Part 3: Identifying major divisions in the plates

In the extant text of the *Book of Mormon*,[1] the three largest groupings of text appear to be identified with three sets of metal plates on which the text was engraved: the small plates of Nephi, the plates of Mormon and the plates of Moroni.[2] These groupings of the text may be separated further into 15 significant parts sometimes called "major divisions" in this source book. This research note examines the beginning texts that appear in the extant original and printer's manuscripts and that clearly signal the start of each major division.

3.1 Beginning texts

The beginning text of a major division appears to consist of at least three of four types of textual fact: a title, an appositive, a chapter designation and an introductory declaration. Titles occur at the beginning of every major division, but appositives follow just five of the titles. Initial chapter designations include a variety of numerical forms, but they appear in the beginning texts of every major division. Introductory declarations also occur in the beginning texts of all the major divisions, but they address their subjects in many different ways. Except for the extant text of the Book of Mosiah, each introductory declaration includes four kinds of information: a content synopsis, a contextual statement of chronology, a societal description and a verification. Because the chronological structure and symbolism of the *Book of Mormon* seem to be organized, at least in part, by the major divisions, simple descriptions and a clear grasp of the textual facts that signal the start of the major divisions are important.

The following examination refers to manuscript versions of the beginning texts[3] and to the version printed in the first (1830) edition of the *Book of Mormon*.[4] Tables 3.A through 3.O reproduce simplified facsimiles of the manuscript and printed versions. The manuscript facsimiles in these tables are simplified in that they do not include scribal cross-outs, smudges, stray dots and other marks on the manuscript pages, except for textual over-writings and insertions. The manuscript texts and 1830 printed text are reproduced on a line by line basis for purposes of clarity and comparison.

3.2 Titles

Each of the 15 major divisions in the extant text begins with a title, which may be defined as "[t]he name of a book ... or other (written) composition".[5] These titles apparently identify two distinct kinds of major divisions. In 14 of the 15 major division titles, the manuscripts use the singular noun *book* in the title form "The Book of ..." or "the Book of ...". In these descriptions of the title form, the ellipsis points represent the personal name of at least one record keeper identified by that name in the *Book of Mormon* narratives. Since more than one record keeper

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[1] The italicized term *Book of Mormon* refers to the library of small books and related writings that have made up the whole volume since its first print publication in 1830. The term Book of Mormon (without italics) identifies the small book that appears near the end of the *Book of Mormon*. The article *the* preceding the other parts of a major division title is neither italicized nor capitalized, except when the title begins a sentence or when the typeset form of the 1830 edition is being quoted. Each of such quotations is footnoted.

[2] See Part 2, Division 10, and Section 1.6 of Part 1, Division 1 of this source book.

[3] Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*; idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*; idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part Two*.

[4] Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830).

[5] *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, II: 3335 (title).

was named Nephi, that name appears in four separate titles. The title name Nephi is used twice in the small plates of Nephi to identify the same record keeper. The names of the record keepers Jacob, Enos, Jarom and Omni are each used once in the titles of the major divisions of the small plates. The Book of Omni contains the engravings of four writers in addition to the named record keeper. In the plates of Mormon, the title name Nephi is used twice to identify two different record keepers, a father and a son. Multiple writers identified in the *Book of Mormon* had the names Mosiah, Alma and Helaman, but these names are each used just once in book titles in the plates of Mormon. The name Mormon appears in Mormon$_2$'s personal book title in the plates of Mormon. In the plates of Moroni, the names Ether and Moroni are each used once in the book titles.

In one of the 15 major division titles, the printer's manuscript uses the plural noun *words* instead of the singular noun *book* in the title form "The words of Mormon". This 15th title begins the last major division in the small plates of Nephi. Apparently, Mormon$_2$ wanted his major division in the small plates to be distinctive and he did not want the major division he was adding to the small plates to be confused with the then-ancient books that appeared on those plates. Since Mormon$_2$ wrote one personal major division on the plates of Mormon and another on the small plates of Nephi, his name appears in two major division titles.

As the accompanying tables indicate, 11 of the book titles printed in the 1830 edition have the same diction as the manuscripts; however, the titles were reproduced in regular capital letters; e.g., THE BOOK OF JACOB and THE BOOK OF ALMA.[6] In two other instances, the original titles of the two books of Nephi in the small plates of Nephi apparently were modified when Oliver Cowdery inserted the words *first* and *second* into the original and printer's manuscript texts of these titles. These insertions were made before the first part of the printer's manuscript was delivered to the printing shop.[7] Hence, in the 1830 edition, the first two major division titles appeared as THE FIRST BOOK OF NEPHI and THE SECOND BOOK OF NEPHI.[8] These major divisions are often referred to as "First Nephi" or "1 Nephi" and as "Second Nephi" or "2 Nephi". Similar insertions (e.g., *third* and *fourth*) were not made at that time in the original titles of the two books of Nephi in the plates of Mormon. However, "[t]he distinction for the last two books was first made by Orson Pratt in the 1879 LDS edition when he added the extra headings 'III Nephi' and 'IV Nephi' before 'The Book of Nephi'. These extra headings for the last two books have continued in all subsequent LDS editions."[9] Now, these major divisions are often referred to as "Third Nephi" or "3 Nephi" and as "Fourth Nephi" or "4 Nephi". In two other instances, the original titles of two books were modified in the 1830 edition when the typesetter dropped the initial article *the* or *The* that appeared in the manuscript text of the title.[10] Hence, these book titles first appeared in print as BOOK OF MORMON and BOOK OF ETHER.[11]

