

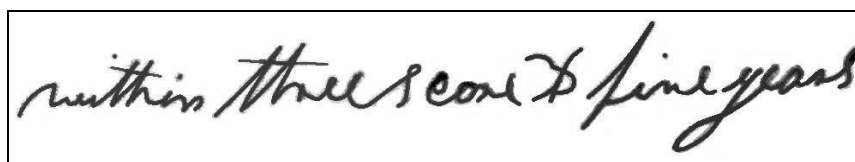
## Part 2: Chronological symbolism in the small plates of Nephi: Diction, language typology, and placement patterns

### 2.1 Ink designs as chronological symbols

The material objects being examined in this study are ink designs on paper dating from 1830 CE or before. A few of the scrutinized ink designs appear on a page of foolscap paper numbered 73 in the printer's manuscript of the *Book of Mormon*. These ink designs were penned by Oliver Cowdery on the far right end of the fifth line of text from the top of the page. Figure 2.1 reproduces these designs. Nearby ink marks on the fourth and sixth lines of text have been removed from the figure, so as to make it as simple as possible.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 2.1

Temporal-expression in 2 Nephi 17:8



A person who has been trained to recognize the meanings of such designs sees them as cursive writing and understands that they symbolize the printed English phrase *within three score and five years*. The facsimile edition of these designs replicates them as “within th(-)ree scor[e] & five years”. The extra markings in the facsimile indicate that the letter *h* in the word *three* is missing a stroke and the letter *e* in the word *score* is partially legible. In addition, the word *and* in the facsimile is signified by an ampersand (&) that appears in a slightly different form in the ink designs.<sup>2</sup>

These designs have been categorized previously in this study as a prepositional or Q type of narrative-link (*within*), a stated cardinal or L type of number-term (*three score and five*) and an express plural or B type of year-term (*years*). Because the designs do not include a time-term, an omitted or H type of time-term has been assigned to this temporal-expression for investigative purposes.<sup>3</sup> These typological terms and capital letters represent distinct parts of the designs in Figure 2.1. In written order, these ink designs or this English phrase in the small plates of Nephi may be represented typologically as a QLBH temporal-expression.

In Division 1 and in Part 1 of this Division, all 29 ink designs representing the temporal-expressions in the small plates were related to each other through an examination of their diction, a sorting of their words into various types of year-, time- and number-terms and narrative-links, and a detailed analysis of the placement of such language types in the text. That examination, sorting and analysis suggested that orderly choices had been made by the writers to compose their year-related expressions and to connect them with their associated narratives. Based on the

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<sup>1</sup> Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 40 (Plate 2).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-9, 196.

<sup>3</sup> See Division 1, Part 2, Table 2.C; Part 3, Table 3.E; Part 4, Table 4.H; Part 5, Table 5.E.

analysis summarized in Table 2.A of this Division,<sup>4</sup> the example of temporal-expression ink designs in Figure 2.1 may be described with the following statements.

1. The prepositional or Q narrative-link in Figure 2.1 is one of 12 Q narrative-links in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings. No other writer in the small plates used a Q narrative-link. This Q narrative-link and three other consecutive ones make up the last of the five (Q) letter-sets in his writings. When viewed with the verbal or R narrative-links in these plates, this narrative-link is part of a five-part, alternating, balanced and reversible (RQ[R]QR) narrative-link letter-group.
2. The stated cardinal or L number-term in Figure 2.1 is one of seven L number-terms in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings and one of 14 such number-terms in these plates. This L number-term creates the first (L) letter-set in the three-part, alternating, balanced and reversible (LML) number-term letter-group that ends Second Nephi.
3. The express plural or B year-term in Figure 2.1 is one of 13 B year-terms in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings and one of 25 such year-terms that appear in these plates. This year-term has a predetermined placement between the two express singular or A year-terms in the block of 13 consecutive chapters of the Book of Isaiah that Nephi<sub>1</sub> quoted in his writings. This year-term creates a central [B] letter-set in the five-part, alternating, balanced and reversible (BA[B]AB) year-term letter-group in Second Nephi.
4. The omitted or H time-term associated for investigative purposes with the temporal-expression in Figure 2.1 is one of ten such time-terms in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings and one of 16 such time-terms in the small plates. This is the last H time-term in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s 11-part, alternating, balanced and reversible (GH[G]HG)[H](GH[G]HG) time-term letter pattern and it is essential to the five-part (GH[G]HG) letter-group in Second Nephi.

Similar statements may be made about each of the 29 temporal-expressions in the small plates of Nephi. They are all part of the placement patterns created by the writers' use of the different types of year-, time- and number-terms and narrative-links.

The noun *symbolism* means “[t]he practice of representing things by symbols, or ... the systematic use of symbols”.<sup>5</sup> The apparently systematic use of specific diction to form the interwoven, typological placement patterns depicted in Table 2.A suggests that the writers intended a bit more symbolism than a simple, “That’s interesting.” The patterns appear to have been intended to declare, “Understand this!”

The noun *symbol* means “[s]omething that stands for, represents, or denotes something else”. The dictionary notes that an “exact resemblance” is not required; rather, “some accidental or conventional relation” or even a “vague suggestion” may be understood. Often, “a material object” represents or is “taken to represent something immaterial or abstract, as a being, idea, quality, or condition”.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the basic questions asked in this analysis of the symbolism of each

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<sup>4</sup> Table 2.A is identical to Table 1.H of this Division, except that the narrative-link elements of the temporal-expression in Jacob 1:1 are emphasized by two complete horizontal lines.

<sup>5</sup> *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, II: 3206 (symbolism).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, II: 3206 (symbol).

placement pattern, each language type, and each word or phrase include: What “conventional relation”, if any, creates potential meanings for these ink designs? What “vague suggestion”, if any, may have been intended by the writer or writers? Seeking answers to these questions in the diction, language typology, and placement patterns of the ink designs is the purpose of this Part 2. The symbolism proposed in the following discussions is summarized in Table 2.B of this Division.

## 2.2 Patterns of time

In this Section, the placement or letter patterns depicted in Table 2.A are related to simple temporal ideas and natural temporal patterns readily visible to unaided eyes. Basic ideas about the passing of time have been chosen because the noun *year* has to do with perceptions of a lengthy interval of time. No proposal is being made that the letter patterns in Table 2.A are unique to chronology. Such patterns might appear in rock formations, cross-stitch, wood grains, painted lines on paved roads, and many other contexts, but that does not necessarily make lapidary arts, needlework, wood carving or road marking relevant to year-related expressions in the *Book of Mormon*. The observation of time passing is a fundamental human experience that appears to be most relevant to year-related expressions.

Part 1 of this Division described the apparently intentional patterns that had been woven together from the various types of year-, time- and number-terms and narrative-links. These placement patterns were described as alternating or variable sequence, balanced or non-balanced, and reversible or non-reversible. The different types also were represented by regular capital letters, so as to simplify and clarify the placement patterns. The letter patterns, the most basic depiction of the chronological structure of the small plates of Nephi, included the following:

1. Three-part, alternating, balanced and reversible placements of (LOL), (LML), and (LNL and/or NLN) number-term letter-groups;
2. Five-part, alternating, balanced and reversible placements of (AB[A]BA) and (BA[B]AB) year-term letter-groups, (GH[G]HG) time-term letter-groups, and (QU[Q]UQ) and (RQ[R]QR) narrative-link letter-groups;
3. A nine-part, variable sequence, balanced and reversible (M)(LOL)[N] (LOL)(M) number-term letter-group in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings;
4. An 11-part, alternating, balanced and reversible (GH[G]HG)[H](GH[G]HG) time-term letter-group in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings; and
5. Seemingly separate placements of a unique (K) number-term letter-set before Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s nine-part, variable sequence, balanced and reversible number-term letter-group and a unique (D) time-term letter-set after the end of Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s 11-part, alternating, balanced and reversible time-term letter-group;

These letter-groups and unique number- and time-terms constitute all the year-related letter patterns in the small plates of Nephi. They exist because the underlying ink designs exist. They are textual facts based on the meanings of specific English words. They do not, however, encompass all the temporal words in the extant text of the *Book of Mormon*.

Hence, this initial analysis of the meanings of the placement patterns begins by identifying some of the other temporal words in the text. The symbolic patterns of the temporal ideas represented by such words are then identified and compared with the letter-groups and unique number- and time-terms listed above. This text-based analysis seeks to identify any

“conventional relation” or “vague suggestion” that may be perceived between simple temporal ideas in the text and these placement patterns associated with temporal-expressions in the small plates of Nephi.

### 2.2.1 Time that is then, now, then.

The noun *time* and its plural *times* collectively occur more than 450 times in the extant text, in phrases such as: “this present time”, “from that time forth”, “at any time”, “this time”, “many times”, “times of old” and “times to come”.<sup>7</sup> The passing of time also is expressed with the adverbs *now* and *then*. *Now* appears more than 1,240 times in the text, but it is most often a simple conjunction or part of a compound conjunction.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, *now* often is used as a distinctly temporal term.<sup>9</sup> The word *then*, apparently describing any time other than *now*,<sup>10</sup> occurs more than 230 times in the *Book of Mormon*.<sup>11</sup>

The words *now* and *then* suggest simple temporal ideas such as present and non-present time. For example, when Sariah saw her sons return from their mission to acquire the brass plates from Laban, she exclaimed, “*Now* I know of a surety that the Lord hath commanded my husband to flee into the wilderness; yea, and I also know of a surety that the Lord hath protected my sons and delivered them out of the hands of Laban and given them power whereby they could accomplish the thing which the Lord hath commanded them”.<sup>12</sup> Implicit in Sariah’s statement is her distinction between her sure knowledge in the present and her prior uncertainty. As another example, when the Lord speaks to Nephite and Lamanite survivors of the great natural destruction at the time of his death, he says, “O all ye that are spared . . . will ye not *now* return unto me and repent of your sins and be converted, that I may heal you? Yea, verily I say unto you: If ye will come unto me, ye shall have eternal life. Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you. And whosoever will come, him will I receive. And blessed are they which cometh unto me”.<sup>13</sup> The temporal word *now* is clearly contrasted with time that has past, when the destruction occurred, and with time that is future, when the Lord’s conditional blessings may transpire.

An example of the word *then* occurs when Nephi<sub>1</sub> explains the writings he is about to engrave. “Behold, I make an abridgment of the record of my father upon plates which I have made with mine own hands. Wherefore after that I have abridged the record of my father, *then* will I make an account of mine own life”.<sup>14</sup> In this instance, *then* looks forward to a non-present time that has yet to exist. In an alternative example, Nephi<sub>1</sub> remembers his father fearing for Laman<sub>1</sub> and Lemuel. “And he did exhort them *then* with all the feeling of a tender parent, that they would hearken to his words, in that perhaps the Lord would be merciful to them and not cast

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<sup>7</sup> E.g., 1 Nephi 3:20; 4:27, 35; 6:1; 10:17, 19; 12:18; Mosiah 1:3; 2:12; Alma 10:6; 12:30; 3 Nephi 16:2; Mormon 9:27; Ether 12:18; Moroni 7:2-3.

<sup>8</sup> E.g., “And now,” 1 Nephi 1:16; Alma 33:12, 17; Ether 8:20; and “Now behold,” 1 Nephi 4:3; Alma 33:14; 3 Nephi 7:1, 4.

<sup>9</sup> E.g., 1 Nephi 5:8; 20:7; Alma 30:32; 36:24; 3 Nephi 9:13; Mormon 6:21; Ether 3:16.

<sup>10</sup> Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, II: [754] (then); *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, II: 3282.

<sup>11</sup> E.g., 1 Nephi 1:17; 13:42; Alma 29:10; 32:17; Ether 4:15-16; 13:10-11.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Nephi 5:8, italics added.

<sup>13</sup> 3 Nephi 9:13-14, italics added.

<sup>14</sup> 1 Nephi 1:17, italics added.

them off”.<sup>15</sup> In this instance, the word *then* looks back to a non-present time that no longer existed. Of course, time that has ceased to exist may be remembered. Various forms of the verb *remember* and the noun *remembrance* occur more than 50 times in the small plates of Nephi.<sup>16</sup> Time or events that have not yet begun to exist may be indicated in the *Book of Mormon* by various forms of words such as *await*,<sup>17</sup> *believe*,<sup>18</sup> *expect*,<sup>19</sup> *fear*,<sup>20</sup> *foresee*,<sup>21</sup> *hope*,<sup>22</sup> *imagine*,<sup>23</sup> *look*,<sup>24</sup> *plan*,<sup>25</sup> *prophesy*,<sup>26</sup> *rely*,<sup>27</sup> *suppose*,<sup>28</sup> *trust*<sup>29</sup> and *wait*.<sup>30</sup> Unquestionably, Nephite writers understood and used the simple temporal ideas of *then* (past), *now* (present), and *then* (future).

If symbols are assigned to represent the words *now* and *then*, a general perception of time advancing from “then” (or =), to “now” (or ∩), to “then” (or =) may be represented by a three-part, alternating, balanced and reversible =∩= symbol pattern. This pattern is balanced because a single = appears on either side of the central ∩. The pattern is reversible because, whether read forward or backward, it is always =∩=. If regular capital letters represent these two temporal terms, the perception of time progressing from non-present “then” (or A), to present “now” (or B), to non-present “then” (or A) may be symbolized by a three-part, alternating, balanced and reversible ABA letter pattern. Each above-listed three-part, alternating, balanced and reversible letter-group in the small plates of Nephi may be this kind of three-part pattern representing a simple “then, now, then” understanding of the progress of time. Naturally, the passing of time is not perceived to be reversible, but to be remembered, current, or anticipated.

### 2.2.2 Artificial day and night

The natural temporal repetition of *day* and *night* in sequence appears to be an easily identifiable, continuous, alternating pattern of the passing of time. These natural time divisions are mentioned often in the *Book of Mormon*. The *day* resulting from one revolution of the earth on its axis is composed of periods when sunlight and darkness are perceived consecutively. Webster’s 1828 dictionary referred to this type of *day* as “the *natural day*.”<sup>31</sup> Such a *day* seems to be intended about 510 times in the text of the *Book of Mormon*. According to Webster, the other type of *day* includes “[t]hat part of the time of the earth’s revolution on its axis, in which its surface is presented to the sun; the part of the twenty four hours when it is light; or the space of

<sup>15</sup> 1 Nephi 8:37, italics added.

<sup>16</sup> E.g., 1 Nephi 2:24; 4:14; 7:15; 12:9; 2 Nephi 1:12; 3:5, 21; 5:25; 10:22; Jacob 1:11; 3:9; 6:4.

<sup>17</sup> E.g., Alma 5:7; Helaman 9:22; 13:6.

<sup>18</sup> E.g., 1 Nephi 2:13, 17; 2 Nephi 2:9; 5:6; Jacob 1:8; 4:5; 7:10; Jarom 1:11; Omni 1:25.

<sup>19</sup> E.g., Alma 54:8; Moroni 9:14.

<sup>20</sup> E.g., 1 Nephi 4:33, 37; 8:4, 36.

<sup>21</sup> E.g., Mosiah 27:30.

<sup>22</sup> E.g., 1 Nephi 16:5; 19:24; 2 Nephi 31:20; Jacob 2:19; 5:46.

<sup>23</sup> E.g., 1 Nephi 2:11; 12:18; Alma 5:16-18; Helaman 16:22; 3 Nephi 2:2; Mormon 9:10, 15.

<sup>24</sup> E.g., 2 Nephi 18:17; 25:18, 24, 26-27; Jarom 1:11.

<sup>25</sup> E.g., 2 Nephi 9:6, 13, 28; Jacob 6:8; Jarom 1:2.

<sup>26</sup> E.g., 1 Nephi 1:4, 18; 5:17; 2 Nephi 1:6; 3:22; 25:1; 31:1, 2; Jacob 1:4; 4:13, 15; 6:1; Enos 1:19, 23, 26; Jarom 1:2; Omni 1:13, 25.

<sup>27</sup> E.g., 1 Nephi 10:6; 2 Nephi 31:19.

<sup>28</sup> E.g., 1 Nephi 5:2; 8:3; 2 Nephi 29:9; Words of Mormon 1:2.

<sup>29</sup> E.g., 2 Nephi 4:34; 22:2; 24:32.

<sup>30</sup> E.g., 1 Nephi 21:23; 2 Nephi 6:7, 13.

<sup>31</sup> Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, I: [525] (*day*), italics and spelling in the original.

time between the rising and setting of the sun; called the *artificial day*.”<sup>32</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines this second type of *day* as “[t]he time between the rising and setting of the sun...; the interval of light between successive periods of darkness or *night*; in ordinary usage including the lighter part of morning and evening twilight, but, when strictly used, limited to the time when the sun is above the horizon.”<sup>33</sup> This shorter interval called *day* appears in the *Book of Mormon* text about 60 times. The numbers are rough for these distinct types of *day* because some of the narratives are unclear whether natural days or artificial days are intended.

The nouns *night*, *nights* and *nighttime* collectively occur more than 90 times in the *Book of Mormon*.<sup>34</sup> Each word refers to the period of darkness<sup>35</sup> that is part of a natural day.<sup>36</sup> This dark interval is distinguished from the artificial day.<sup>37</sup> The simple phrase *day and night* occurs in Mormon<sub>2</sub>'s writings.<sup>38</sup> The more complex phrase *by day and by night* and related instances where *by day* appears shortly before *by night* occur in all three sets of plates.<sup>39</sup> For example, Moroni<sub>2</sub> recorded that Ether “hid himself in the cavity of a rock *by day, and by night* he went forth, viewing the things which should come upon the people”. This narrative contrasts Ether’s two activities and links them with the periods made up of daylight and darkness.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, the passing of time is described as occurring on *two days and two nights*,<sup>41</sup> on *three days and three nights* or *for three days and for three nights*.<sup>42</sup> Following the same pattern, the phrase *all the day* occurs before the following *night* in all three sets of plates.<sup>43</sup> The phrase *one day* is followed by the word *night* in Mormon<sub>2</sub>'s writings.<sup>44</sup> Also, there are references to *this day* or *that day* followed by the word *night* in Mormon<sub>2</sub>'s and Moroni<sub>2</sub>'s writings.<sup>45</sup>

If symbols are assigned to represent the simple temporal pattern of an artificial day (☺) followed by a dark night (☹), the perception of many natural days passing may be symbolized by a continuously alternating symbol pattern (e.g., ☺ ☹ ☺ ☹ ☺ ☹ ☺ ☹) that is non-balanced and non-reversible. However, if a limited period of consecutive artificial days and nights is specified, such as “one day and a night and a day”,<sup>46</sup> then the symbol pattern also becomes limited (e.g., ☺ ☹ ☺). The corresponding delimited letter pattern could be another three-part, alternating, balanced and reversible one, such as ABA or any of the above-listed three-part number-term letter-groups in the small plates of Nephi. Naturally, day and night are understood

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, I: 650 (day), italics in the original.

<sup>34</sup> E.g., 1 Nephi 4:5, 22; 2 Nephi 4:23; 9:52; Enos 1:4; Mosiah 9:18; Alma 2:20; 36:10; Helaman 2:6; 3 Nephi 1:8, 13-15, 19; Ether 6:9; Moroni 7:15.

<sup>35</sup> “The sense may be dark, black, or it may be the decline of the day.... That part of the natural day when the sun is beneath the horizon, or the time from sunset to sunrise.” Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, II: [180] (night).

<sup>36</sup> E.g., Alma 62:20 (the darkness of night); Moroni 7:15 (the dark night); compare Alma 34:33; 41:7 (night of darkness);.

<sup>37</sup> 2 Nephi 14:6; Mosiah 18:5 (the daytime); Moroni 7:15 (the daylight).

<sup>38</sup> 3 Nephi 3:14; 5:3.

<sup>39</sup> 1 Nephi 17:30; 2 Nephi 9:52; 14:5; 33:3; Alma 56:16; 3 Nephi 4:21; Ether 13:13; 14:23.

<sup>40</sup> Ether 13:13, italics added.

