<sup>3</sup>

For a number of quotations, the studies in this source book also use the diction, punctuation and spelling of the first (1830 CE<sup>4</sup>) printed edition or of the original and printer’s manuscripts from which the first edition was typeset. With respect to the manuscripts, the studies rely on the monumental work of Skousen and his associates.<sup>5</sup> For quotations from the 1830 edition, the

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<sup>1</sup> The italicized term *Book of Mormon* refers to the library of small books and related writings that have made up the whole volume since its first print publication in 1830. The term *Book of Mormon* (without italics) identifies the small book that appears near the end of the *Book of Mormon*. The article *the* preceding a book title is neither italicized nor capitalized, except when the typeset form of the 1830 edition is discussed.

<sup>2</sup> Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Royal Skousen, “Editor’s Preface”, in Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text*, xxxv-xxxix, xli.

<sup>4</sup> Year numbers in the modern Common Era calendrical system are followed by the CE designation when required for chronological clarity; however, this first use of the year numbered 1830 CE is so designated for purposes of explanation. Common Era year numbers are chronologically identical to year numbers in the *anno Domini* or AD calendrical system, but the unnecessary religious reference and apparent chronological error in the ancient AD system are avoided. Year numbers in the derivative Before the Common Era calendrical system are followed by the BCE designation when required for chronological clarity and are identical to the ancient derivative BC calendrical system.

<sup>5</sup> Royal Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Extant Text*, vol. 1 of the Book of Mormon Critical Text Project (Provo, Utah: The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University [“BYU FARMS”], 2001); idem, *The Printer’s Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Entire Text in Two Parts, Part One*, vol. 2 of the Book of Mormon Critical Text Project (Provo, Utah: BYU FARMS, 2001); idem, *The Printer’s Manuscript of the Book of Mormon:*

studies rely on digital<sup>6</sup> and reprint<sup>7</sup> versions of that edition. No differences between the two versions were found in pagination or in the diction, punctuation and spelling of the first edition texts examined in this study. Quotations based on these early sources are clearly noted.

The independent Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (“FARMS”), prior to its acquisition by Brigham Young University (“BYU”), published a few of my thoughts on *Book of Mormon* chronology.<sup>8</sup> After BYU acquired and apparently repurposed FARMS (“BYU FARMS”), I began placing my chronological studies in a source book format at this website.

From 2015 through 2017, my wife and I served volunteer missions for the Church. One day while comparing a couple of French translations of the *Book of Mormon*, I realized that the translations of identical English chronological expressions sometimes were different and I began to understand how much more basic this source book needed to be. The ten proposed divisions of this source book are the outcome of that insight.

Thus, this source book is undergoing a major transition. Some divisions include several of my pre-2015 studies, which appear in Arial font. Over time, my post-2017 studies and revisions of pre-2015 studies will be posted in their appropriate divisions, all in Times New Roman font to make the transitions clear. In addition, all of the individual studies are identified in the Table of Contents by the dates when their most current versions were placed on this website.

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I invite you to enjoy studying the *Book of Mormon* as much as I do.

Randall P. Spackman  
2 January 2019

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*Typographical Facsimile of the Entire Text in Two Parts, Part Two*, vol. 2 of the Book of Mormon Critical Text Project (Provo, Utah: BYU FARMS, 2001); Royal Skousen (with Stanford Carmack), *The History of the Text of the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3 of the Book of Mormon Critical Text Project, issued in two parts in 2016 and in two parts in 2018 (Provo, Utah: BYU FARMS and BYU Studies); and Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon*, vol. 4 of the Book of Mormon Critical Text Project, issued annually in six parts (Provo, Utah: BYU FARMS, 2004-2009).

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Smith, Jr., *The Book of Mormon* (Palmyra, New York: E.B. Grandin, 1830), accessed at [archive.org](http://archive.org).

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Smith, Jr., *The Book of Mormon* (Independence, Missouri: Herald Heritage Reprint, 1970).

<sup>8</sup> Randall P. Spackman, “Introduction to Book of Mormon Chronology: The Principal Prophecies, Calendars, and Dates,” *FARMS Preliminary Report SPA-93* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1993); idem, “The Jewish/Nephite Lunar Calendar,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7/1 (1998): 48-59, 71; idem, Review of “Thomas O. Moore. *A Detailed Chronology of the Book of Mormon* (Wall Chart),” in *FARMS Review of Books* 10/1 (1998):1-11; idem “Interpreting Book of Mormon Geography,” in *The FARMS Review* 15/1 (2003): 19-46.