<sup>41</sup> Mosiah 27:23; Alma 18:43; 19:1, 5.

<sup>42</sup> Alma 36:10, 16; 38:8.

<sup>43</sup> Enos 1:4; Alma 41:5; Ether 6:9.

<sup>44</sup> Mosiah 9:18; Helaman 14:4; 3 Nephi 1:8.

<sup>45</sup> Alma 34:33; 62:19-20; 3 Nephi 1:8; Ether 15:17, 20, 24-25.

<sup>46</sup> Helaman 14:4.

to continue advancing in their regular alternating way, but a limited three-part interval within the overall progress of time has been specified.

Defining the limits of a period of days and nights in this way is not restricted to a three-part ☺☹☺ symbol pattern or an ABA letter pattern. The alternatives appear endless. The small plates of Nephi include a five-part, alternating, balanced and reversible GHGHG time-term letter pattern and an 11-part, alternating, balanced and reversible GHGHGHGHGHG time-term letter pattern. Both suggest a defined temporal pattern of many ( $X$ ) artificial days followed by almost as many ( $X-1$ ) dark nights (e.g., ☺☹☺☹☺ or ☺☹☺☹☺☹☺☹☺☹☺) or, vice versa, many ( $X$ ) dark nights followed by almost as many ( $X-1$ ) artificial days (e.g., ☹☺☹☺☹ or ☹☺☹☺☹☹☹☹☹☹☹). Thus, each above-listed three-part, five-part or 11-part letter pattern may symbolize, in a conventional way, a purposeful definition of a specific portion of alternating artificial days and nights. Of course, this possibility does not create a certainty nor does this proposed symbolism suggest that these kinds of temporal patterns originated with Lehi<sub>1</sub> or Nephi<sub>1</sub>. At this point in the analysis, the suggested symbolism is merely that alternating symbol patterns or letter patterns composed of odd numbers of symbols or letters are entirely consistent with the temporal patterns of delimited portions of artificial days and nights. The knowledge of such natural daily patterns surely is ancient and seems basic to the *Book of Mormon* writers' observation and conception of the passing of time.

### 2.2.3 Positions and brightness of the sun

Samuel<sub>2</sub> the Lamanite seems to have defined the beginning of natural and artificial days as occurring at “the rising of the sun” and, when he described the division between the artificial day and the following night, he spoke of the “sitting” of the sun as a way to “know of a surety” that the artificial day had ended and his prophesied night without darkness had begun.<sup>47</sup> In describing the fulfillment of this prophecy, Nephi<sub>3</sub> noted that “at the going down of the sun there was no darkness. And the people began to be astonished because there was no darkness when the night came”.<sup>48</sup> The parallel conceptual structure of this statement appears to equate “the going down of the sun” with “when the night came.”<sup>49</sup> Then, according to Nephi<sub>3</sub>, when the sun “did rise in the morning again, according to its proper order,” the people “knew that it was the day that the Lord should be born”.<sup>50</sup> In a similar way, Moroni<sub>2</sub> implicitly referred to an artificial day as lasting “from the morning even until the going down of the sun”.<sup>51</sup> Moroni<sub>2</sub>'s statement seems to imply that, as an artificial day ended with “the going down of the sun,” it also began with “the rising of the sun.” These statements suggest that *Book of Mormon* people understood and were observing “the rising of the sun” and “the going down of the sun”, which necessarily would have involved their perceptions of the proximate horizons.

Related to the positional ideas of the sun above, at, or below a horizon is another positional idea of the sun at its zenith, its “highest or culminating point” in “the expanse of sky

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<sup>47</sup> Helaman 14:4, non-standard spelling in the original.

<sup>48</sup> 3 Nephi 1:15.

<sup>49</sup> The noun *night* may be defined as “[t]hat part of the natural day when the sun is beneath the horizon, or the time from sunset to sunrise.” Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, II: [180] (night).

<sup>50</sup> 3 Nephi 1:19.

<sup>51</sup> Ether 12:3.

overhead”.<sup>52</sup> The noun *zenith* does not appear in the *Book of Mormon*, but Amulek exhorted a group of listeners to pray “over all your household, both morning, midday, and evening”.<sup>53</sup> The word *midday* also is used in the Nephite description of the night before the Lord’s birth: “there was no darkness in all that night, but it was as light as though it was midday.”<sup>54</sup> Webster’s 1828 dictionary defined the noun *mid-day* to mean “[t]he middle of the day; noon”.<sup>55</sup> The term *midday* only appears in the plates of Mormon; however, a similar term, *noonday*,<sup>56</sup> occurs once in Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s description of Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s vision: “And it came to pass that he saw one descending out of the midst of heaven, and he beheld that his luster was above that of the sun at noonday”.<sup>57</sup> These texts suggest that *midday* and *noonday* referred to the central part of an artificial day, when the sun was perceived to reach its zenith and to be its brightest.

If symbols are assigned to represent the sun’s consecutive positions at the horizon (≈), at the zenith (☀) and again at the horizon (≈), then this period also may be represented by another three-part, alternating, balanced and reversible ≈☀≈ symbol pattern. However, the sun also can be perceived to appear from below the horizon and to disappear below the horizon. This may suggest a fourth position, one of invisibility below the horizon, and this position will require a third symbol (●). Consecutive natural days may then be represented with a continuous ≈☀≈●≈☀≈●≈☀≈●≈☀≈● symbol pattern. Intentionally starting and ending this pattern with the same symbol may create a balanced and reversible, five-part (e.g., ●≈☀≈● or ☀≈●≈☀), seven-part (e.g., ≈☀≈☀≈●≈ or ≈☀≈●≈☀≈) or larger symbol pattern, or it may create a non-balanced and non-reversible, five-part (e.g., ≈●≈☀≈ or ≈☀≈●≈) or larger symbol pattern.

In a similar manner, concepts associated with the brightness of the sun at noonday, or at “the dawn of the day”<sup>58</sup> or “the dawn of the morning”,<sup>59</sup> or when the “evening” arrived<sup>60</sup> may suggest related, but more complex symbol patterns. When the *Book of Mormon* was being prepared for publication, the noun *dawn* could be defined as “[t]he break of day; the first appearance of light, in the morning.... The word may express the whole time from the first appearance of light to sunrise.”<sup>61</sup> During this initial part of the day, the sun is still invisible, but the brightness of the sunlight seems to gradually increase. Similarly, in 1828, the *evening* was thought to be the “latter part and close of the day,” which commenced in the afternoon and continued “to bed-time, whatever that time may be.”<sup>62</sup> The noun *evening* also could mean “the process or fact of growing dusk; the time at which this takes place, the time about sunset”.<sup>63</sup> During this latter part of the artificial day, the brightness of the sunlight seems to gradually decrease.

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<sup>52</sup> *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, II: 3868-69 (zenith).

<sup>53</sup> Alma 34:21.

<sup>54</sup> 3 Nephi 1:19.

<sup>55</sup> Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, II: [126] (mid-day).

<sup>56</sup> “Mid-day; twelve o’clock in the day.” Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, II: [186] (noonday).

<sup>57</sup> 1 Nephi 1:9.

<sup>58</sup> Alma 47:14.

<sup>59</sup> Alma 56:39.

<sup>60</sup> Alma 34:21; 55:8.

<sup>61</sup> Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, I: [525] (dawn).

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, I: [691] (evening).

<sup>63</sup> *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, I: 906-07 (evening).





fold”. In 1 Nephi 22:26 (which includes the central [H] letter-set), Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s prophecy about a wholly righteous people and a powerless Satan during these bright years may suggest that Isaiah<sub>1</sub>’s descriptions of the moon and sun are figurative. But are his words only figurative? That issue is beyond the scope of this study.

Nephi<sub>1</sub> knew the prophecies of Isaiah<sub>1</sub>. In the wilderness, Nephi<sub>1</sub> “did rehearse unto [his elder brothers] the words of Isaiah”. In the land of promise, Nephi<sub>1</sub> “did read unto [his brothers] that which was written by the prophet Isaiah; for [he] did liken all scriptures unto [them], that it might be for [their] profit and learning.” Nephi<sub>1</sub> also asked his younger brother, Jacob<sub>2</sub>, to teach the words of Isaiah<sub>1</sub> to the Nephite people and Nephi<sub>1</sub> twice stated, “my soul delighteth in the words of Isaiah”. He quoted many chapters of the brass plates’ version of the Book of Isaiah in his writings, including many verses of Isaiah 29.<sup>67</sup> Thus, it seems likely that Nephi<sub>1</sub> would have been aware of Isaiah 30:26 and the prophecies that “the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold”. Are these prophecies implied by the central [H] letter-set that Nephi<sub>1</sub> intended for his 11-part, alternating, balanced and reversible (GHGHG[H]GHGHG) time-term letter-group? It would seem so, since Isaiah 30:26 and 1 Nephi 22:26 both appear to deal with the reign of the Holy One of Israel.

#### 2.2.4 Phases of the moon

In Part 1 of Division 1, the Nephite chronological concepts of a *month* and *moon* were introduced.<sup>68</sup> The definitional confusion of Webster’s 1828 dictionary regarding a *month* also was examined and, despite the confusion, the dictionary seemed to identify five specific types of months. First, an interval described as a lunation, synodical month or moon was based on observed or calculated conjunctions of the moon and sun, and exhibited a mean period of about 29.53059 days. Second, a lunar month also called a sidereal or periodical month was based on observed or calculated conjunctions of the moon and a star, and exhibited a mean period of about 27.32159 days (the modern estimate is about 27.32166 days). Third, a solar month was based on the observed or calculated movement of the sun through the ecliptic or the 12 signs of the zodiac, and exhibited a mean period of approximately 30.43686 days. Fourth, a popular use of the noun *month* could mean a calculated period of four weeks or 28 days. Fifth, a calendar month consisted of a calculated 28, 29, 30 or 31 days, depending on the assigned number of days in the Julian or Gregorian calendar.<sup>69</sup>

That introduction also noted that, while the noun *month* does not occur in the small plates of Nephi, the phrase “nine moons” does occur there.<sup>70</sup> The Nephite writer Amaleki<sub>1</sub> described this interval in a narrative apparently intended to be read by other Nephites.<sup>71</sup> He used the plural form of the noun *moon* as a temporal term that could be numbered to quantify time during the period when the Nephites’ first chronological system measured years from the time that Lehi<sub>1</sub> left Jerusalem.<sup>72</sup> This suggests that the calendar associated with this system measured time with

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<sup>67</sup> E.g., 1 Nephi 15:20; 19:23; 2 Nephi 6:4; 11:2; 12-24; 25:5; 27.

<sup>68</sup> See Division 1, Part 1, Section 1.9.5.

<sup>69</sup> Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, II: [147] (month and moon); [591] (sidereal); and [723] (synodical).

<sup>70</sup> Omni 1:21.

<sup>71</sup> Omni 1:12-30.

<sup>72</sup> 3 Nephi 2:6.

moons rather than, or in addition to, the *months* identified with later Nephite chronological systems. Webster’s dictionary also noted that “rude nations use the name of the moon” to mean a “month”.<sup>73</sup> While setting aside Webster’s notion of “rude nations”, his definitional note and Amaleki<sub>1</sub>’s description, taken together, suggest that the Nephites may have been observing the moon’s phases and numbering moons as part of their earliest chronological system.

Samuel<sub>2</sub> the Lamanite prophesied a sign of the Messiah’s birth that would be visible to the Nephite people.<sup>74</sup> The sign included “great lights in heaven”, a phrase that may be related to a brass plates’ version of a Genesis narrative in which “God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth”.<sup>75</sup> The two great lights of Genesis surely are the sun and moon. Presumably, Samuel<sub>2</sub>’s “great lights in heaven” were the same. Hence, Nephite observation of the moon again seems to be suggested.

Nights when the moon is invisible because of its apparent nearness to the sun (astronomical new moons) and nights when the moon is fully lighted from dusk to dawn (astronomical full moons) usually may be observed to occur about 14 to 16 nights apart. The variability in time may occur because of observational limitations (trees, smoke, dust, clouds, etc.) and because the orbits of the earth and moon are not always the same and their differences affect each other. The contrasting positions and brightness of astronomical new and full moons may be depicted as the dark and bright opposites in another endlessly alternating ☺ ☹ ☺ ☹ ☺ ☹ symbol pattern or ABABAB letter pattern.

Over periods of about 26 to 28 nights of observation, the phases of the visible moon may be perceived to change from a first crescent visible in the west at dusk, to waxing crescent moons, to a half moon, to waxing gibbous moons, to a full moon visible throughout the night, to waning gibbous moons, to another half moon, to waning crescent moons, and to a last crescent visible in the east at dawn. The shapes of the crescent, half and gibbous moons that appear before the full moon reverse after the full moon. Then, once the reversible shapes of the visible moon have run their course, the moon is invisible for one or two nights, although it may make its presence visible in front of the sun during daylight if there is a solar eclipse.

When regular capital letters are assigned to symbolize visibly notable phases of the lighted surface of the moon, the monthly pattern might be depicted as A (first visible crescent), B (half moon), C (full moon), B (reversed half moon), and A (reversed last visible crescent). This would suggest a five-part, variable sequence, balanced and reversible (AB[C]BA) letter-group somewhat similar to the five-part letter-groups suggested above for the artificial day. If the letter pattern were to include the intermediate nights, the transitional moons might be labeled X and the entire letter pattern would be AXBXCXBXA or, perhaps, if separated into five groupings, the pattern would be three letter-sets separated by two balanced and reversible letter-groups (A)(XBX)(C)(XBX)(A).

Clearly, this way of symbolizing the natural pattern of the moon’s visible phases is not the only way to do so. Unlike modern concepts related to waxing and waning crescents and gibbous moons, the proposed pattern sorts all the transitional moons into the same category. However,

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<sup>73</sup> Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, II: [147] (moon).

<sup>74</sup> Helaman 14:2-8.

<sup>75</sup> Genesis 1:16-17.

except for the use of different letters, the (A)(XBX)(C)(XBX)(A) letter pattern is identical to Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s variable sequence, balanced and reversible (M)(LOL)(N)(LOL)(M) number-term pattern composed of three letter-sets and two letter-groups. The symbolic connection may be that Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s nine number-term letter-sets were planned to draw attention to the visible phases of the synodic month and to suggest further that he and his followers were carefully observing the phases of the moon. This proposed connection also suggests an obvious rationale for an initial, seemingly standalone (K) number-term letter-set. In a complete depiction of the synodic month, the (K) letter-set symbolizes the astronomical new moon, the time when the moon is invisible because of its proximity to the sun (unless an eclipse of the sun occurs).

Why would Nephi<sub>1</sub> place a letter-set representing a moonless night or a solar eclipse *before* the 12 express number-terms that seem to represent visible phases of the moon? Two reasons seem equally plausible. The symbolism associated with each reason has a clear textual basis.

### 2.2.5 Dark days for Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s family

The first proposed reason for Nephi<sub>1</sub> placing a symbolic astronomical new moon first in his writings is based on his mention of Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s "days". Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s first year-related expression occurs in his report that "in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah", Lehi<sub>1</sub> had "dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days"; i.e., since his birth.<sup>76</sup> This is the narrative that includes the stated cardinal or (K) number-term letter-set. The days of Lehi<sub>1</sub> (and his probable refugee progenitors who came from the land of Manasseh<sup>77</sup>) had been dark days. Such days were likely reported in the brass plates' "record of the Jews from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah".<sup>78</sup> During the reigns of kings Manasseh (about 697 to 642 BCE) and Amon (about 642 to 640 BCE) at Jerusalem, idolatry had been practiced in the courts of the temple, the altars of astronomical deities had been built in the temple, child sacrifice had been practiced outside the city walls, and the worship of Jehovah seems to have been abandoned.<sup>79</sup> King Josiah (about 640 to 609 BCE) instituted religious reforms throughout Judah (including a reinstatement of Passover), but not until his 18th regnal year (about 622 BCE). He was later killed in a battle with the Egyptians, when he apparently sought to prevent them from protecting their influence over the kingdom of Judah and other kingdoms in the Levant. Josiah's son, Jehoahaz (about 609 BCE), was enthroned by the people of Judah, but after three months, the Egyptians took him captive into Egypt, where he died. Another of Josiah's sons, Jehoiakim (about 609 to 598 BCE), was chosen by the Egyptians for the throne of Judah. Neither Jehoahaz nor Jehoiakim continued their father's religious reforms; indeed, they reportedly did "that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that [their] fathers had done".<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> 1 Nephi 1:4.

<sup>77</sup> Alma 10:3.

<sup>78</sup> 1 Nephi 5:12.

<sup>79</sup> 2 Kings 21. See also "Bible Dictionary," in *The Holy Bible* (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989), 639 (chronology); *The Jerusalem Bible* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1966), 483-84; James Hastings, ed., *Dictionary of the Bible*, rev. ed., Frederick C. Grant and H. H. Rowley, eds. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), 27 (Amon), 616 (Manasseh).

<sup>80</sup> 2 Kings 22-23. See also "Bible Dictionary," 639 (chronology); *The Jerusalem Bible*, 484-87; Hastings, ed., *Dictionary of the Bible*, 461 (Jehoahaz), 532-33 (Josiah).

In 605 BCE, the Babylonian army routed the Egyptian army in northern Syria. Then the Babylonians brought the kingdoms of the Levant into submission (including Judah, probably no later than early 603 BCE). The armies of Egypt and Babylonia battled again about two years later, this time at Egypt's border. The overpowered Babylonian army retreated to Babylon to rebuild. About this time, Jehoiakim apparently refused to pay any more tribute to Babylon and realigned Judah with Egypt. However, Jehoiakim died in 598 BCE at about the same time as the rebuilt Babylonian army was mustered to punish his rebellion.<sup>81</sup> By the time Jerusalem was besieged by the Babylonians, Jehoiakim's 18-year old son, Jehoiachin, "reigned in his stead".<sup>82</sup>

The Babylonian chronicle mentions the capture of Jerusalem, but the text also implies that the city capitulated before it was destroyed because a new king chosen by Babylon was "appointed in the city".<sup>83</sup> The report in 2 Kings 24:11-12 suggests that the preservation of the city was negotiated and then Jehoiachin surrendered himself and his mother, servants, princes and officers to begin their captive trek to Babylon. The victorious Babylonians then rounded up some 10,000 of the city's business, military, political and religious elites, who also began their miserable trek into exile. During those grim days, the Babylonians' vassal king, another son of Josiah, took the name Zedekiah for his reign (about 597 to 587 or 586 BCE). He and his entourage occupied the royal quarters of Jerusalem.<sup>84</sup> Lehi's family members, at their house in Jerusalem,<sup>85</sup> likely were not spared the military controls, social and economic hardships, and terrors of that time.

In the midst of those dark days, Nephi<sub>1</sub> presents a first glimmer of light for Lehi<sub>1</sub> and his family. "[I]n that same year there came many prophets prophesying unto the people that they must repent or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed".<sup>86</sup> In the year-related expression "that same year", Nephi<sub>1</sub> uses his first referenced ordinal or M number-term, apparently to symbolize the first visible crescent of the moon. Nephi<sub>1</sub> implies that the work of these prophets led Lehi<sub>1</sub> to pray for his people and then to receive visions of a pillar of fire, the throne of God, and a heavenly book. During these visions, Lehi<sub>1</sub> was given prophetic tasks that he promptly began to carry out.<sup>87</sup> Thus, Nephi<sub>1</sub> may have begun his record with a symbolic astronomical new moon to represent the dark, difficult days faced by Lehi<sub>1</sub>, his ancestors, and his family, followed by a symbolic first visible crescent to represent the beginning of days of light and hope for Lehi<sub>1</sub> and all who would follow him.

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<sup>81</sup> 2 Kings 23:36; 24. See also Division 5, "When Was the First Year of the Reign of Zedekiah, King of Judah?"

<sup>82</sup> 2 Kings 24:6, 8. See also Division 10, "Was Jerusalem Destroyed in 601 B.C.?"

<sup>83</sup> Albert Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, Texts from Cuneiform Sources, A. Leo Oppenheim, ed., vol. 5 (Locust Valley, New York: J.J. Augustin Publishers, 1975), 102; compare Donald J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1956), 72-73, 86; Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, Benjamin R. Foster, ed. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 231.

<sup>84</sup> 2 Kings 24:14-17. Mattaniah, a son of the late king Josiah, was "a king of [Nebuchadrezzar's] own choice (lit. heart)." Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 33, 73.

<sup>85</sup> 1 Nephi 1:7.

<sup>86</sup> 1 Nephi 1:4.

<sup>87</sup> 1 Nephi 1:5-20.

## 2.2.6 Nephi<sub>1</sub> believed “all the words” of his father<sup>88</sup>

The second proposed reason for Nephi<sub>1</sub> placing a symbolic astronomical new moon first in his writings might seem to be simply calendrical, but this placement also suggests the depth of Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s belief in his father's words. Even before Nephi<sub>1</sub> wrote about the first year of Zedekiah and Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s days at Jerusalem, Nephi<sub>1</sub> noted that he was making his “record in the language of [his] father, which consist[ed] of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians”.<sup>89</sup> The language on the brass plates, which Nephi<sub>1</sub> obtained from a distant relative's treasury at Jerusalem, was noted by the Nephite king Benjamin to be “the language of the Egyptians, therefore [Lehi<sub>1</sub>] could read these engravings and teach them to his children, that thereby they could teach them to their children, and so fulfilling the commandments of God, even down to this present time”.<sup>90</sup> Presumably, Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s and Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s understanding of the Egyptian language included some perception of the Egyptians' ancient method of measuring a lunar month, which differed significantly from the ancient method used in the Near East and, presumably, in Judah.

In Egypt, a lunar calendar appears to have been maintained for thousands of years before the time of Lehi<sub>1</sub>. The Egyptians began each natural day at dawn and they measured each lunar month from the first dawn when the waning crescent moon was no longer visible near the eastern horizon. This dawn to dawn first day of the synodic month either included, or immediately preceded the day that included, the moment of the astronomical new moon.<sup>91</sup> In the Near East, however, for thousands of years before the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem, the natural day began at evening and, therefore, the first day of each lunar month was measured from the first evening when a crescent moon became visible near the western horizon. This evening to evening first day of the synodic month soon followed the time of the astronomical new moon.<sup>92</sup>

Thus, Nephi<sub>1</sub> appears to have introduced his writings and abridged his father's record with a symbolic K number-term, a symbolic dark time of the astronomical new moon that itself may have represented an Egyptian lunar month likely known to Lehi<sub>1</sub> and Nephi<sub>1</sub> because they knew and could write in the Egyptian language. This lunar month implicitly contrasted with the kind maintained by the Babylonian empire and its vassal, Zedekiah, who “did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done”.<sup>93</sup> In beginning the placement patterns or chronological structure of his writings this way, Nephi<sub>1</sub> seems not only to have contrasted Egyptian and Near Eastern calendars, not only to have signified the dark days endured by Lehi<sub>1</sub> and his connections, and not only to have underscored the arrival of days radiant with Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s prophetic calling, but also to have symbolized his complete acceptance of his father's reading of the visionary book. Nephi<sub>1</sub> fully believed that Jerusalem, because of its “wickedness” and “abominations”, “should be destroyed and ... many should perish by the sword and many [more after the 10,000 in 597 BCE] should be carried away captive into Babylon”.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> 1 Nephi 2:16

<sup>89</sup> 1 Nephi 1:2.

<sup>90</sup> Mosiah 1:4.

<sup>91</sup> Richard A. Parker, *The Calendars of Ancient Egypt*, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, No. 26 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), 9-10.

<sup>92</sup> Mark E. Cohen, *The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East* (Bethesda, Maryland: CDL Press, 1993), 3-4.

<sup>93</sup> 2 Kings 24:19.

<sup>94</sup> 1 Nephi 1:13, 19; 2:16; 2 Nephi 25:9-10.

## 2.3 Year-term symbolism

The placement patterns discussed in Section 2.2 represent intentional decisions made by Nephi<sub>1</sub> and the other writers in the small plates to choose specific words and phrases. The placement patterns may be thought to symbolize temporal patterns related to words such as *now* and *then*, *day* and *night*, *sun* and *moon*. With the placement patterns also suggesting Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s devotion to the words of Lehi<sub>1</sub> and diligence in observing the sun and moon, this Section examines the chronological symbolism that appears to be associated with the specific diction of temporal-expressions and their language types. As with the analysis of chronological structure, this examination starts with Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s express use of the words *year* and *years*. The noun *year* occurs four times in the small plates of Nephi, but only in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings. The noun *years* occurs 13 times in his writings and another 12 times in the other writers' major divisions of these plates. No implied singular year-term occurs in the small plates, but such year-terms do occur in the plates of Mormon. No implied plural year-term appears in the *Book of Mormon*.

With those basic textual facts about year-terms noted, it must also be mentioned that their meanings and proposed symbolism depend to a great extent on analyzing their use in the context of their associated time- and number-terms, narrative-links, and year-related narratives. In addition, their specific placement patterns listed in Section 2.2 are crucial to this part of the examination. Year-terms are the focus of the investigation, but year-terms cannot be fully understood apart from every other part of their temporal-expressions or apart from their placement with other year-terms in the text of the small plates. These textual facts also are relevant to understanding the symbolism of year-terms. In this regard, reference also may be made to Table 2.A, where the diction, language typologies, and placement patterns of year-related expressions and narrative-links are listed.

### 2.3.1 Express singular *year*

Part 1 of this Division noted that the diction of two express singular or A year-terms in Second Nephi was predetermined because Nephi<sub>1</sub> quoted these year-terms from the Book of Isaiah.<sup>95</sup> These year-terms might seem to be insignificant aspects of the block of 13 consecutive Isaiah chapters quoted by Nephi<sub>1</sub> in his second book. However, without these A year-terms, the (BA[B]AB) year-term letter-group in Second Nephi and the associated chronological symbolism of this placement pattern would not exist. The diction of the time-terms that qualify these A year-terms also was predetermined by Isaiah<sub>1</sub>. These are personalized or G time-terms describing the conclusions of the reigns of Uzziah and Ahaz, two kings of Judah. Because of these two G time-terms, Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s (GHGHG)[H](GHGHG) time-term letter pattern has a central temporal-expression associated with the expected reign of the Holy One of Israel.<sup>96</sup> The predetermined diction of the number-term that qualifies each of these A year-terms is the determiner *the*, a referenced ordinal or M number-term. Without the M number-term in 2 Nephi 16:1, the nine-part (M)(LOL)(N)(LOL)(M) number-term letter pattern in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings would become non-balanced and non-reversible, and would not appear to symbolize the advancing phases of the visible moon. Similarly, without the M number-term in 2 Nephi 24:28, the (LML) number-term

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<sup>95</sup> See Division 2, Part 1, Section 1.4.

<sup>96</sup> 1 Nephi 22:26.

letter pattern that concludes Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings would apparently just dangle as an (L) letter-set that would not symbolize alternating temporal events.

Part 1 of this Division also noted that the first A year-term in First Nephi seemed to be predetermined because Nephi<sub>1</sub> likely quoted it from his father's record.<sup>97</sup> The diction of the time-term that qualifies this A year-term is a G time-term describing the reign of Zedekiah, the last king to rule Judah before the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem. From the stated ordinal or K number-term, *the first*, it becomes clear that this year-related expression describes a time near the beginning of Zedekiah's reign. Without this A year-term, the proposed five-part (AB[A]BA) year-term letter-group in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings—a pattern delimited by, and centered on, year-related expressions describing royal reigns—also would not exist.

The second A year-term in First Nephi immediately follows the first A year-term. This year-term is not accompanied by an express time-term, but it is qualified by a referenced ordinal or M number-term, *that same*. While the form of this year-related expression may or may not have been predetermined by Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s record, the M number-term makes it clear that this A year-term also represents the first regnal year of king Zedekiah. Without both of the M number-term letter-sets in the (M)(LOL)(N)(LOL)(M) number-term letter pattern, it would become a single letter-set bracketed by two letter-groups (LOL)(N)(LOL) and no letter-sets would appear to represent the unique positions of the first and last visible crescent moons.

The conventional meaning associated with an express singular year-term is straightforward. As discussed in Part 1 of Division 1, the word *year* appears to represent “a lengthy period of time (a) established by a people for their own purposes, (b) observed or measured by the procedures they adopted, and (c) in some instances modified from time to time as they saw fit”.<sup>98</sup> Within the small plates of Nephi, every express singular or A year-term is expressly or impliedly qualified by a personalized or G time-term that represents a lengthy interval established, observed, and numbered in connection with the reign of a king of Judah prior to the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem. When a new king began to reign at Jerusalem, the numbering of years began anew to separate the predecessor's reign from the new king's time on the throne.<sup>99</sup> The A year-terms in the small plates of Nephi surely symbolize time measured, numbered and recorded in the chronological system of the kingdom of Judah. This is the time and place of origin for Lehi<sub>1</sub> and his descendants and followers.

### 2.3.2 Express plural *years*

Part 1 of this Division also observed that an express plural or B year-term in Second Nephi was predetermined by Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s quotation from the Book of Isaiah.<sup>100</sup> This B year-term is denoted by one of the ink designs in Figure 2.1 above. The prepositional or Q narrative-link (*within*) and the stated cardinal or L number-term (*three score and five*), which uses the noun *score* to mean *twenty*, are unique in the *Book of Mormon*. This B year-term separates the two predetermined (A) letter-sets in the (BA[B]AB) year-term letter-group in Second Nephi and, without it, the chronological symbolism of this placement pattern also would not exist. Twelve

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<sup>97</sup> See Division 2, Part 1, Section 1.4.

<sup>98</sup> See Division 1, Part 1, Section 1.3.

<sup>99</sup> E.g., 1 Kings 11:42; 14:19; 15:1, 9-10, 25, 33; 2 Kings 3:1; 8:16-17; 12:1-2.

<sup>100</sup> See Division 2, Part 1, Section 1.4.



other express plural or B year-terms appear in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings, 11 of which were inserted between the (A) year-term letter-set that began First Nephi and the first (A) letter-set to appear in Second Nephi. Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s last (B) year-term letter-set was placed after the second (A) year-term letter-set in Second Nephi.

Only four express time-terms qualify B year-terms in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings. These are G time-terms that refer to the same event. Nephi<sub>1</sub> described the event three times as “my father left Jerusalem” and once as “we left Jerusalem”.<sup>101</sup> Lehi<sub>1</sub> and his family left Jerusalem at the same time.<sup>102</sup> The identical cardinal number in the L number-terms (*six hundred*) is associated with three of these same B year-terms. This diction represents the number of years to be measured and numbered in connection with Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s prophecy of the Messiah's birth. The fourth B year-term that is qualified by a G time-term also is associated with an L number-term (*thirty*). This is the number of years that had passed away “from the time [Lehi<sub>1</sub> and his family] left Jerusalem” and began to measure the years of Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s 600-year prophecy. After these 30 years, God commanded Nephi<sub>1</sub> to create the small plates.<sup>103</sup>

The conventional meaning associated with these four qualified B year-terms is as definite as that of the four qualified A year-terms. Each of these B year-terms represents a lengthy period stated, or observed and numbered, in connection with Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s temporal prophecy. These B year-terms surely symbolize time measured in a chronological system adopted by Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s family. Moreover, while this system initially was that of Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s family, it eventually became a chronological system of the Nephite people. A vague suggestion associated with this clear symbolism is that the system used by Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s family, while perhaps similar to the official system of Judah in some respects, likely was not as complex as the royal one. The lengthy trek of Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s family away from Jerusalem,<sup>104</sup> their lack of food, water and other resources,<sup>105</sup> and the other physical and psychological challenges of their journey,<sup>106</sup> all may have motivated them to simplify their system for measuring, numbering and recording of the passage of years.

The remaining eight B year-terms in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings are typified by omitted or H time-terms. In 2 Nephi 17:8, the chronological system of Judah would appear to be understood for Isaiah<sub>1</sub>'s 65-year temporal prophecy. For the prophecies associated with the temporal-expressions in 1 Nephi 15:13 and 22:26, the events seem to have been in the distant future and the chronological systems associated with the year-terms are not indicated in any way. Presumably, they are not years in the chronological system of Lehi<sub>1</sub> and his followers. This presumption likely does not apply to the ages of Lehi<sub>1</sub> and Sariah mentioned in 1 Nephi 18:17 because the years of their old age occurred after they left Jerusalem. Unquestionably, in 1 Nephi 17:4, 20-21 and 2 Nephi 5:34, the B year-terms and their associated number-terms imply the chronological system used to measure, number and record years from the time that Lehi<sub>1</sub> left Jerusalem.

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<sup>101</sup> 1 Nephi 10:4; 19:8; 2 Nephi 5:28; 25:19.

<sup>102</sup> 1 Nephi 2:1-5.

<sup>103</sup> 2 Nephi 5:28-33.

<sup>104</sup> 1 Nephi 2:1-6; 16:9, 12-17, 33; 17:1, 4.

<sup>105</sup> 1 Nephi 16:11, 14-15, 18-19, 31-32; 17:2.

<sup>106</sup> 1 Nephi 16:18-20, 22, 24-25, 27, 32, 34-39; 17:1, 6.

In the major divisions of the small plates that were created after the time of Nephi<sub>1</sub>, 12 more B year-terms occur. Six are qualified by express time-terms related to the measurement of Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s 600-year prophecy. Jacob 1:1 specifies years with a long name, "from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem". Jacob 4:4 and 7:7 describe years as "before his [the Messiah's] coming" and "hence". The word *hence*, since it was spoken by an apostate named Sherem, apparently means "from now until Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s prophecy is proven to be false". Enos 1:8 describes years "before he [the Messiah] shall manifest himself in the flesh" and Enos 1:25 specifies years with a personalized long name, "from the time that *our father* Lehi left Jerusalem" (italics added). The final B year-term in the small plates of Nephi is qualified by Mormon<sub>2</sub>'s G time-term, "after the coming of Christ".<sup>107</sup> This year-related expression is part of Mormon<sub>2</sub>'s witness that the Nephites' expected birth of the Messiah actually had occurred. The other six B year-terms that were created after the time of Nephi<sub>1</sub> are not qualified by time-terms; so, they have been categorized for analytical purposes as having omitted or H time-terms. Nonetheless, the number-terms of these six B year-terms, whether stated or referenced cardinal names, make it clear that the years of Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s 600-year prophecy were being measured, numbered and recorded.

Thus, as noted in Part 1 of this Division, the B year-terms quoted or composed by Nephi<sub>1</sub> and all subsequent writers in the small plates occur in year-related narratives about Isaiah<sub>1</sub>'s, Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s or Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s prophecies, about the faithful measurement of Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s 600-year prophecy, or about the faithless rejection of Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s and Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s prophetic leadership by Laman<sub>1</sub>, Lemuel and Sherem. These are narratives about temporal prophecy. The conventional symbolism associated with their B year-terms is that of chronological systems of the kingdom of Judah or the people of Nephi that were employed to express or to measure, number and record temporal prophecies.

### 2.3.3 Intertwined year-term symbolism

Part 1 of this Division also proposed a symbolism, a vague suggestion perhaps, that is associated with the B year-term narratives, but is suggested further by the exclusive use of A year-terms in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings in connection with the beginning or end of the reign of a king of Judah. King Zedekiah obtained royal power when his reign commenced.<sup>108</sup> The reigns and powers of kings Uzziah and Ahaz both ended with their deaths.<sup>109</sup> When Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s combined ABABAB year-term letter pattern is delimited by (A) year-term letter-sets, the resulting five-part, alternating, balanced and reversible (AB[A]BA) letter-group seems to contrast the mortally limited powers of a king with the powers of a true prophet, which extend beyond his mortal ministry. Isaiah<sub>1</sub>'s prophecies of the destruction of the kingdom of Judah were fulfilled long after his death. Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s 600-year prophecy extended far beyond his own life.

This proposed "contrasting power" symbolism of the (AB[A]BA) year-term letter-group is not merely a function of A year-term diction. The associated narratives appear to be precise. The letter-group or placement pattern begins and ends (with A year-terms) at times when prophecies about the pending destruction of Judah and Jerusalem by the Babylonian empire are revealed to Lehi<sub>1</sub> and Isaiah<sub>1</sub>. The turning point in this intertwined placement pattern, the "sun at noonday" in a natural temporal pattern of daily light, is the central [A] letter-set, the time when Isaiah<sub>1</sub>

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<sup>107</sup> Words of Mormon 1:2.

<sup>108</sup> 1 Nephi 1:4.

<sup>109</sup> 2 Nephi 16:1; 24:28.

received his calling and prophesied that “the cities [shall] be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land [shall] be utterly desolate, and the Lord [shall] have removed men far away, for there shall be a great forsaking in the midst of the land”.<sup>110</sup>

Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s calling to prophesy came in “the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah,” at the time when Isaiah<sub>1</sub>’s prophecies of Judah’s utter waste were about to be fulfilled. In Judah, the Babylonians had chosen a vassal king and “many prophets” came “prophesying unto the people that they must repent or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed”.<sup>111</sup> Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s prayerful response to these prophets, his later vision of the throne of God and calling to be a prophet, and his visionary reading of a holy book placed him fully within the group who believed Isaiah<sub>1</sub>’s prophecies. Lehi<sub>1</sub> “went forth among the people and began to prophesy and to declare unto them concerning the things which he had both seen and heard. And ... the Jews did mock him because of the things which he testified of them, for he truly testified of their wickedness and their abominations”.<sup>112</sup>

As Part 1 of this Division also noted, the first year-term to follow the (A) letter-set that begins Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s ABABAB letter pattern is a B year-term in a year-related narrative that states Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s most important temporal prophecy. This B year-term begins the first (B) letter-set in Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s writings. First Nephi 10:2-3 describe the prophesied time of the Messiah’s birth as occurring after the destruction of Jerusalem, after the exile to Babylon of many survivors of the devastation, and after the return of some of the Jews “according to the own due time of the Lord ... to possess again their land of inheritance”. Then, with emphasis and specificity, Nephi<sub>1</sub> stated Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s prophecy. The Messiah would be born “yea, even six hundred years from the time that my father left Jerusalem”.<sup>113</sup>

Just as Isaiah<sub>1</sub>’s 65-year prophecy had been fulfilled in the lifetimes of Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s Israelite ancestors (the narrative suggested by the second (B) letter-set<sup>114</sup>); so, Nephi<sub>1</sub> seems to have understood and expected his father’s 600-year prophecy to be fulfilled in the lifetimes of at least some of Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s descendants.<sup>115</sup> Nephi<sub>1</sub> is so persuaded of the importance and truth of his father’s prophecy that he reiterates it after six more year-terms have been recorded<sup>116</sup> and he repeats it again after another six year-terms have been recorded.<sup>117</sup>

Part 1 also indicated that with Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s concluding, alternatively delimited (BA[B]AB) year-term letter group, he employed 15 intertwined B and A year-terms to create a unique five-part, alternating, balanced and reversible (1/6/1/6/1) number pattern and to stress the importance of Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s 600-year prophecy. This (1/6/1/6/1) year-term number pattern was completed after the ABA year-term letter pattern in Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s quotations from the Book of Isaiah, which are incorporated in the (1/6/1/6/1) number pattern. In 2 Nephi 25:19, Nephi<sub>1</sub> finished his use of temporal-expressions with a final B year-term: “the Messiah cometh in six hundred years from

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<sup>110</sup> 2 Nephi 16:1-12; compare Isaiah 6:1-12.

<sup>111</sup> 1 Nephi 1:4.

<sup>112</sup> 1 Nephi 1:18-19.

<sup>113</sup> 1 Nephi 10:4.

<sup>114</sup> 2 Nephi 17:8.

<sup>115</sup> 1 Nephi 12:1-10.

<sup>116</sup> 1 Nephi 15:13; 17:4 (2), 20-21; 18:17.

<sup>117</sup> 1 Nephi 22:26; 2 Nephi 5:28, 34; 16:1; 17:8; 24:28.

the time that my father left Jerusalem”. This prophecy completed Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s (BA[B]AB) year-term letter-group and his coterminous (1/6/1/6/1) year-term number pattern.

Thus, while Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s initial (AB[A]BA) letter-group seems to have emphasized the reigns and limited powers of Judah’s kings—and the pending destruction of their kingdom and its capitol—Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s alternatively delimited (BA[B]AB) letter-group and (1/6/1/6/1) number pattern appear to have emphasized the ministries of prophets and the power of their prophecies. In the five-part, balanced and reversible (BA[B]AB) letter-group, the first (B) letter-set occurs with Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s 600-year prophecy, the middle (B) letter-set occurs with Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s quotation of Isaiah<sub>1</sub>’s 65-year prophecy, and the last (B) letter-set helps to conclude Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s writings with another repetition of Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s 600-year prophecy. In the closely-related (1/6/1/6/1) number pattern, Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s 600-year prophecy also is emphasized by its remarkable repetition. Thereafter, every writer in the small plates of Nephi used a B year-term that either identified an interval of years within the 600-year period or, in Mormon<sub>2</sub>’s case, was integral to his witness that Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s prophecy had been fulfilled. The consistent use of B year-terms by those who wrote after Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s death suggests that this practice was one of his “commands” to Jacob<sub>2</sub>.<sup>118</sup>

Another symbolic aspect of the intertwined A and B year-terms and (1/6/1/6/1) year-term number pattern relates to two of the most important features of Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s calling to be a prophet. Following his vision of God’s throne, Lehi<sub>1</sub> “saw one descending out of the midst of heaven, and he beheld that his luster was above that of the sun at noonday. And he also saw twelve others following him, and their brightness did exceed that of the stars in the firmament. And they came down and went forth upon the face of the earth”.<sup>119</sup> The thrice-emphasized prophecy of the holy birth<sup>120</sup> may signify the three roles announced by Lehi<sub>1</sub> (the “prophet”, “Messiah” and “Savior of the world”)<sup>121</sup> and could underscore the status of the “one” whose “luster was above that of the sun at noonday”. The (6+6 = 12) additional temporal-expressions in the (1/6/1/6/1) year-term number pattern seem to symbolize Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s vision of “twelve others following him”. Their brightness, less than that of the sun but more than that of the stars, presumably was the brightness of the moon.

The last symbolism implied by the intertwined A and B year-terms and alternatively delimited, five-part (AB[A]BA) and (BA[B]AB) letter-groups appears to relate to the numbers of A and B year-terms and their potential for expressing calendrical meaning. In the (AB[A]BA) letter-group, four A year-terms and 12 B year-terms occur, but in the (BA[B]AB) letter-group, two A year-terms and 13 B year-terms occur. In both proposed letter-groups, the year-terms may be distinguished by six of them being qualified by G time-terms and the rest having H time-terms. This pattern also may be related to Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s (1/6/1/6/1) number pattern, where the sum 12 is created by a 6+6 addition. The alternative B numbers 12 and 13, and the number 6 dividing both letter-groups, may suggest ancient traditional aspects of the calendrical systems maintained in the Near East and in Egypt.

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<sup>118</sup> Jacob 7:27.

<sup>119</sup> 1 Nephi 1:9-11.

<sup>120</sup> See Division 10, “Lehi’s 600-year Prophecy”.

<sup>121</sup> 1 Nephi 10:4.

By the time that Zedekiah's reign commenced in Judah (597 BCE)<sup>122</sup>, “lunisolar” calendars had been recorded in the Near East for at least two thousand years. Each year appears to have been composed of 12 synodic months, but occasionally the 12-month year was intercalated with a 13th synodic month. Each year was measured from the first visible crescent of the moon of its first month to the first visible crescent of the first month of the following year. A new calendar year normally was commenced when 12 months of the previous year had passed; however, 12-month lunar years are only about 354.367 days long (nearly 11 days shorter than the solar or tropical year of about 365.2422 days). To adjust the calendar for these astronomical facts, Near Eastern kings and their priests (apparently based on seasonal and agricultural observations) declared every so often that another synodic month was to be intercalated to keep spring religious festivals and agricultural activities in the springtime and autumn religious festivals and agricultural activities in the autumn. Typically, the spring to autumn festival/agricultural/equinoctial period was maintained as a six-month period that divided the year into a consistent six-month portion and another portion containing six, seven or perhaps even eight months. If a year that might have been intercalated was not (perhaps because spring arrived earlier than usual or political upheaval devastated the land), then a subsequent year might be intercalated with 13th and 14th synodic months. “[I]n effect, a solar year [was] squeezed into a lunar strait-jacket” because “the year [was] measured by complete lunar cycles”.<sup>123</sup>

The Egyptians also maintained a calendar composed of synodic months. They measured the first month of their lunar year from the first dawn (at the end of a lunation) that occurred without a visible crescent moon and after the heliacal rising of the brightest star in the sky, known as Sirius (Greek: Sothis).

The stars which rise and set have, like the moon, conjunctions with the sun, and, like the moon, they are invisible when near conjunction. This is not, of course, because they shine by reflected light, but because the sun is so much brighter than any star that it simply swallow's up the star's light. Unlike the moon, each star has but one conjunction a year, and its period of invisibility is much greater than the moon's.... Sirius is invisible for a period of 70 days. There comes a time, however, when the sun has dropped back from it enough so that it is again visible in the dawn, just before sunrise, above the eastern horizon. This event is called its *heliacal rising*....<sup>124</sup>

In the majority of years, the calendar included just 12 synodic months. However, the heliacal rising of Sirius always occurred in the last month of each calendar year. Hence, when the approximately 11-day difference between the 12-month year and the solar year aggregated more days than were contained in a synodic month (about 29.53059 days), then the heliacal rising of Sirius occurred in the 13th synodic month of the current calendar year and the following new moon began the next calendar year. Naturally, this “lunistellar” calendar tying these two astronomical events together had agricultural meaning. The heliacal rising of Sirius and the following first lunar month approximated the time of the seasonal inundation of the Nile, which brought fresh soil and water to the arable lands along the river. Because the agricultural seasons

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<sup>122</sup> See Division 5, “When Was the First Year of the Reign of Zedekiah, King of Judah?”

<sup>123</sup> Cohen, *The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East*, 3-4; see also the overview in 3-20.

<sup>124</sup> Parker, *The Calendars of Ancient Egypt*, 7, emphasis in the original.

in the Nile valley of Africa differed from the agricultural seasons in the Near East, the Egyptian 12- or 13-month lunar calendar did not have a six-month festival/agricultural/equinoctial season. In Egypt, the lunar calendar appears to have been divided into three agricultural seasons of four synodic months each in a typical year: inundation, seeding through harvest, and low water. The origins of this apparently strict lunistellar system, which at least in the historical period does not appear to have been subject to observation of the variable times when the Nile actually flooded, may have been as early as the fifth or fourth millennium BCE.<sup>125</sup>

Assuming that Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s and Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s years in the kingdom of Judah and use of the Egyptian language for writing provided them with an understanding of both types of occasionally intercalated 12-month calendars and with the Near Eastern six-month spring to autumn semester, then the alternative B year-term numbers 12 and 13 with their six express time-terms certainly could represent the calendar of Judah, a Near Eastern type of calendar that differed from the Egyptian calendar. This symbolism also may relate to the 11 B year-terms placed in the small plates by Jacob<sub>2</sub> and his descendants before they stopped including year-related expressions in their writings. As will be suggested in the following discussions of time-terms, number-terms and narrative-links, Jacob<sub>2</sub>'s descendants seem to have reserved the space and position for a 12th B year-term with a 6th express time-term to be added by the descendant who could report the fulfillment of Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s prophecy when 600 years from the departure of Lehi<sub>1</sub> had passed away.

If it is assumed that the alternative 12 and 13 B year-terms, and the consistent division of the year-terms by six express time-terms, all represent an occasionally intercalated 12-month calendar, one may question what the alternative 4 and 2 A year-terms in the (AB[A]BA) and (BA[B]AB) letter-groups, and the 3 B year-terms that are separate from the 6+6 = 12 year-terms in the (1/6/1/6/1) number pattern, might represent. The answer also may be related to the Near Eastern lunisolar calendar, rather than the Egyptian lunistellar calendar. In the Near East, the decision to intercalate a 13th month typically appears to have been made in accordance with seasonal and agricultural observations, whereas in Egypt the decision seems to have been a function of astronomical observations. Hence, in the Near East, the timing of an intercalation might vary depending on political and economic conditions as well as seasonal fluctuations. Perhaps an intercalation might be made as early as two years following the previous intercalation if spring came particularly late. More often, an intercalation would be made three years after the last intercalation, but an intercalation also might occur as much as four years after a previous intercalation if the third spring season came early. Thus, the alternative 4 and 2 A year-terms might be thought to symbolize the usual limits of years that could pass before an intercalation typically would be declared.

One final aspect of the alternative 12 and 13 B year-terms must be mentioned. In Part 4 of Division 1, an unexpected type of number-term symbolism was introduced.<sup>126</sup> When the number-terms in a major division of the small plates were assumed to represent a Set with a Set-sum and the Set-sum was assumed to represent a number of natural days, the number implied a distinctive chronological setting that was shorter than a Nephite era. In First Nephi, the largest Set-sum was 1,230 and represented a period of 1,230 natural days, which is a fairly exact measure of 45 mean sidereal months (1229.4747 days), the time it takes the moon to return to the same place in the

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 2-10, 30-32, 51-56.

<sup>126</sup> See Division 1, Part 4, Section 4.9.

“fixed” stars 45 times. The simple Set composed by Jarom may be represented by the equation and Set-sum  $200+238 = 438$ . A period of 438 days is a close approximation of 16 mean sidereal months (437.1466 days). When sidereal months are measured with natural days, a period of 16 mean sidereal months may be measured closely with either 437 or 438 days. In the Words of Mormon, only one temporal-expression exists. When Mormon<sub>2</sub> wrote this temporal-expression, he stated that “it is many hundred years after the coming of Christ”. The referenced cardinal number-term, “many hundred”, clearly refers to 300 because Mormon<sub>2</sub> was born after the 300th year passed away<sup>127</sup> and he died before the 400th year passed away.<sup>128</sup> A period of 300 natural days is about 11 mean sidereal months (300.5383 days), the time it takes the moon to return to the same place in the stars 11 times. When sidereal months are measured with natural days, a period of 11 mean sidereal months could be measured closely with either 300 or 301 days. This unexpected chronological symbolism suggests that the Nephites may have carefully measured sidereal months in addition to synodic months. A calendar composed of 12 synodic months averages about 354.367 days per year. A corresponding period of 13 sidereal months averages about 355.182 days; this is the time the moon takes to return to the same place in the stars 13 times. The difference in the two annual periods is about 19.6 hours, but both 12 synodic months and 13 sidereal months could be approximated with a count of 355 natural days. Hence, it seems possible that the alternative 12 and 13 B year-terms also may have been intended to imply an astronomical correspondence between 12 synodic months and 13 sidereal months.

None of this proposed symbolism, which has been focused primarily on the diction, language typology, and placement patterns of year-terms, indicates that the writers of temporal-expressions in the small plates of Nephi followed haphazard or unplanned methods for creating chronological structure and symbolism in these plates. The precise opposite is indicated.

## 2.4 Time-term symbolism

As Table 2.A shows, seven express time-terms occur in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings, all of which are personalized or G time-terms. They create six (G) time-term letter-sets and are followed in Jacob 1:1 by a long name or (D) time-term letter-set that is unique in these plates and presumably was planned by Nephi<sub>1</sub>. Thereafter, Jacob<sub>2</sub> used two more G time-terms and his son, Enos<sub>2</sub>, did the same. Because the G time-terms of Enos<sub>2</sub> were consecutive with Jacob<sub>2</sub>'s second G time-term, these writers' four G time-terms create two more (G) letter-sets. Hence, a total of 12 express (D and G) time-terms and 9 express (D) and (G) time-term letter-sets occur in the writings of Nephi<sub>1</sub>, Jacob<sub>2</sub> and Enos<sub>2</sub>. None of the descendants of Enos<sub>2</sub> included an express time-term in his writings. However, hundreds of years after Amaleki<sub>1</sub> delivered the small plates to king Benjamin for safekeeping by the Nephite kings, Mormon<sub>2</sub> added a 12th G time-term as part of his witness that Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s temporal prophecy had been fulfilled. As a result, his addition made a total of 13 express (D and G) time-terms in the small plates of Nephi. The symbolism of the numbers 12 and 13 suggested in Section 2.3 again seems to be indicated by express time-terms.

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<sup>127</sup> 4 Nephi 1:48-49; Mormon 1:1-5.

<sup>128</sup> Mormon 6:1-15; 8:1-6.

## 2.4.1 Nephite chronological systems

In Division 1 of this source book, an introductory examination of the diction of time-terms was presented. That introduction identified 124 of the 154 express time-terms that seemed to symbolize the existence of three Nephite chronological systems or “eras”; i.e., to represent era names.<sup>129</sup> The noun *era* does not appear in the *Book of Mormon*, but it is used in this study to mean “[a] system of chronological notation, characterized by the numbering of years from some particular point of time”.<sup>130</sup> Hence, the diction that symbolizes this kind of an era has to indicate the existence of at least two chronological features.

1. A beginning point for measuring and numbering the passing time must be specified. This feature of the Nephite chronological systems is evidenced by the 124 time-terms listed and grouped in Table 3.G of Division 1. Each of the three proposed groups appears to identify a “point of time” or unique event from which Nephite years were measured and separately numbered: first, “Lehi left Jerusalem”; then, “the reign of the judges” began; and last, “the coming of Christ” occurred.

2. A calendar or other method for measuring and numbering the years must be used. This feature of the Nephite chronological systems is evidenced primarily by the express number-terms of the 124 year-related expressions in which an era name appears as the time-term.<sup>131</sup> Additionally, numbered months and numbered days within months are mentioned a few times.<sup>132</sup> These texts, in conjunction with the era names, suggest standardized or official calendars were in use. The record of year numbers from each beginning point (in the associated number-terms) may seem random for the first and third eras and tedious for the second era, but the numbers chosen seem to have followed specific procedures, as introduced in Part 3 of this Division.

Third and fourth features suggested, but not necessarily required, by the second feature would include a system of numbering with consecutive integers and, as the number of years increased, a reliable system of remembering or recording the years that had passed. The 124 written temporal-expressions that symbolize the three Nephite eras suggest that both of these additional features were part of the Nephite chronological systems.

Most narratives in the *Book of Mormon* do not include year-related expressions. Most year-related expressions were not composed with an express number-term and an express time-term. These textual facts suggested the creation of an analytical term to describe the whole interval of years in which a Nephite era or chronological system apparently was used. This lengthy interval was called an “era context” in Division 1. The noun *context* in this term means “[t]he whole structure of a connected passage regarded in its bearing upon any of the parts which constitute it”.<sup>133</sup> Thus, the three proposed eras separate the Nephite timeline into three long, overlapping era contexts that provide chronological settings for most *Book of Mormon* narratives.

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<sup>129</sup> See Division 1, Part 3, Section 3.9 and Table 3.G.

<sup>130</sup> *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, I: 889 (era).

<sup>131</sup> Compare Division 1, Part 3, Tables 3.A and 3.G.

<sup>132</sup> Alma 10:6; 14:23; 16:1; 49:1; 52:1; 56:1, 27, 42; 3 Nephi 4:7, 11; 8:5.

<sup>133</sup> *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, I: 536 (context).



## 2.4.2 Lehi era context

In the small plates of Nephi, five personalized or G time-terms combine with stated cardinal or L number-terms and express plural or B year-terms in year-related expressions that identify the beginning point of the Lehi era context: “my father left Jerusalem”;<sup>134</sup> “we left Jerusalem”;<sup>135</sup> and “our father Lehi left Jerusalem”.<sup>136</sup> A sixth year-related expression uses a long name D time-term with an L number-term and B year-term to identify the same beginning point: “Lehi left Jerusalem”.<sup>137</sup> Seven more year-related expressions with L number-terms, B year-terms and omitted or H time-terms describe intervals that existed within the same era context.<sup>138</sup> In each instance, these seven expressions with H time-terms are placed after the Lehi era context has been identified and their L number-terms indicate an increasing number of years in this era context. In the plates of Mormon, L number-terms and D time-terms are used to report that intervals of 476 years and 600 years had passed “from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem”.<sup>139</sup> Another L number-term and altered name or F time-term describes an interval of 509 years that had passed “from the time Lehi left Jerusalem”<sup>140</sup> and a final L number-term and short name or E time-term reports the end of an interval of 609 years “since Lehi left Jerusalem”.<sup>141</sup>

In Division 1, this interval of 609 complete years and, apparently, some part of a 610th year, were identified as the Lehi era context. This era context began when Lehi<sub>1</sub> and his family left Jerusalem. The chronological system for measuring, numbering and recording years from that day forward seems to have been initiated relatively quickly because many subsequent reports noted the passing of a definite number of years in this era context. When progressively larger numbers of years were reported, but time-terms were omitted, the diction implied that the Nephites knew, for example, when 40 years had passed<sup>142</sup> or when 200 years had passed.<sup>143</sup> For the other reports of years passing,<sup>144</sup> the similar diction implied that the Nephites were maintaining the same system that had been employed since Lehi<sub>1</sub> left Jerusalem. Hence, the Lehi era context seems to have been maintained devotedly for more than 609 years.

Despite the clear evidence for the Lehi era context in most major divisions of the small plates of Nephi, six exceptions to that era context appear and these distinctive expressions must be understood. The three year-related expressions that Nephi<sub>1</sub> quoted from the Book of Isaiah appear to have been written long before Lehi<sub>1</sub> left Jerusalem.<sup>145</sup> The two year-related expressions describing the first year of the reign of the Jewish king Zedekiah also relate to narratives that occurred before Lehi<sub>1</sub> left Jerusalem.<sup>146</sup> The chronological system of the kingdom of Judah was

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<sup>134</sup> 1 Nephi 10:4; 19:8; 2 Nephi 25:19.

<sup>135</sup> 2 Nephi 5:28.

<sup>136</sup> Enos 1:25.

<sup>137</sup> Jacob 1:1.

<sup>138</sup> 1 Nephi 17:4; 2 Nephi 5:34; Jarom 1:5, 13; Omni 1:3, 5.

<sup>139</sup> Mosiah 6:4; 3 Nephi 1:1.

<sup>140</sup> Mosiah 29:46.

<sup>141</sup> 3 Nephi 2:6.

<sup>142</sup> 2 Nephi 5:34.

<sup>143</sup> Jarom 1:5.

<sup>144</sup> Jarom 1:13; Omni 1:3, 5.

<sup>145</sup> 2 Nephi 16:1; 17:8; 24:28.

<sup>146</sup> 1 Nephi 1:4.

identified above as being the system most likely implied by those five expressions. The last year-related expression in the small plates of Nephi was engraved by Mormon<sub>2</sub> hundreds of years after the Lehi era context apparently came to an end.<sup>147</sup> Thus, while a Lehi era context is indicated for most of the narratives in the small plates of Nephi, these six year-related expressions and their associated narratives primarily relate to events outside the Lehi era context.

### 2.4.3 NC era context

Mormon<sub>2</sub> lived during the third and last Nephite era context, which has been called the Nephite Christian or NC era context.<sup>148</sup> When Mormon<sub>2</sub> added his chronological and Messianic witness to the small plates of Nephi, he did so with a personalized or G time-term. The meaning of his verification and contextual statement of chronology in the beginning text of the Words of Mormon is clear. “I Mormon” testify that “it is many hundred years after the coming of Christ”.<sup>149</sup> The implication of this witness is that Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s 600-year prophecy was fulfilled, just as Lehi<sub>1</sub> and his followers had expected. The singular phrase “after the coming of Christ” does not appear in any other year-related expression in the *Book of Mormon*, but it is closely related to the meaning of similar time-terms in the plates of Mormon.<sup>150</sup> The chronological symbolism of these time-terms also is clear. Just as “Lehi left Jerusalem” and his followers measured years from that event; so, the “coming of Christ” occurred and a new Nephite chronological system measured years from that event. By the time of Mormon<sub>2</sub>’s witness, “many hundred years” in the NC era context had been measured, numbered, and recorded. Mormon<sub>2</sub> later was killed by his enemies, presumably in the 385th year “from the coming of Christ”.<sup>151</sup> His son, Moroni<sub>2</sub>, reported in the final year-related expression of the *Book of Mormon* that “more than four hundred and twenty years has passed away since the sign was given of the coming of Christ”.<sup>152</sup> Thus, the NC era context appears to have been preserved faithfully for more than 420 years after the birth of Christ.

### 2.4.4 Intertwined time-term symbolism

As discussed in Section 2.2.3 above, the time-term letter pattern in the small plates of Nephi appears to take the 16 omitted name or (H) time-term letter-sets into account. Indeed, they are vital to the placement patterns of Nephi<sub>1</sub> and the subsequent writers in these plates. In Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s writings, the alternating (G) and (H) letter-sets appear to create an 11-part, balanced and reversible (GHGHG)[H](GHGHG) letter pattern. Section 2.2.3 also suggested prophetic symbolism associated with Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s central [H] letter-set and the long name or (D) letter-set engraved by Jacob<sub>2</sub>. When Jacob<sub>2</sub> placed his narratives in the small plates, a task that seems to have been undertaken late in his long life,<sup>153</sup> his four year-related expressions included three express time-terms and omitted a single time-term. Jacob<sub>2</sub> had received “commands” regarding

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<sup>147</sup> Words of Mormon 1:2.

<sup>148</sup> See Division 1, Part 3, Section 3.9.3.

<sup>149</sup> Words of Mormon 1:1-2.

<sup>150</sup> E.g., 3 Nephi 3:1; 4 Nephi 1:21, 48; Mormon 3:4.

<sup>151</sup> Mormon 6:5-15; 8:3.

<sup>152</sup> Moroni 10:1.

<sup>153</sup> Jacob preface.

these plates directly from Nephi<sub>1</sub> and, many years later, Jacob<sub>2</sub> re-established the use of alternating (G) and (H) letter-sets before delivering the plates to his son, Enos<sub>2</sub>. Moreover, when Enos<sub>2</sub> received the plates, he “promised obedience unto the commands” of Nephi<sub>1</sub>.<sup>154</sup> At that point in time, the placement pattern for time-terms in these plates could be depicted as (GHGHG)[H](GHGHG)(D)(GHG). Taken together with the idea of Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s continuing “commands”, Jacob<sub>2</sub>’s three-part, balanced and reversible (GHG) letter-group suggests that subsequent writers eventually were to conclude this record on the small plates of Nephi with another (GH[G]HG) time-term letter-group following Jacob<sub>2</sub>’s (D) time-term letter-set.

Enos<sub>2</sub> added just two G time-terms to his father’s time-term pattern; so, when he conveyed the small plates to his son, Jarom, the placement pattern (GHGHG)[H](GHGHG)(D)(GHG) had not changed. The last G time-term of Jacob<sub>2</sub> and the two G time-terms of Enos<sub>2</sub> presumably were understood to merge into a single (G) letter-set, just as Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s many identical and consecutive year-, time- and number-terms and narrative-links were deemed to merge into single letter-sets. Perhaps Enos<sub>2</sub> agreed with his father to use only G time-terms and to require his descendants who would later write in the plates (except the last) to compose year-related expressions that had no time-terms. Whatever the “commands” of Nephi<sub>1</sub> originally may have been, when the son of Enos<sub>2</sub>, Jarom, composed and engraved his narratives, he stated that he was writing “a few words according to the commandment of my father Enos, that our genealogy may be kept”.<sup>155</sup> Jarom then went on to compose two year-related expressions, each of which omitted the time-term. Thus, when the plates were transferred to Jarom’s son, Omni, the time-term placement pattern of the plates could be depicted as (GH[G]HG)[H](GH[G]HG)(D)(GHGH). The alternating (GHGH) letter-group was non-balanced, non-reversible, and incomplete when compared with either of Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s original (GH[G]HG) letter-groups.

Omni added two more H time-terms to the pre-existing placement pattern and his son, Amaron, added another H time-term.<sup>156</sup> For more than 265 recorded years, Jacob<sub>2</sub>, Enos<sub>2</sub>, Jarom, Omni and Amaron had created and maintained a time-term placement pattern apparently designed by Nephi<sub>1</sub>. The following writer was Amaron’s brother, Chemish, who kept the record “according to the commandments of our fathers”, but did not compose a year-related expression.<sup>157</sup> His son, Abinadom, also did not compose a year-related expression.<sup>158</sup> Amaleki<sub>1</sub>, the son of Abinadom, followed the examples of his grandfather and father by writing no year-related expression. However, Amaleki<sub>1</sub> did include details regarding the challenges to Nephite leadership during his days. As his life drew to a close, he apparently could find no other descendant of Jacob<sub>2</sub> to receive these plates; so, he delivered them to the Nephite king, Benjamin.<sup>159</sup> Thus, the (GH[G]HG)[H](GH[G]HG)(D)(GHGH) time-term letter pattern of Nephi<sub>1</sub>, Jacob<sub>2</sub>, and Jacob<sub>2</sub>’s descendants until Amaleki<sub>1</sub>, may indicate, and is certainly consistent with, an attempted reservation of space on the plates and an expectation of a final G time-term to be placed in the small plates when one of their descendants could add his witness

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<sup>154</sup> Jacob 7:27.

<sup>155</sup> Jarom 1:1.

<sup>156</sup> Omni 1:3, 5.

<sup>157</sup> Omni 1:9.

<sup>158</sup> Omni 1:10-11.

<sup>159</sup> Omni 1:12-30.

that Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s prophecy of the Messiah's birth had been fulfilled.<sup>160</sup> That expectation, with respect to Jacob<sub>2</sub>'s descendants at least, was not fulfilled. Mormon<sub>2</sub>, the sixth writer after Nephi<sub>1</sub> to record a year-related expression in these plates, added the final (G) letter-set hundreds of years after Amaleki<sub>1</sub> delivered the plates to Benjamin and some 384 years after the Messiah's birth.

The possible five-part symbol patterns of the visible moon at night and sun during the artificial day,<sup>161</sup> taken together with the proposed symbolism of the five-part year-term letter-groups,<sup>162</sup> suggest that some sort of related symbolism may have been intended by Nephi<sub>1</sub> with respect to his two (GH[G]HG) letter-groups and the third (GH[G]HG) letter-group that he seems to have required Jacob<sub>2</sub> and his descendants to write. In the proposed visible moon symbol patterns, the delimiting events for the moon seem to be the first and last crescent moons near the horizons at evening and dawn, respectively. The central event seems to have been the full moon rising from the eastern horizon, remaining visible throughout the night, and setting into the western horizon at dawn. In the proposed visible sun symbol patterns, the delimiting events seem to be the sun's rising above the eastern horizon in the morning and its setting into the western horizon at evening. The central event seems to be its zenith position and brightness at noonday. Thus, one might expect that the beginning and ending (G) letter-sets in each of the five-part (GH[G]HG) time-term letter-groups also would represent delimiting times in Nephiite chronology and that the central [G] letter-set might represent a time of particular importance, a time like the brightness of the sun or full moon above.

The times defined by the (G) letter-sets do not disappoint this expectation. The (GH[G]HG) letter-group in First Nephi begins with a single G time-term that identifies the reign of Zedekiah, the king who presided over a rebellion by the kingdom of Judah that brought about the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem. During Zedekiah's reign, Lehi<sub>1</sub> received his prophetic calling, pursued his prophetic work, and eventually left Jerusalem. The central G time-term is part of Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s 600-year prophecy, which appears to have been delivered in the context of Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s deliverance both from being murdered and from leaving his family to suffer through the following destruction. The event is definite: Lehi<sub>1</sub> immediately obeyed God's command to take his family and leave Jerusalem.<sup>163</sup> The ending G time-term in First Nephi is part of Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s first repetition of Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s 600-year prophecy, apparently given in the context of an angel directly confirming the prophecy to Nephi<sub>1</sub>.<sup>164</sup>

The (GH[G]HG) letter-group in Second Nephi begins with a single G time-term that relates to the time when God commanded Nephi<sub>1</sub> to create his second set of plates, the ones that came to be known as the "small plates". The central G time-term is part of Isaiah<sub>1</sub>'s record, which identifies the time when he received his calling to be a prophet and began to warn the people of Judah that their kingdom would be destroyed if they did not repent. The ending (G) letter-set in Second Nephi is composed of two consecutive G time-terms. The first is another part of the Book of Isaiah, where Babylon is identified as the nation that will bring about the prophesied destruction. This is followed by the G time-term that is part of Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s second repetition of

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<sup>160</sup> See Division 10, Part 4.

<sup>161</sup> See Section 2.2 above.

<sup>162</sup> See Section 2.3 above.

<sup>163</sup> 1 Nephi 2:1-5.

<sup>164</sup> 1 Nephi 19:8.

Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s 600-year prophecy. This G time-term occurs in the context of Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s declaration that "the words of the prophets" continued to preserve this vital prophecy.<sup>165</sup>

The third (GH[G]HG) letter-group is spread across the writings of Jacob<sub>2</sub>, his descendants, and the Words of Mormon. Jacob<sub>2</sub>, "having ministered much unto [his] people", begins with a single G time-term that identifies a time late in his ministry. As one of the prophets who maintained the 600-year prophecy, he noted that "we labor diligently to engraven these words upon plates, hoping that our beloved brethren and our children will receive them with thankful hearts"; and he also declared, "we had a hope of his [the Messiah's] glory many hundred years before his coming".<sup>166</sup> The second (G) letter-set is the one that seems to have been planned to become the central [G] letter-set in a completed (GH[G]HG) letter-group. This (G) letter-set consists of three G time-terms: the last one composed by Jacob<sub>2</sub> and the two composed by Enos<sub>2</sub>. Since this (G) letter-set is followed only by H time-terms in the writings of Jacob<sub>2</sub>'s other descendants, the letter pattern suggests that the planning certainly was done by Jacob<sub>2</sub>, but also may have included consultation with Enos<sub>2</sub>.

The first of these three G time-terms occurs in a year-related expression in which Jacob<sub>2</sub> is quoting Sherem, when this challenger sought to wrest religious leadership from Jacob<sub>2</sub> and to destroy the expectation of a Messiah to come "many hundred years hence".<sup>167</sup> The second or central G time-term of these three G time-terms occurs when Jacob<sub>2</sub>'s young son, Enos<sub>2</sub>, calls upon God, apparently to know if he is worthy to accept the leadership role offered him by his father. God tells Enos<sub>2</sub>, "thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed ...wherefore go to it; thy faith hath made thee whole". As part of this revelation, God also declares that there are "many years" yet to come before the Messiah's prophesied birth.<sup>168</sup> The third G time-term records the preservation of Enos<sub>2</sub> as another of the prophets. Before he died, he saw the 179th year pass away from the time Lehi<sub>1</sub> left Jerusalem.<sup>169</sup> All three G time-terms that create the central (G) letter-set relate (either shortly before or long after) to the crucial time when the transition of religious leadership occurred from Jacob<sub>2</sub> to Enos<sub>2</sub>.

The last of the (G) letter-sets in the small plates of Nephi was added by Mormon<sub>2</sub>.<sup>170</sup> The temporal context was "many hundred years" after the birth of the Messiah. By his astute repetition of Jacob<sub>2</sub>'s phrase "many hundred years", Mormon<sub>2</sub> finished the third (GH[G]HG) letter-group begun by Jacob<sub>2</sub> more than 700 years before. Mormon<sub>2</sub>'s conclusion of the complete (GHGHG)(H)(GH[G]HG)(D)(GHGHG) placement pattern identifies the central letter-set in the pattern apparently designed by Nephi<sub>1</sub>: the central [G] letter-set composed of a single G time-term in 2 Nephi 16:1. This time-term occurs in Isaiah<sub>1</sub>'s narrative about his calling to be a prophet and the revelation he received that the kingdom of Judah would be destroyed and a remnant would be spared.<sup>171</sup>

The chronological symbolism of Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s two (GH[G]HG) letter-groups does not appear to end with their connections to natural visible patterns or their emphasis on defining events in the

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<sup>165</sup> 2 Nephi 25:19.

<sup>166</sup> Jacob 4:1-4.

<sup>167</sup> Jacob 7:7.

<sup>168</sup> Enos 1:5-8.

<sup>169</sup> Enos 1:25.

<sup>170</sup> Words of Mormon 1:2.

<sup>171</sup> See Isaiah 6.

lives of the prophets. A clear and specific (1/6/1/6/1) number pattern and symbolism appeared with Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s year-terms and that number pattern suggests the examination of time-terms for number patterns.<sup>172</sup> The result of that inquiry is other closely-related number patterns associated with Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s G and H time-terms. Seven G time-terms occur in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s two (GH[G]HG) letter-groups, but the last two time-terms combine into a single letter-set; so, there are just six (G) letter-sets. The number 6 appears within the context of the number 7, a (6 within 7) number pattern, likely suggesting the seven-day week in which six days carry the burdens of labor and the seventh comforts with rest. Nine H time-terms also occur in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s two (GH[G]HG) letter-groups. In the (GH[G]HG) letter-group of First Nephi, a single H time-term creates the first of two (H) letter-sets. Six consecutive H time-terms combine to create the second of these letter-sets. Again, the numbers and suggested arithmetic (1+6 = 7) seem to indicate a seven-day week in which a Sabbath day is kept sacred from six days of labor. The (1 then 6) order of these two (H) letter-sets in First Nephi apparently is determined not by the underlying religious texts or tradition related to Sabbath days, but by Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s other placement patterns. The chronological symbolism of the numbers 1, 6 and 7 in the context of escapees from the pending destruction of Jerusalem seems clear. The seven-day week with its sacred Sabbath day has been symbolized by Nephi<sub>1</sub> with both G and H time-terms. Moreover, just as the G time-terms suggest six days of labor followed by a seventh day of rest; so, the H time-terms in the (GH[G]HG) letter-group of First Nephi suggest that each day of rest is followed by six days of labor. In other words, the measurement and numbering of days in each week and in subsequent weeks was continuous, a daily pattern of numbering that seems obvious today, but that may have needed reiteration at the time of Lehi<sub>1</sub> and Nephi<sub>1</sub>.

In the (GH[G]HG) letter-group of Second Nephi, the (H) letter-sets are created by two separate H time-terms. Hence, the (6 within 7) number pattern of G time-terms in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s two (GH[G]HG) letter-groups is placed within a total number context with nine H time-terms in the same letter-groups. This suggests a (7 within 9) number pattern, similar to the one associated with prepositional or Q narrative-links that was introduced in the structural discussion in Part 1 of this Division.<sup>173</sup> Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s apparent symbolism in both time-term and narrative-link contexts seems to be that a Nephite (originally Israelite), continuously-kept count of seven days is enclosed by, and being contrasted with, a continuously-kept count of nine days. Because this (7 within 9) number pattern also occurs with narrative-links, the analysis now proceeds to examine that pattern in the narrative-links before returning to the question of the chronological symbolism of the (7 within 9) number pattern.

## 2.5 Narrative-link symbolism

The language of the narrative-links used in the small plates of Nephi may seem rudimentary. Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings include three linguistic types of narrative-links. Prepositions, adverbs and verbs appear in First Nephi; prepositions and verbs occur in Second Nephi. In the compositions of all the other writers, only verbs are used as narrative-links. Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s 12 prepositional or Q narrative-links include the words *for* (once), *in* (six times), *of* (four times) and *within* (once). His two adverbial or U narrative-links are both *yea*. His three verbal or R narrative-links are all past

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<sup>172</sup> See Division 2, Part 1, Sections 1.4-1.5; and Section 2.3.3 above.

<sup>173</sup> See Division 2, Part 1, Section 1.5.

tense: *have suffered* (once) and *had passed* (twice). The 12 R narrative-links used by Jacob<sub>2</sub>, his descendants, and Mormon<sub>2</sub> include: *had* (once), *had passed* (eight times), *is* (once), *pass* (once) and *shall come* (once). These narrative-links are so simple, they initially may seem unimportant. However, their complex placement patterns in these plates suggest a systematic calendrical symbolism. (Table 2.A also depicts the diction, typology, placement and references associated with these seemingly ordinary narrative-links.)

### 2.5.1 Prepositional narrative-links

The placement patterns that appear to be associated with Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s 12 prepositional or Q narrative-links were introduced in Part 1 of this Division.<sup>174</sup> By themselves, these narrative-links may be thought to form a single (Q) letter-set; however, when their diction and numbers are considered, they seem to create order and calendrical symbolism in the distribution of their year-related expressions and associated narratives. As discussed in Part 1, two overlapping, coterminous patterns seem to have been intended, somewhat like the overlapping, coterminous (BA[B]AB) letter-group and (1/6/1/6/1) number pattern in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings, which were discussed above in connection with year-term symbolism.<sup>175</sup> The following list (duplicated from Part 1 of this Division) itemizes the diction, numbers of identical and consecutive narrative-links, and textual references associated with the sequential placement of Q narrative-links in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings.

Preposition	Number	Reference	Comment
<i>of</i>	1	1 Nephi 1:4	predetermined first of 4 prepositions ( <i>of</i> )
<i>in</i>	1	1 Nephi 1:4	intermixed first of 4 prepositions ( <i>in</i> )
<i>of</i>	2	1 Nephi 15:13; 17:4	central 2 of 4 prepositions ( <i>of</i> )
<i>for</i>	1	1 Nephi 17:20	unique preposition in small plates
<i>in</i>	2	1 Nephi 18:17; 19:8	central 2 of 4 prepositions ( <i>in</i> )
<i>of</i>	1	1 Nephi 22:26	last of 4 prepositions ( <i>of</i> )
<i>in</i>	1	2 Nephi 16:1	predetermined last of 4 prepositions ( <i>in</i> )
<i>within</i>	1	2 Nephi 17:8	predetermined unique preposition in small plates
<i>in</i>	2	2 Nephi 24:28; 25:19	one predetermined preposition ( <i>in</i> ) followed by the last preposition ( <i>in</i> ) in the small plates

Two coterminous, overlapping narrative-link patterns are depicted in the foregoing list by the first nine narrative-links and the prepositions *in*, *of* and *for*. These diction and number patterns both are balanced around the central preposition *for*, which is a unique narrative-link in the small plates of Nephi. The diction pattern is (*of/in/of*) on one side of the central preposition, with the second *of* consisting of two apparently identical and consecutive narrative-links. On the other side of the central preposition, the diction pattern is (*in/of/in*), with the first *in* consisting of two apparently identical and consecutive narrative-links. The complete (*of/in/of*)(*for*)(*in/of/in*) diction pattern is non-reversible. The number pattern (1/1/2) appears on one side of the single central preposition, while on the other side, the converse number pattern is (2/1/1). The complete (1/1/2/1/2/1/1) number pattern is reversible. While these overlapping patterns are composed of

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> See Division 2, Part 1, Sections 1.4-1.5.

the same nine sequential Q narrative-links, the diction placement may be viewed as creating “units” somewhat like letter-sets. Thus, these nine Q narrative-links may be sorted into just seven units: *in* (three units); *of* (three units); and *for* (one unit). Nephi<sub>1</sub> again seems to have placed a (7 within 9) number pattern in his writings.

The last three Q narrative-links use the words *within* (once) and *in* (twice as apparently identical and consecutive prepositions). Their diction and number patterns may seem unrelated to the balanced diction and number patterns of the previous nine prepositions. Moreover, the meanings of their diction are identical, at least if the word *in* “denotes present or inclosed, surrounded by limits”. If *in* does not have that meaning, but instead “denotes present in time”,<sup>176</sup> then the words *within* and *in* must be considered separately. In either case, both *within* and *in* may appear to be mere adjuncts to the overlapping, coterminous placement design of the previous nine Q narrative-links.

Despite the seemingly unrelated or adjunct nature of the final three Q narrative-links, one may not merely ignore the fact that two of the six *in* narrative-links occur in this final part of the 12 Q narrative-links. Moreover, each of the clearly unique Q narrative-links (*for* in the first nine and *within* in the last three) is followed by a unit consisting of two consecutive *in* narrative-links. The placement of this diction suggests that while the initial nine Q narrative-links clearly indicate delimited, self-contained, overlapping diction and number patterns, a third intentional and overlapping pattern seems to consist of all 12 prepositions, again divided in half by the six *in* narrative-links. Depending on the definition of *in*, this third pattern may be depicted in terms of numbers as (1/1/2/1/2/1/4), (1/1/2/1/2/1/1)(3) or (1/1/2/1/2/1/1)(1/2) and in terms of diction units as (*of/in/of*)(*for*)(*in/of/in-within-in*), (*of/in/of*)(*for*)(*in/of/in*)(*within-in*) or (*of/in/of*)(*for*)(*in/of/in*)(*within/in*).

### 2.5.2 The meanings of *in*

The definitional issue posed by each *in* narrative-link is its ambiguity. Webster’s 1828 dictionary defined *in* as denoting something “present or inclosed, surrounded by limits” or “present in time.”<sup>177</sup> The definitions in the *Oxford English Dictionary* are more precise with respect to time: *in* can mean “[w]ithin the limits of a period or space of time” or “at the expiration” of a “limit of time.”<sup>178</sup> The chronological difference in these two meanings is particularly important in Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s writings, where *in* is the narrative-link for two of the three iterations of Lehi’s 600-year prophecy. The two later repetitions of the prophecy’s year-related expression are connected to their associated narratives by the 7th and 12th Q narrative-links.<sup>179</sup> All three iterations of the prophecy have similarities, but they also differ from each other, either in their narrative-links, number-terms or time-terms. These differences in the temporal-expressions cannot be overlooked in a detailed analysis of narrative-links.

Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s initial statement of his father’s prophecy notes generally that certain events were to follow *after* others and some events were to occur in *the own due time of the Lord*. These general chronological assertions are followed by an emphatic statement: “yea, even six hundred years

<sup>176</sup> Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, I: [946] (*in*), spelling in the original.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, I: 1395 (*in*).

<sup>179</sup> 1 Nephi 19:8; 2 Nephi 25:19.



from the time that my father left Jerusalem”, a prophet would be raised up among the Jews.<sup>180</sup> In this statement, the narrative-link is the adverb *yea*. “[S]ometimes [*yea*] introduces a subject, with the sense of indeed, verily, truly, it is so” and “sometimes [*yea*] enforces the sense of something preceding; not only so, but more”.<sup>181</sup> Both definitions (an introduction and an enlargement) seem applicable to 1 Nephi 10:4, where *yea* is used as the adverbial or U narrative-link. The time when the Messiah would be born had been described previously in a general way, but the narrative-link *yea* introduced a year-related expression with a definite number-term and enlarged on the general prophecy by describing the precise time when the Messiah would enter mortality. In both later repetitions of Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s prophecy, the narrative-link is not the adverb *yea*, but the preposition *in*.

The number-term in Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s initial statement of the prophecy is “even six hundred”. The adverb *even*, according to Webster’s 1828 dictionary, notes certain things “emphatically” or brings “something within a description, which is unexpected.”<sup>182</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *even* as “an intensive or emphatic particle” meaning something akin to *quite*, *fully*, *exactly* or *precisely*, so as to emphasize the “identity” of the subject, object, predicate or qualifying circumstance.<sup>183</sup> Thus, Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s initial statement of the prophecy may be paraphrased as: “Truly, the Messiah will be born exactly six hundred years from the time that my father left Jerusalem”. In both later repetitions of Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s prophecy, each number-term is merely “six hundred”. Did Nephi<sub>1</sub> misconstrue or alter his father’s precise 600-year prophecy? Is the prophesied period “exactly” 600 years, “almost” 600 years, or merely “within” 600 years? The time-terms of the three temporal-expressions provide evidence to help answer such questions.

Each of the three iterations of Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s prophecy in Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s writings uses a personalized name or G time-term. Again, two of the G time-terms are identical: “from the time that my father left Jerusalem”. The third is slightly different and less formal because the word *that* has been ellipted: “from the time my father left Jerusalem”.<sup>184</sup> The identical time-terms occur in the first and last expressions of the prophecy and strengthen the implication that their two number-terms are to be considered identical. Indeed, all three prophecies are about the same event and the numbered period prophesied in each case is 600 years following Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s escape from Jerusalem. Thus, the ambiguity of the *in* narrative-links associated with Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s prophecy seems likely to have been intended to be resolved in favor of defining the period as “at the expiration” of a “limit of time”, rather than “within the limits of a period ... of time”. That is, the 7th and 12th Q narrative-links seem likely to mean “at the expiration” of exactly 600 years.

This definition of the 7th and 12th Q narrative-links (each an *in*) contrasts with the definition of the other four instances where the word *in* is the narrative-link. In three temporal-expressions, these Q narrative-links occur with A year-terms and referenced ordinal or M number-terms, either “in that same year” (once) or “[i]n the year” (twice).<sup>185</sup> In these instances,

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<sup>180</sup> 1 Nephi 10:2-4.

<sup>181</sup> Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, II: [947] (*yea*).

<sup>182</sup> Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, I: [691] (*even*).

<sup>183</sup> *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, I: 906 (*even*).

<sup>184</sup> A similar use of formal and less formal time-terms occurs in the plates of Mormon. At the enthronement of king Mosiah<sub>2</sub>, the formal, long name time-term is “from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem”. However, at the institution of the reign of the judges and the new Nephite chronological system, a less formal, altered name time-term (with the word *that* ellipted) is used to describe the previous chronological system: “from the time Lehi left Jerusalem”. Compare Mosiah 6:4; 29:46.

<sup>185</sup> 1 Nephi 1:4; 2 Nephi 16:1; 24:28.

the word *in* means “within the limits” of a certain year. In the fourth instance, the Q narrative-link occurs just with a B year-term in the phrase, *in years*.<sup>186</sup> Webster’s 1828 dictionary mentions this phrase: “*Years*, in the plural, is sometimes equivalent to age or old age; as a man in *years*.”<sup>187</sup> The associated narrative in First Nephi states that Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s “parents being stricken in years ... were brought down, yea, even upon their sick beds”. Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s parents were not yet “at the expiration” of their old age because they apparently continued to live for some time.<sup>188</sup> However, they were weakened and lived “within the limits” of their old age. Thus, in all four of these instances, the word *in* appears to mean “within the limits of a period ... of time”, rather than “at the expiration” of a “limit of time”.

Within the 12 Q narrative-links, the words *for* and *within* are unique. Each is preceded (not necessarily immediately) in the text by a single *in* narrative-link that appears to mean “within the limits of a period ... of time”. Each is followed in the text by an *in* unit composed of two consecutive *in* narrative-links. Both distinctive meanings of *in* are represented in those units: first, “within the limits of a period ... of time”; and second, “at the expiration” of a “limit of time”. Based on these distinctive definitional structures, the 12 Q narrative-links appear to have been designed to be viewed as a single group, with two exceptional prepositions (*for* and *within*). The unique preposition *within* most likely was not intended to be combined into a single unit with the prior *in* narrative-link or with the following unit made up of two consecutive (but definitively different) uses of *in* narrative-links. Thus, the patterns created by all 12 Q narrative-links may have been intended to include the integrated seven-unit pattern depicted in the following list.

Preposition	Unit	Number	Reference
<i>of-in'</i>	1	1 & 2	1 Nephi 1:4
<i>of-of</i>	2	3 & 4	1 Nephi 15:13; 17:4
<i>for</i>	3	5	1 Nephi 17:20
<i>in'-in''</i>	4	6 & 7	1 Nephi 18:17; 19:8
<i>of-in'</i>	5	8 & 9	1 Nephi 22:26; 2 Nephi 16:1
<i>within</i>	6	10	2 Nephi 17:8
<i>in'-in''</i>	7	11 & 12	2 Nephi 24:28; 25:19

The (*within*)(*in'-in''*) units in this diction pattern, and the fifth and tenth positions of the unique prepositions, do not appear to be unrelated or mere adjuncts to the previous units of the pattern. By analyzing the definitions of *in*, one may view the last three Q narrative-links as integral parts of the entire group of 12 Q narrative-links. These 12 prepositions may be sorted as six *in* narrative-links, four *of* narrative-links, one *for* narrative-link and one *within* narrative-link, possibly a 6 *in* + 6 not *in* = 12 pattern. Alternatively, they may be sorted into nine units: *in* (four units); *of* (three units); *for* (one unit); and *within* (one unit). These nine units remind one of the first nine prepositions that appear in distinctive, overlapping, coterminous and balanced diction and number patterns. The initial nine prepositions may be sorted as four *in* narrative-links, four

<sup>186</sup> 1 Nephi 18:17.

<sup>187</sup> Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, II: [948] (year), italics in the original.

<sup>188</sup> Compare 1 Nephi 18:19-24; 2 Nephi 2:1-5; 3:25; 4:12; 5:1-6, which suggest that Sariah passed away after nourishing her youngest sons through childhood and perhaps after Lehi, passed away.

*of* narrative-links, and one *for* narrative-link, or as seven units: *in* (three units); *of* (three units); and *for* (one unit). Then again, as the foregoing list suggests, the 12 Q narrative-links may be sorted into seven units: (*of-in'*)(*of-of*)(*for*)(*in'-in''*)(*of-in'*)(*within*)(*in'-in''*). Hence, the Q narrative-links suggest at least two number patterns with potential calendrical symbolism related to the numbers 7 and 9: first, (7 within 9) patterns similar to the one associated with Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s G and H time-terms; and second, (7 and 9 within 12) patterns.

In the discussion of time-terms, the (6+1 = 7) and (1+6 = 7) arithmetic implications were interpreted as being associated with the continuous repetition of an Israelite 7-day week consisting of six natural days of labor and a sacred natural day of rest; i.e., a calendrical symbolism. With respect to Q narrative-links, the related numbers of units and implicit arithmetic might be sorted as (3+1+3 = 7) or, perhaps, as 6 repeated (*of* and *in*) units and a unique *for* narrative-link (3+3+1 = 7 or 6+1 = 7). The position of the unique day or number 1 in a continuous repetition of 7-day weeks will change depending on the day when the measurement of the week begins. For example, if one designates a week from today, and today is Tuesday (day 3), the upcoming week may be depicted as (3+1+3 = 7). The delimited seven units of Q narrative-links, whether understood as (7 within 9) or (7 within 12) also appear to be potential calendrical symbols of an Israelite 7-day week.

### 2.5.3 Calendrical symbolism of the number 9

The Q narrative-links and G and H time-terms both suggest that the number 7 existed within a numerical context represented by the number 9. The number 7, as it appears in the (7 within 9) number patterns of these narrative-links and time-terms, seems to present a specific calendrical symbolism, the continuous repetition of a 7-day week. This proposed symbolism would be strengthened if the number 9 also represented a slightly larger, perhaps quite different, but continuous repetition of nine specific days. Such a connection is proposed, but its cultural setting is not Judah, the Near East or Egypt. The setting is ancient Mesoamerica. The underlying assumption of this proposal is that ink designs produced before 1830 CE can symbolize something meaningful about Mesoamerican chronology nearly 2,600 years ago. If this were the only proposed connection to this early chronology in the text of the *Book of Mormon*, the assumption should be rejected. However, many ink designs and their apparent diction, language typologies, and placement patterns seem to symbolize other aspects of Mesoamerican chronology. At this point in the analysis, the proposal that the number 9 in the (7 within 9) number patterns implies a repeating 9-day cycle in Mesoamerica must be taken as provisional.

Nine sequential “lords of the night” that apparently were known in northern Mesoamerica were named in a Hispanic document written by Jacinto de la Serna as early as 1656 CE. They were also discussed in print by Lorenzo Boturini Benaduci in 1746 and by Antonio de León y Gama in 1792. Thus, European documentation of this 9-day cycle appeared well before 1830. Nine apparently related hieroglyphs (often referred to as “glyphs”) were found in Mexican codices by European scholars during the closing years of the 19th century.<sup>189</sup> In a 1929 study, one of the Maya glyphs (Glyph G), which has nine variants that occur sequentially in the context

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<sup>189</sup> J. Eric S. Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: Introduction* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, Publication 589, 1950), 208, accessed at [mesoweb.com/publications/Thompson/Thompson1950.html](http://mesoweb.com/publications/Thompson/Thompson1950.html).

of chronological statements, was suggested to have a similar function in southern Mesoamerica as the nine lords of the night in northern Mesoamerica.<sup>190</sup>

Scholars since then have struggled to find correspondences between Glyph G and the nine northern lords, and between Glyph G and the sometimes accompanying Glyphs A through F, X, Y and Z, which together make up the so-called “Supplementary Series” of Maya chronological glyphs. By 1935, scholars had identified Glyphs A through E as recording lunar information, but Glyphs F and G were suggested to be cultic in origin, rather than lunar.<sup>191</sup> A 1972 study suggested that the 9-day cycle in Mesoamerica had an astronomical basis like that of the nine Hindu “planets” (sun, moon, five visible planets, and two invisible planets that were thought to create eclipses).<sup>192</sup> A 2003 paper proposed that the times represented by Glyphs F and G were general periods of maize development, but it also noted that “there are still many unanswered questions”.<sup>193</sup> More recent studies of Glyphs F and G suggest both cultic and astronomical associations potentially having to do with nightly astrological oracles for the following artificial day, as first suggested by Cristóbal del Castillo in 1596 with respect to the Aztec lords of the night,<sup>194</sup> and having to do with lunar cycles “commensurated with the 260-day [cycle] ... to track the eclipse year and the position of the moon relative to the nodes in the draconic month. Thus, [the proposed Maya 9-day cycle] would have been useful for the prediction of both solar and lunar eclipses”.<sup>195</sup> Among the Maya, such eclipses “are often associated with crop failure and birth defects. Lunar eclipses are specifically regarded as damaging to fertility”.<sup>196</sup> “Throughout the Maya area, eclipses are believed to cause illness and death and to be particularly dangerous to pregnant women”.<sup>197</sup> How the Maya may have viewed eclipses some 2,600 years ago is not known.

Nephi<sub>1</sub> placed his creation and composition of the small plates in the mid-6th century BCE, more than 30 years after he left Jerusalem.<sup>198</sup> Mesoamerican evidence of the 9 lords of the night or Glyph G seems to appear only hundreds of years after the time of Nephi<sub>1</sub>. Nevertheless, the (7 within 9) number patterns in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s G and H time-terms and Q narrative-links, viewed together with *Book of Mormon* references to 7-day weeks and Sabbath days, seem to suggest two continuous day cycles in which each natural day was viewed as progressing from evening to

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<sup>190</sup> J. Eric S. Thompson, “Maya Chronology: Glyph G of the Lunar Series”, *American Anthropologist*, 31 (1929), 223-31, accessed at [anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdfdirect/10.1525/aa.1921.31.2.02a00010](https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdfdirect/10.1525/aa.1921.31.2.02a00010).

<sup>191</sup> For a more detailed introduction to the “Initial Series” and “Supplementary Series” of Maya glyphs, including the “Lunar Series”, see, e.g., Michael J. Grofe, “Glyphs G and F: the cycle of nine, the lunar nodes, and the draconic month”, in Gerardo Aldana y Villalobos and Edwin L. Barnhart, ed., *Archaeoastronomy and the Maya* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014), 135-39, accessed at [academy.edu/8210479/Glyphs\\_G\\_and\\_F\\_the\\_cycle\\_of\\_nine\\_the\\_lunar\\_nodes\\_and\\_the\\_draconic\\_month](https://academy.edu/8210479/Glyphs_G_and_F_the_cycle_of_nine_the_lunar_nodes_and_the_draconic_month).

<sup>192</sup> David H. Kelley, “The Nine Lords of the Night”, in John A. Graham, ed., *Studies in the Archaeology of Mexico and Guatemala* (Berkeley: University of California, Contributions of the University of California Archaeological Research Facility 16, 1972), 53-68, accessed at [eshcolarship.org/uc/item/6v49z886#page=55](https://eshcolarship.org/uc/item/6v49z886#page=55).

<sup>193</sup> Sven Gronemeyer, “Glyphs G and F identified as aspects of the Maize God”, *Wayeb Notes* 22 (2006), accessed at [wayeb.org/notes/wayeb\\_notes0022.pdf](https://wayeb.org/notes/wayeb_notes0022.pdf).

<sup>194</sup> Gerardo Aldana, “Ti’huun: Glyph F as Astrological Title”, in *Mayan Hieroglyphic Astronomy Notes* (Santa Barbara: University of California, Mayan Hieroglyphic Astronomy Collaboratory, No. 2, 2014), accessed at [sites.google.com/site/glyphastro/notes/note-files](https://sites.google.com/site/glyphastro/notes/note-files).

<sup>195</sup> Grofe, “Glyphs G and F: the cycle of nine, the lunar nodes, and the draconic month”, 153.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>197</sup> Susan Milbrath, *Star Gods of the Maya: Astronomy in Art, Folklore, and Calendars* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 27, accessed at [academia.edu/2762803/Star\\_Gods\\_of\\_the\\_Maya\\_Astronomy\\_in\\_Art\\_Folklore\\_and\\_Calendars](https://academia.edu/2762803/Star_Gods_of_the_Maya_Astronomy_in_Art_Folklore_and_Calendars).

<sup>198</sup> 2 Nephi 5:28-34.

evening (an astronomer's or, perhaps more accurately, astrologer's day cycle for observing the temporal events of the night that usually involved the moon, planets, and fixed stars).

#### 2.5.4 Calendrical symbolism of the number 12

What may be suggested, if anything, by the 12 Q narrative-links and by the apparent definitional differentiation of the 7th and 12th prepositions? In Section 2.3.3, the symbolism of the year-term number 12 in the (1/6/1/6/1) number pattern appeared to relate to the 12 men who would follow the Messiah, beings whose "brightness did exceed that of the stars in the firmament".<sup>199</sup> The moon is the dominant natural light in the "firmament" of the night; so, the "brightness" of these 12 beings perhaps suggests a lunar association for the proposed (6+6 = 12) number pattern. As that Section also noted, the symbolism of the alternative 12 and 13 numbers of B year-terms in the (AB[A]BA) and (BA[B]AB) letter-groups seemed to represent calendrical information associated with ancient lunar calendars (of the Near East in particular) and, perhaps, with observations of the moon's positions within the stars. A Near Eastern spring to autumn festival/agricultural/ equinoctial period typically appears to have been maintained as a six-month period that divided the year into a consistent six-month portion and another portion usually containing six months, but if intercalation were declared, seven or perhaps even eight months. The numbers 12 and 13 related to express time-terms also were mentioned in Section 2.4. Furthermore, an apparently planned group of 12 time-terms was created by Jacob<sub>2</sub> and the subsequent writers, with six time-terms (beginning with the long name in Jacob 1:1) being express and six time-terms being omitted. This group's (6+6 = 12) number pattern may suggest that the era calendar of the faithful followers of Lehi<sub>1</sub> and Nephi<sub>1</sub> was a 12-month calendar divided into two 6-month semesters; i.e., a calendar without intercalation.

Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s creation of 12 Q narrative-links involved the addition of a second unique Q narrative-link (*within*) and two more consecutive *in* narrative-links in a definitional pattern that placed *in* (within limits) immediately ahead of *in* (at the expiration of a limit) in a second Q unit. The six *in* narrative-links clearly divide his 12 Q narrative-links in half, just as the (6+6 = 12) year- and time-term number patterns depicted 12 as the sum of two 6s. In a related manner, the proposed definitions of the 7th and 12th prepositions may be interpreted as marking out the limits of the latter group of six Q narrative-links; i.e., 7-12, as distinguished from the former 1-6. Thus, the 12 Q narrative-links may be proposed to symbolize a 12-month calendar made up of two 6-month semesters.

If the (7 within 9) number pattern of the Q narrative-links is assumed to be a calendrical symbol related to continuous repetitions of 7-day and 9-day cycles, respectively, then the remaining issue with respect to the 12 Q narrative-links is what might be symbolized by the (7 within 9 within 12) number pattern. The (7 within 9) narrative-link number pattern sorts the same nine Q narrative-links in different ways; however, the (7 within 9 within 12) number pattern creates an entirely new number pattern by adding three more Q narrative-links that are tied to the prior nine Q narrative-links by a second unique narrative-link and by the use and order of the two different definitions of the preposition *in*. These facts of the text create number and diction patterns for all 12 Q narrative-links that are different from the patterns of the first nine Q narrative-links. The implication may be that while the calendrical symbolism of the numbers 7

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<sup>199</sup> 1 Nephi 1:10.

and 9 relate to constant repetitions of periods of natural days, the symbolism of 12 (as discussed with respect to year- and time-terms) may be fine-tuned in the symbolism of the Q narrative-links to suggest continuous repetitions of the calendar of 12 synodic months and its six-month semesters.

In Section 1.3 of Part 1 of Division 1, this study noted that Webster’s 1828 dictionary described this type of year as a “[l]unar astronomical year”, which consists of 12 “lunar synodical months”. The Islamic calendar, which originated in Arabia, is famous for being a purely 12-month lunar calendar, but it was not instituted until the time of the prophet Muḥammad in the seventh century CE.<sup>200</sup> The reign of Judah’s king Zedekiah (about 597 to 587 or 586 BCE) was more than a thousand years earlier. The calendar of Arabia in the first millennium BCE seems to have been “a purely Lunar year” without intercalation,<sup>201</sup> but accurate information about the history of ancient Arabia “rests on meagre foundations”.<sup>202</sup>

If Lehi<sub>1</sub> and his followers had any understanding of the intercalation practices of the kingdom of Judah, they likely were geared to a winter wet season, in which the most rain fell from December through February.<sup>203</sup> Lehi<sub>1</sub> and his followers probably would not have felt a need to continue such practices in their chronological system during the relatively rapid trek south-southeast through western Arabia<sup>204</sup> or during their sojourn of another seven years or so in the hills and mountains of southern Arabia,<sup>205</sup> before they moved to the southern seacoast and the land they called Bountiful.<sup>206</sup> In southern Arabia, the monsoon or wet season occurs in summer (June to September).<sup>207</sup>

A simple 12-month calendar that repeated without intercalation may have been all that the followers of Lehi<sub>1</sub> could manage. As Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s description of their trek and shipbuilding make clear, the family spent more than eight years trekking and sojourning “in the wilderness” of the Arabian Peninsula and, presumably, many more years building a seaworthy ship on the coast of that Peninsula and then sailing to the New World.<sup>208</sup> A 12-month, continuously repeating lunar calendar would have provided an observationally simple, easily recorded calendar for measuring years during a period of more than a decade on the Peninsula and, depending on the mostly unmentioned complexities and length of the voyage to the New World, perhaps nearly two decades from the time Lehi<sub>1</sub> left Jerusalem. Intercalation of their simple calendar, outside of a stable agricultural context, may have been the least of their concerns.<sup>209</sup>

The adoption of a continuously repeating 12-month observational calendar for measuring the Lehi era also would have given the Nephites a “short”, but culturally understandable

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<sup>200</sup> Sherrard Beaumont Burnaby, *Elements of the Jewish and Muhammadan Calendars* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1901), 367-69, accessed at archive.org; Robert G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the coming of Islam* (London: Routledge, 2001), 1, accessed at almuslih.org/Library.

<sup>201</sup> Burnaby, *Elements of the Jewish and Muhammadan Calendars*, 367, 460-70.

<sup>202</sup> Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, 10.

<sup>203</sup> *Israel Science and Technology Directory: Climate and Seasons in Israel*, accessed at science.co.il/weather/Israel-climate.php.

<sup>204</sup> 1 Nephi 16:13-14.

<sup>205</sup> 1 Nephi 17:1-4.

<sup>206</sup> 1 Nephi 17:5-6.

<sup>207</sup> *Oman Water Society: Climate*, accessed at omanws.org.om/en/page/climate.

<sup>208</sup> 1 Nephi 17:7-22, 48-55; 18.

<sup>209</sup> Only after the family reached the land of promise did they put “all [their] seeds into the earth which [they] had brought from the land of Jerusalem”. 1 Nephi 8:1; 18:24.

measurement of Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s 600 prophesied years. If the Lord's revelation to Lehi<sub>1</sub> referenced any calendar, such as the Egyptian 365-day solar-based calendar or a solar astronomical calendar the length of the tropical year (about 365.2422 days per year), then the "short" measurement would have given Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s descendants a benchmark for seeing the birth of the Messiah as rapidly approaching. In light of the Nephites' apparent interest in sidereal months,<sup>210</sup> the "short" measurement of a year of 12 synodic months (about 354.367 days per year) also would have been completed before the measurement of a year of 13 sidereal months (about 355.182 days per year). Six hundred 12-month years composed of synodic months are a few hours more than 212,620 natural days and the equivalent of about 598.62 years measured with 13 sidereal months, about 582.52 years measured with a 365-day calendar, and about 582.13 years measured with a tropical year calendar.

These statistics may suggest that it was not merely coincidental when an immense external threat to the Nephite people came from the people that the Nephites referred to as "Gaddianton's robbers and murderers".<sup>211</sup> In the 16th year after the coming of Christ, this adversarial group was led by a secret society and a governor named Giddianhi. He threatened to destroy the Nephite people if they would not give up their religion and all their possessions, and submit to Gaddianton rule. The remaining righteous Nephites and converted Lamanites responded by gathering themselves, their provisions, and their flocks and herds into a single area, which they fortified so they could withstand the great conflict they expected. The Gaddianton armies began their raids into unoccupied Nephite lands in the 18th year, apparently during the 600th tropical year following Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s escape from Jerusalem; however, because of the Nephite fortifications, the attackers did not attempt a decisive battle with the people of Nephi until the 19th year after the coming of Christ.<sup>212</sup> In Section 2.5.8 below, this study will examine additional symbolic evidence for the proposal of a continuous 12-month lunar calendar for the Nephite measurement of the Lehi era.

#### 2.5.5 Adverbial narrative-links

The adverb, *yea*, appears twice as a narrative-link in First Nephi. The word *yea* "sometimes introduces a subject, with the sense of indeed, verily, truly, it is so" and "sometimes [*yea*] enforces the sense of something preceding; not only so, but more".<sup>213</sup> Both definitions seem applicable to the texts where *yea* is used as an adverbial or U narrative-link in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings. In 1 Nephi 10, the initial verses describe a general period prior to the time when the Messiah would be born, but in verse 4, the content of the preceding text is enforced or enlarged: "yea, even six hundred years from the time that my father left Jerusalem". At the same time, the adverb *yea* introduces a year-related expression that includes an emphatic and exact number-term, "even six hundred". The meaning appears to be that 600 years will pass and then the Messiah will enter mortality. In 1 Nephi 17, verse 4 describes the length of time that Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s group sojourned in the wilderness with a general chronological statement, "the space of many years". Then, immediately, the next temporal-expression adds to or enforces the general

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<sup>210</sup> See Division 1, Part 4, Sections 4.9-4.10.

<sup>211</sup> Helaman 6:18.

<sup>212</sup> 3 Nephi 3:1-4:15.

<sup>213</sup> Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, II: [947] (*yea*).

statement. The number-term, “even eight”, is an emphatic and exact report of the years that had passed in the measurement of Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s prophecy. The implication of this report is that Lehi<sub>1</sub> and his followers were measuring, numbering, and recording the passing of time in a chronological system that began when Lehi<sub>1</sub> left Jerusalem.

Beyond that basic symbolism, the meanings of the two precise temporal-expressions that use U narrative-links seem significant to two other narratives. Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s 600-year prophecy appears to be related to another feature of his departure from Jerusalem; he prophesied a land of promise for his followers.<sup>214</sup> Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s faithful attention to his father’s words, whether about his father’s temporal prophecy or their land of promise, seems to have helped prepare him to receive his own revelation about how they would obtain that land of promise.<sup>215</sup> When “even eight years” had passed and the weary nomads had reached the seashore area they called Bountiful and when an additional “space of many days” had passed in the ninth year (and possibly the 10th year) following their separation from Jerusalem, it was Nephi<sub>1</sub> who received the revelation that they had not reached their destination. Bountiful was not the land of promise. Indeed, God informed Nephi<sub>1</sub> that they must voyage to the land of promise in a ship that he also told Nephi<sub>1</sub> to build.<sup>216</sup>

In terms of intertwined narrative-link symbolism, the two U narrative-links in the small plates of Nephi make the five-part, balanced and reversible (QU[Q]UQ) letter-group possible. The pattern appears to be intentional and to have temporal observation antecedents, as does every other five-part, alternating, balanced and reversible placement pattern in these plates. The number pattern associated with this letter group is simple and repetitive. Five Q narrative-links are combined with two U narrative-links for a total of seven narrative-links. The implied 7-day week seems to be re-emphasized in Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s writings, perhaps to symbolize the refugees’ devotion to honoring the Sabbath day throughout their wearying sojourn in the wilderness.

#### 2.5.6 Verbal narrative-links

Fifteen verbal or R narrative links appear in the small plates of Nephi, but only three occur in Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s writings. The following 12 occur in the major divisions of the subsequent writers. The first four of the R narrative-links make possible the five-part, alternating, balanced and reversible (RQ[R]QR) letter-group that begins with Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s elder brothers’ complaint about the misery they had endured after following Lehi<sub>1</sub> into the wilderness (apparently including their time in Bountiful). The verbal or R narrative-link in 1 Nephi 17:21 is “have suffered”. The brothers’ two related references to the elapsed time, “these many years”, also expressed their anger. They cared little about “the foolish imaginations of [Lehi<sub>1</sub>’s] heart” and they rejected Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s notions about building a ship and sailing to a land of promise. His elder brothers wished they could be back in Jerusalem, enjoying their “possessions and the land of [their] inheritance”.<sup>217</sup>

Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s other two R narrative-links introduce year-related expressions he created after he led the building of the ship, after the voyage to the New World had been completed, and after

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<sup>214</sup> 1 Nephi 5:4-5.

<sup>215</sup> 1 Nephi 2:16; 3:1-8; 4:1-4, 38.

<sup>216</sup> 1 Nephi 17:4-15.

<sup>217</sup> 1 Nephi 17:17-21.



Nephi<sub>1</sub> and his followers separated from Laman<sub>1</sub>, Lemuel and their followers in the land of promise.<sup>218</sup> These narrative-links form the middle (R) letter-set of the (RQ[R]QR) letter-group. The temporal-expressions symbolize the commitment of Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s people to keeping God's commandments and measuring the years of Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s prophecy. Thirty and then 40 years "had passed" since they left Jerusalem, but they had obtained a land where they could live "after the manner of happiness". Still, the followers of Lehi<sub>1</sub> had not only divided following his death, but by the time Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s people had numbered 40 years, they "had already had wars and contentions with [their] brethren".<sup>219</sup> Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s three R expressions relate to narratives about Laman<sub>1</sub> and Lemuel's rejection of Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s and Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s revelations; Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s faithfulness to the commands of God (including the creation of a small set of plates for religious purposes) within the narrative context of threats on his life and the need to establish a separate people; and the subsequent wars and contentions between Nephites and Lamanites.

The fourth R narrative-link in consecutive order appears in Jacob 1:1 and apparently confirms Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s intent that the last narrative-link letter-group in the small plates also would have a five-part, alternating, balanced and reversible placement pattern. Like the previous R narrative-links, this R narrative-link is associated with narratives about Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s faithfulness in the labors, challenges and conflicts of life. In this instance, however, his troubles are about to end. He is preparing for death by anointing a king for his people and delivering the official plates of Nephi into the hands of that king and his successors. He confirms Jacob<sub>2</sub>'s religious leadership of the people and delivers the small plates of Nephi, the Messianic "manual" for teaching his people, into the hands of Jacob<sub>2</sub> and his descendants. For Nephi<sub>1</sub>, faithfulness in the face of worldly contention is about to end.<sup>220</sup>

### 2.5.7 Intertwined R and Q narrative-link symbolism

Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s three R narrative-links were composed and placed by him so that the initial alternating (QU[Q]UQ) letter-group was closed off and another intertwined, alternating RQRQ letter pattern began. The (R) narrative-link letter-set that completes the five-part (RQ[R]QR) letter-group does not occur in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings, but begins with his younger brother Jacob<sub>2</sub>'s first year-related expression.<sup>221</sup> This narrative-link is the 18th narrative-link in the small plates of Nephi. The 18th narrative-link connects the narrative to a year-related expression that includes the 12th time-term letter-set, the unique (D) letter-set. This expression's year-term is part of the 6th and final (B) letter-set in these plates. The associated number-term and narrative indicate that it had been 55 years since the family left Jerusalem. The small plates were in the care of Jacob<sub>2</sub> and his descendants and, thereafter, they would only use R narrative-links and B year-terms when they included temporal-expressions in these plates. Following this expression with its R narrative-link, B year-term and unique D time-term, Jacob<sub>2</sub> composed an alternating, balanced and reversible (GHG) time-term letter pattern, which eventually was emphasized by Enos<sub>2</sub>, expanded into a GHGH letter pattern by Jarom and his descendants, and then completed by Mormon<sub>2</sub> as a (GH[G]HG) time-term letter-group. These patterns also suggest that the temporal-

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<sup>218</sup> 2 Nephi 5:28, 34.

<sup>219</sup> 2 Nephi 5.

<sup>220</sup> Jacob 1:1-12.

<sup>221</sup> Jacob 1:1.

expression in Jacob 1:1 was intended or designed (“commanded”) by Nephi<sub>1</sub> for the purpose of completing a five-part, alternating, balanced and reversible (RQ[R]QR) narrative-link letter-group in the small plates.

The R narrative-link engraved by Jacob<sub>2</sub> limited the number of Q narrative-links in this (RQ[R]QR) letter-group to seven. The number of R narrative-links that would compose the letter-group was known at that time to be at least four, but because every temporal-expression composed by writers subsequent to Nephi<sub>1</sub> apparently was required to have an R narrative-link, the total number of R narrative-links (eventually 15) was not known until Mormon<sub>2</sub> composed the final temporal-expression in these plates.<sup>222</sup>

#### 2.5.8 Jacob<sub>2</sub>'s year- and time-terms

A detailed analysis of the temporal-expression in Jacob 1:1 is undertaken now because the number patterns associated with it in the chronological structure and symbolism of the small plates are crucial to understanding the number-term symbolism discussed in Part 3 of this Division. Jacob 1:1 includes a B year-term that is part of the 6th year-term letter-set in these plates and a D time-term that is unique in these plates and constitutes the 12th time-term letter-set. This verse contains the 18th temporal-expression in the small plates of Nephi.

As to number patterns, this one may be depicted as (6 and 12 within 18). As to calendrical symbolism, both numbers 6 and 12 have been discussed as potential symbols of a 6-month lunar semester and a 12-month lunar year. One might think that the number 18 merely represents another way of indicating that the proposed 12-month calendar of Lehi<sub>1</sub> repeats itself without intercalation (the next 6-month semester of the following year being noted). However, the number pattern is not composed of 6, 12 and 18 letter-sets, unless one is willing to compose the number patterns as 6+12 = 18 and 18 within 18. But what would be the point of that? The pattern seems to be 6 and 12 letter-sets *within* 18 temporal-expressions. Thus, this study again suggests that ink designs written before 1830 CE for the purpose of publishing the *Book of Mormon* provide a number pattern that symbolizes key aspects of Mesoamerican time keeping and astrology. The number 18 in the (6 and 12 within 18) pattern appears to represent a lunar measurement composed of 18 synodic months.

To introduce this proposed Mesoamerican connection, a little more needs to be said about the Supplementary Series of Maya glyphs. About a century ago, some of these glyphs were identified as depicting lunar information.<sup>223</sup> Glyph A seems to show the projected length of the current (or previous) synodic month in natural days (either 29 or 30), as represented by a moon sign that signifies the number 20 and a numerical coefficient (either 9 or 10). Glyph C seems to be accepted as a representation of the number of the current month in a 6-month lunar semester. Glyphs D and E appear to depict the number of days elapsed since the first visible crescent (or in some inscriptions perhaps, since the astronomical new moon) of the current month. When Glyph D is accompanied by a numerical coefficient (from 1 through 19), it represents one of the first 19

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<sup>222</sup> Words of Mormon 1:2.

<sup>223</sup> John E. Teeple, “Maya Inscriptions: Glyphs C, D, and E of the Supplementary Series,” *American Anthropology*, 27 (1925): 108-15, accessed at [anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdfdirect/10.1525/aa.1925.27.1.02a00090](http://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdfdirect/10.1525/aa.1925.27.1.02a00090); idem, “Maya Astronomy,” (1930 preprint of *Contributions to American Archaeology*, 1:29-115 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, Publication 403), accessed at [mesoweb.com/publications/CAA/CAA02.pdf](http://mesoweb.com/publications/CAA/CAA02.pdf).

days of the lunation. If Glyph D appears, but it has no coefficient, then it is accompanied by Glyph E. When Glyph E appears with Glyph D or by itself, and it has no coefficient, then Glyph E represents the 20th day of the lunation. Glyph E may also have a numerical coefficient (1 up to 10) that indicates the 21st through 30th days of the lunation.<sup>224</sup> The relationship of Glyphs C and X seems to have been resolved only since the analysis by John H. Linden in 1986.<sup>225</sup> Glyph X appears to symbolize three principal variants that accompany Glyph C. Thus, Glyphs C and X, when read together, have been interpreted to specify the current month in one of three sequential 6-month semesters of an 18-month lunar measurement.<sup>226</sup> Again, however, the evidence for the 18-month lunar measurement seems to appear hundreds of years after the time of Nephi<sub>1</sub>.

The (6 and 12 within 18) number pattern associated with Jacob 1:1 seems to represent a symbolic progression of 6-month lunar semesters that recur continuously. This interpretation of the symbolism in Jacob 1:1 is consistent with the interpretation given to the (7 within 9) and (7 within 9 within 12) number patterns identified above as representing continuous cycles of 7 and 9 days, which occur within continuous cycles of 12-month years. A simplified chronological system has been proposed for Lehi<sub>1</sub> and his followers in the Arabian Peninsula and at sea: 7-day weeks and 12-month lunar years. This chronological system seems to have been compared by Nephi<sub>1</sub> and Jacob<sub>2</sub> with the system they apparently discovered when they reached the land of promise in the sixth century BCE, a system that included 9-day cycles and 18-month lunar years composed of three 6-month semesters.<sup>227</sup>

#### 2.5.9 Jacob<sub>2</sub>'s number-terms and narrative-links

The relatively simple proposal for the 18th temporal-expression in Jacob 1:1 also seems to have ancient symbolic connections with the narrative-link and number-term letter-sets of this verse. Table 2.A shows that the verbal or R narrative-link in Jacob 1:1 creates the final R letter-set in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s apparently planned (RQ[R]QR) letter-group. This is the 5th letter-set of this letter-group and the tenth narrative-link letter-set in the (QU[Q]UQ)(RQ[R]QR) letter-groups of the small plates of Nephi. (Later temporal-expressions just add R narrative-links to the tenth R letter-set.) Table 2.A also shows that the stated cardinal or L number-term in Jacob 1:1 is part of the third number-term letter-set that ends Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s concluding (LML) letter-group. The prior ten letter-sets have been interpreted above as representing a synodic month that began with the dark time of an astronomical new moon and ended with the day when the last lunar crescent of the

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<sup>224</sup> Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: Introduction*, 237-243.

<sup>225</sup> John H. Linden, "Glyph X of the Maya Lunar Series: An Eighteen-Month Lunar Synodic Calendar," *American Antiquity*, 51 (1986): 122-36.

<sup>226</sup> See also Linda Schele, Nikolai Grube and Federico Fahsen, "The Lunar Series in Classic Maya Inscriptions: New Observations and Interpretations," *Texas Notes on Precolumbian Art, Writing, and Culture*, No. 29 (Austin, Texas: Center of the History and Art of Ancient American Culture, Art Department, University of Texas, 1992), accessed at repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/15724; John H. Linden, "The Deity Head Variants of Glyph C", in Merle G. Robertson, ed., *Eighth Palenque Round Table* (San Francisco: Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute, Palenque Round Table Series, vol. 10, 1996), 343-56, accessed at precolumbia.org/pari/publications/RT10/Linden1996.pdf; Nikolai Grube, "The Forms of Glyph X of the Lunar Series," (Bonn: Textdatenbank und Wörterbuch des Klassischen Maya, Research Note 9, 2018), accessed at mayawoerterbuch.de/the-forms-of-glyph-x-of-the-lunar-series/; Marc Zender and Joel Skidmore, "Unearthing the Heavens: Classic Maya Murals and Astronomical Tables at Xultun, Guatemala" Mesoweb Reports (2012), accessed at mesoweb.com/reports/Xultun.pdf.

<sup>227</sup> Distinctive calendrical contrasts between Mesoamerican and Egyptian 365-day calendars appear to have been intended by the symbolism of Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s number-terms in his second book. See Part 3 of this Division 2.

lunation was visible at dawn (KMLOLNLOLM).<sup>228</sup> Thus, the L letter-set that concludes in Jacob 1:1 is the 13th number-term letter-set in the proposed chronological design created by Nephi<sub>1</sub>.

The 13th number-term letter-set might be interpreted as a calendrical reference to the length of an intercalated lunar year; however, this letter-set appears in the writings of Jacob<sub>2</sub>, who was born after his family had left the land of Judah. He may have had no experience with, or interest in, intercalated lunar calendars. This number-term also might be interpreted as a measurement of 13 sidereal months (about 355.182 days), which is the number of sidereal months that approximates the length of a 12-month calendar composed of synodic months (about 354.367 days). Jacob<sub>2</sub> initially might have been familiar with sidereal months because of his family's time in the Arabian Peninsula and at sea, when his attention may have been drawn to the moon's return to certain places in the "fixed" stars.

In a New World context, the 13th number-term letter-set might be interpreted as a calendrical reference to the repeating cycle of 13 day-numbers in Mesoamerica. The 13-day cycle, as an integral part of the Mesoamerican 260-day divinatory cycle, has been tentatively identified as existing in the seventh and sixth centuries BCE. Munro S. Edmonson proposed that a hieroglyph on an ear-spool from Cuicuilco, in central Mexico, recorded the day-number and day-name "2 Lord" and he placed this "earliest day-count date" on a day in 679 BCE. He also identified stone monument inscriptions using the "Zapotec calendar", one of which "correlates the Olmec and Zapotec calendars", as representations of days in 594 and 563 BCE.<sup>229</sup> This evidence suggests that 13-day cycles were being measured and recorded during the adult lifetimes of Nephi<sub>1</sub> and Jacob<sub>2</sub> in the sixth century BCE.

This proposed Mesoamerican connection for the 13 number-term letter-sets seems to leave the ten narrative-link letter-sets with no calendrical symbolism. In addition, this proposal includes the initial ten (KMLOLNLOLM) number-term letter-sets (which seem to symbolize a synodic month<sup>230</sup>) within the total of 13 letter-sets. That is, there is no recognition of the symbolic differences between the (KMLOLNLOLM) and (LML) number-term letter-sets. Perhaps another way of understanding these 23 letter-sets may be to assume that the ten narrative-link letter-sets, as elements that are distinct from their year-related expressions, may be added both to the initial ten (KMLOLNLOLM) number-term letter-sets (for the sum 20) and to the latter three (LML) number-term letter-sets (for the sum 13). This kind of double use of letter-sets is somewhat similar to the alternatively delimited (AB[A]BA) and (BA[B]AB) year-term letter-sets proposed above for Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings. In Mesoamerica, 13 consecutive day-numbers appear to have been intertwined with 20 consecutive day-names for thousands of years (and for 100 years or more before the time of Jacob<sub>2</sub>). As noted in Section 6.5.3 in Part 6 of Division 1, a cycle of 260 natural days suggests the Mesoamerican "sacred day count.... There is nothing like the 260-day divinatory cycle anywhere else in the world. This calendar ... is *the* centerpiece of the Maya calendar system, the single most important block of time they ever kept, and still do keep in areas remote from modern influence."<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> See Sections 2.2.4 through 2.2.6 above.

<sup>229</sup> Munro S. Edmonson, *The Book of the Year: Middle American Calendrical Systems* (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1988), 20-22.

<sup>230</sup> See Sections 2.2.4 through 2.2.6 above.

<sup>231</sup> Aveni, *Empires of Time: Calendars, Clocks, and Cultures*, 197, italics in original.

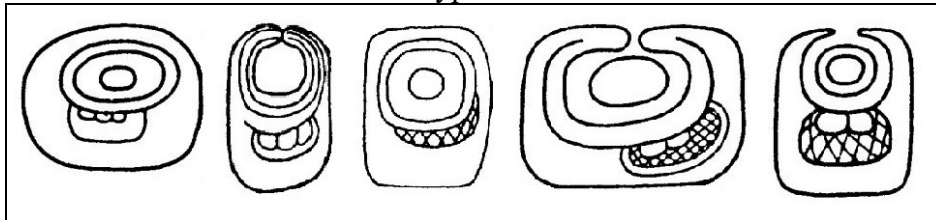
A second way of grouping the narrative-link and number-term letter-sets of Jacob 1:1 also may be suggested. This composition does not require a double use of the 10 narrative-link letter-sets. This method of grouping the letter-sets begins with the 13 letter-sets that seem symbolically distinct (LML) and (QUQUQ)(RQRQR) from the ten number-term letter-sets (KMLOLNLOL M) that seem to symbolize a synodic month. Neither three letter-sets, nor ten, by themselves depict a synodic month. One might speculate that multiplication of the three number-term and ten narrative-link letter-sets is intended ( $3 \times 10 = 30$ ), which would be a symbolic statement of a 30-day synodic month. However, while ( $3 \times 10 = 30$ ) is an interesting way to combine number-term and narrative-link letter-sets, it merely gives the synodic month symbolized by the initial ten number-term letter-sets an above-average number of days (the mean is 29.53059 days). More likely, the ( $10 + 3 = 13$ ) narrative-link and number-term letter-sets have been positioned as a symbolic contrast with the ten number-term letter-sets that seem to represent a synodic month.

This suggestion brings the analysis directly to the meaning of a symbolized synodic month and to a proposed calendrical symbolism perhaps encountered by Nephi<sub>1</sub> and Jacob<sub>2</sub> in the land of promise. In Maya Glyphs A and E of the Supplementary Series, the number 20 is represented not by written numbers, but by symbolic moon signs.<sup>232</sup> A few examples of Maya moon signs depicted in these Glyphs are reproduced in Figure 2.2.

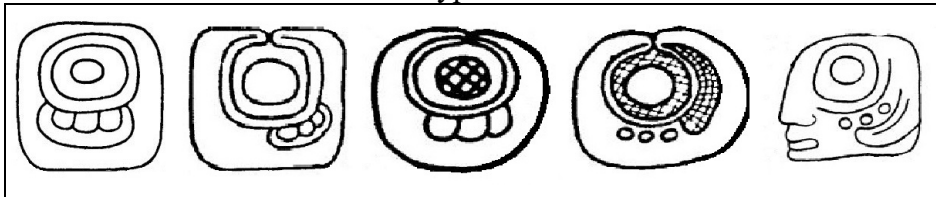
Figure 2.2

Maya Moon Signs Representing the Number 20 in the Supplementary Series

Glyph A<sup>233</sup>



Glyph E<sup>234</sup>



These moon signs are not identical, but they exhibit distinct similarities. Circles, crescent shapes, dots and crosshatching apparently may or may not be used in any particular glyph, but these appear to be the principal elements that make up a moon sign at a glyphic position known either as Glyph A or E. A person who has been trained to recognize the meanings of such

<sup>232</sup> Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: Introduction*, 237-243.

<sup>233</sup> Glyph A (from left to right): Copan J; Yaxchilan L 46; Piedras Negras L 2; Piedras Negras 36; Quirigua P in Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: Introduction*, Plates: Fig. 36: 14, 53; Fig. 37: 10; Fig. 36: 60, 65.

<sup>234</sup> Glyph E (from left to right): Quirigua A; Piedras Negras 3; Piedras Negras 12; Pusilha O; Quirigua G in Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: Introduction*, Plates: Fig. 36: 34, 25; Fig. 37: 67, 46, 16 (head variant).

designs sculpted into stone monuments or wooden lintels, or painted on ancient walls, apparently may see them as depictions of lunar chronological information and may understand that they symbolize the number 20. In other words, a moon sign may represent the number 20 in a calendrical context such as Glyph A or E of the Supplementary Series.

A connection between the calendrical number 20 and the moon seems to have been noted, if not comprehended, by Boturini in 1746: “veinte dias cada mes, fundados sobre un peregrino Systema de *Neomenius Lunares*”.<sup>235</sup> In this description of part of the Aztec 365-day calendar, Boturini noted that 18 months each were composed of 20 days, a monthly length founded on a “strange system” of lunar new moons. In other words, the synodic month seems to have been connected, but in a way not understood, to the calendrical measurement of a 20-day month.

Does a placement pattern of number-terms in the writings of Nephi<sub>1</sub>, which appears to be a symbolic depiction of a synodic month, similarly symbolize the number 20? The pattern may have been able to do so within a Mesoamerican chronological context. However, what would be the point of devising two symbolic ways to compose a 260-day Mesoamerican cycle of time?

Like the 6 year-term letter-sets and 12 time-term letter-sets, the number-term and narrative-link letter-sets presumably also must be understood to occur within the context of 18 temporal expressions or, as proposed above, within the context of an 18-month lunar measurement. In each instance of a symbolic 260-day cycle, the number pattern may be described as (13 with 20 within 18) or for both instances, the number pattern may be depicted as [(13 with 20) and (13 with 20) within 18]. From a chronological standpoint, the close correspondence of 18 synodic months (531.55 days) and 39 draconic half-months (530.64 days) and the even closer correlation of two 260-day cycles (520 days) and three eclipse half-years (519.93 days) are remarkable. They suggest that these periods, apparently understood by the Maya, may have been used to record and predict lunar and solar eclipses<sup>236</sup> within a divinatory context designed to warn them of (and perhaps thereby engage in rituals to ward off) rough days ahead with respect to fertility of the people and their lands.<sup>237</sup> For the Nephites, such apotropaic rituals may have been understandable because of their origin in the land of Judah, their brass plates scriptures, and their familiarity with 7-day weeks, lunar months, special days like Sabbaths, Passover, and the Day of Atonement, and festivals such as Unleavened Bread and Ingathering.<sup>238</sup>

Do the two separate groupings of letter-sets that appear to suggest 260-day cycles also suggest two 260-day cycles within the context of 18 synodic months? It may seem so. It is certainly interesting that the diction, language typology, and placement patterns of ink designs discussed in this Part 2 may be interpreted as symbolizing Mesoamerican chronological concepts associated with the moon and eclipses. In that regard, another grouping of narrative-link and number-term letter-sets may be instructive. This grouping takes into account both the symbolic synodic month letter-sets (which are assumed to represent the number 20) and the as-yet-unexamined textual fact that in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings, there are only nine narrative-link letter-sets. The tenth narrative-link letter-set only occurs in Jacob<sub>2</sub>'s addition to his elder brother's

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<sup>235</sup> Lorenzo Boturini Benaduci, *Idea de Una Nueva Historia General de la America Septentrional* (Madrid: Zuñiga, 1746), 4, italics in the original; accessed at archive.org.

<sup>236</sup> See the sources referenced in footnotes 225 and 226 above.

<sup>237</sup> Grofe, “Glyphs G and F: the cycle of nine, the lunar nodes, and the draconic month”, 143.

<sup>238</sup> Zev I. Farber, “Israelite Festivals: From Cyclical Time Celebrations to Linear Time Commemorations,” *Religions* 10(5) 2019: 323, accessed at doi.org/10.3390/rel10050323.

placement pattern. The suggestion seems to be that, just as with the ancient Maya Glyph A, Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s plan for narrative-links included depicting the alternative lengths of a synodic month in natural days (either 29 or 30) by the use of a symbolized moon sign (the ten number-term letter-sets signifying the number 20) and a numerical coefficient represented by the numbers of narrative-link letter-sets (either 9 in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s writings or 10 in Jacob 1:1).

What is to be done with the remaining three number-term letter-sets in the (LML) letter-group? Are these merely "optional" letter-set appendages somewhat like the three little dots that appear in some of the moon signs of Glyphs A and E? Assuming multiple uses of the narrative-links, these three letter-sets may be combined with the nine or ten narrative-link letter-sets to produce sums ( $3+9 = 12$  or  $3+10 = 13$ ) that may be interpreted to bring Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s symbolic discussion of chronology back to lunar measurements composed of 12 synodic months (about 354.367 days) or 13 sidereal months (about 355.182 days). The admixture of calendrical and astronomical data again appears to have been accomplished and seems to have been intended. But it must be remembered that the small plates of Nephi contain only 29 (or 6.8%) of the 426 temporal-expressions in the extant text of the *Book of Mormon*. The suggestion of Mesoamerican calendrical, astronomical and cultural connections from this small sample must necessarily be regarded as introductory and provisional.

Unquestionably, the placement patterns based on diction, language type, and numbers may be combined in many more ways. In Jacob 1:1, for example, one might create letter-set combinations like ( $6+12 = 18$ ), ( $6+10 = 16$ ), ( $6+13 = 19$ ), ( $12+10 = 22$ ), ( $12+13 = 25$ ), and ( $10+13 = 23$ ). Are these intentional patterns symbolizing other chronological meanings or are they merely alternative ways of organizing the 6, 10, 12 and 13 letter-sets that seem to suggest an intentional Mesoamerican symbolism within the context of 18 temporal-expressions?

## 2.6 Conclusion

Parts 1 and 2 of this Division have attempted to identify both the structure and symbolism associated with the chronology in Nephi<sub>1</sub>'s small plates. The chronology has been identified by ink designs representing specific English diction, by the related language types, and by the placement patterns of the various types of year-, time- and number-terms, and narrative-links. The placement patterns were symbolized for simplicity and clarity by the use of capital letters, letter-sets, and letter-groups, by numbers of letter-sets and temporal-expressions, and, even more basically, by diction units and contrasting definitions. The patterns were described as alternating or variable sequence, balanced or non-balanced, and reversible or non-reversible.

In this Part 2, the symbolism of the letter patterns initially was identified by simple temporal observations suggested in the text regarding *then* and *now*, *day* and *night*, and the *sun* and *moon* positions, visibility, and brightness. The analysis then examined year- and time-terms, and narrative-links. The symbolism of year- and time-terms suggested astronomical and calendrical connections with Near Eastern, and perhaps Egyptian, lunar astronomy. The symbolism suggested a simplified calendar for the wanderers and their descendants (6-month lunar periods, 12-month lunar years, and 7-day Sabbath cycles). The symbolism suggested by narrative-links seemed to strengthen the connections with the proposed simplified calendar and lunar astronomy, but this symbolism also seemed to emphasize alternative 9-day cycles. Seven-day

weeks that began in the evening appear to have been understood as six days of labor followed by a full day of rest and remembrance.<sup>239</sup> This 7-day cycle seems to have been contrasted with a 9-day cycle that, in the last century and as to ancient Mesoamerica, has been proposed as a nightly astronomical observation and as being related, perhaps, to divination of the events of the coming artificial day. The analysis of symbolism in this Part ended with an examination of the remarkable temporal-expression in Jacob 1:1 and its possible chronological meanings. A repeating 12-month lunar calendar apparently used to measure Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s 600-year prophecy seems to have been contrasted with a Mesoamerican 18-month lunar calendar apparently used (in connection with repeating 260-day cycles) to record and, perhaps, predict eclipses that might have been thought to affect the welfare of the Nephites' indigenous neighbors.

Nonetheless, perhaps not too much emphasis should be placed on the "contrast" of time keeping systems or apotropaic thoughts and practices. Lehi<sub>1</sub> and his followers came to the New World because God commanded them to do so and made their journey possible.<sup>240</sup> Their distinct form of revelatory religion likely kept them separate in some ways from even their closest neighbors, but this separation need not have meant their devotion to preserving their people and measuring the passage of time were not shared and communicated with those neighbors. The 6-month and 12-month periods proposed for the Lehi era calendar fit precisely within the proposed 18-month measurement that Maya Glyphs C and X appear to represent. As to Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s temporal prophecy that seems to have been crucial to the earliest Nephites, 600 12-month cycles are the equivalent of 400 18-month cycles. This mathematical fact does not suggest, at all, that the Nephites provided the intellectual spark to originate the compared or contrasted Mesoamerican cycles of time; rather, it suggests that Lehi<sub>1</sub>'s followers may have discovered aspects of common chronological ground with their neighbors as they settled into the land of promise. That Nephi<sub>1</sub> used such information to help create his chronological structure and to strengthen the veracity of his writings is entirely consistent with his introduction in 1 Nephi 1: preface, 1-3.

The Nephite king Benjamin, writing several hundred years after the time of Nephi<sub>1</sub>, noted that "[w]ere it not for [the things recorded on the brass plates] ... we should have been like unto our brethren the Lamanites".<sup>241</sup> This statement seems to have specific reference to some of the Nephites' religious ideas and practices. However, the statement also may suggest that in almost every other way, the Nephites had adopted the culture of their closest neighbors. Such adoptions could have included what may have been ancient methods of describing, measuring, symbolizing, and recording astronomical and calendrical information. Even during the lifetime of Nephi<sub>1</sub>, king Benjamin's illustrious ancestor seems to have signaled his awareness of, and to have found some use for, 9-day, 13-day, 20-day and 18-month cycles of time in his structured chronological thought.

At the same time, the conflicts of the earliest Nephites with some of their neighbors (notably those who followed Laman<sub>1</sub> and Lemuel to war) meant that the earliest followers of Nephi<sub>1</sub> lived, as Jacob<sub>2</sub> recalled late in his life, "mourn[ing] out our days". He wrote sadly of his embattled people, that "time passed away with us, and also our lives passed away like as it were

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<sup>239</sup> E.g., Jarom 1:5; Mosiah 13:16-19; 18:23-26.

<sup>240</sup> E.g., 1 Nephi 2:1-7; 3:1-8; 4:38; 5:20-22; 7:1-5, 21-22; 16:7-11; 7:1-16, 49-55; 18:1-8, 21-25.

<sup>241</sup> Mosiah 1:5.



unto us a dream, we being a lonesome and a solemn people, wanderers cast out from Jerusalem, born in tribulation in a wild wilderness, and hated of our brethren”.<sup>242</sup>

This Part 2 concludes by reiterating the narrative policy of this study. Narrative details are presented and discussed in the way the ink designs present them. That policy means that nothing in the foregoing discussion of chronological symbolism requires the existence of Lehi<sub>1</sub>, Nephi<sub>1</sub>, Jacob<sub>2</sub>, Benjamin or Mormon<sub>2</sub> other than in ink designs on paper. However, the ink designs require that someone or some group did exist to create the information that now appears in the original and printer’s manuscripts and in the 1830 edition of the *Book of Mormon*. Apart from the *Book of Mormon*, where do such chronological patterns appear in English literature prior to 1830 CE? Someone or some group created such patterns. Who? These issues are beyond the scope of this examination.

With respect to the narratives in the group of texts that are called the small plates of Nephi, year-related ink designs create the reality of the chronological structure summarized in Table 2.A of this Division. The diction, language typology, and placement patterns of year-related expressions and their narrative-links in the small plates suggest the thematic, calendrical, and astronomical symbolism proposed in this Part and summarized in Table 2.B of this Division. Still, at this point in the analysis, the proposed Mesoamerican chronological connections must be viewed as provisional, at best. The analysis continues in Part 3 of this Division, where the focus rests primarily on the one element of the ink designs not yet analyzed in detail for its related imagery, the chronological meanings of number-term diction.

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<sup>242</sup> Jacob 7:26.