Other significant titles appear in the *Book of Mormon*, but they do not signal the beginnings of major divisions. In the Second Book of Nephi, Nephi$_1$ quotes a speech of Jacob$_2$, his younger brother.[12] In the printer's manuscript, this quotation begins with a title, "The words of Jacob",

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6   Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 123, 221.

7   Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 42-43.

8   Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 5, 59.

9   Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 43.

10   Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, *Part Two*, 877, 908.

11   Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 518, 538.

12   2 Nephi 6-10.

which is similar in its initial diction to the major division title, "The words of Mormon";[13] however, in the case of Jacob$_2$'s words, the title does not signal the beginning of a major division because the text of the Second Book of Nephi continues after the quotation of Jacob$_2$'s words.[14] The 1830 edition preceded "The words of Jacob" with a chapter designation "CHAPTER V.", but the title itself was printed in regular font as part of the first paragraph of this chapter.[15]

In the Book of Mosiah,[16] Mormon$_2$ quoted "The record of Zeniff"[17] and the 1830 edition reproduced this title in regular capital letters as THE RECORD OF ZENIFF.[18] However, this title also does not signal the beginning of a major division because the Book of Mosiah continues after the information quoted from Zeniff's personal record.[19]

The title, "The prophecy of Samuel the Lamanite to the Nephites", occurs in the printer's manuscript for the Book of Helaman[20] and the 1830 edition reproduced this title in regular capital letters as THE PROPHECY OF SAMUEL, THE LAMANITE, TO THE NEPHITES.[21] The subsequent text containing narratives and prophecies of Samuel$_2$, a Lamanite prophet, are followed by more text of the Book of Helaman;[22] so, again, this title does not signal the beginning of a major division.

A potential title, "Jesus Christ sheweth himself unto the people of Nephi", occurs in the printer's manuscript text of Third Nephi.[23] The first printed edition reproduced this possible title as part of a heading in italic font: *Jesus Christ sheweth himself unto the people of Nephi.*[24] This potential title is followed by additional heading diction, related narratives, commandments, teachings and prophecies of Jesus Christ contained in 18 modern chapters of the *Book of Mormon.*[25] This potential title does not signal the beginning of a major division because the visions of the resurrected Christ given to his Nephite and Lamanite disciples are followed by more text that is part of Third Nephi.[26]

One last aspect of title complexity may be noted. Mormon$_2$ distinguished between his books (his abridgments on the plates of Mormon) and their sources (the officially recorded books of Nephi on the large collection of plates of Nephi). In Helaman 2:13-14, he mentioned "the end of this book" and then clarified that he did not mean the end of his Book of Helaman, but "the end of the book of Nephi, from which [he had] taken all the account of which [he had] written". In this passage, Mormon$_2$ clearly differentiated "the book of Nephi", an official record that he was then abridging, from "this book", the major division he was then engraving on the plates of Mormon that he had entitled the Book of Helaman. A similar distinction occurs in Mormon 6:6, where Mormon contrasted "this record" that he was engraving on "these few plates" (the plates

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13   Compare Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 166 and 281.

14   2 Nephi 11:1-33:15.

15   Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 74.

16   Mosiah 9-10.

17   Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, *Part One*, 314.

18   Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 173.

19   Mosiah 11:1-29:47.

20   Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, *Part Two*, 761.

21   Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 441.

22   Helaman 16:10-25.

23   Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, *Part Two*, 810.

24   Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 476.

25   3 Nephi 11:1-28:16.

26   3 Nephi 28:17-30:2.

of Mormon) with "the records which had been handed down by our fathers" (apparently the official records that could be referred to as the book of Nephi), which had been engraved on "the plates of Nephi".[27] In both of these instances, "the book of Nephi" and "the plates of Nephi" appear to refer to official records engraved on a large collection of plates, which by the time of Mormon$_2$ may have consisted of various books of Nephi.[28]

3.3   Appositives

In five of the 15 major divisions, the title is accompanied by an appositive, a phrase that immediately follows and modifies the record keeper's name that appears in the title.[29] Two appositives appear with book titles in the small plates of Nephi. The phrase "his reign & ministry" is the first of these appositives and it immediately follows and modifies the title of First Nephi.[30] Apparently, with the name Nephi thus modified, no further modification of the writer's name was deemed necessary at the beginning of Second Nephi. Both of Nephi$_1$'s books deal with "his reign & ministry".

The second appositive in the small plates, "The Brother of Nephi", immediately follows the title "The Book of Jacob" on a separate line of text in the printer's manuscript.[31] In this instance, the appositive describes Jacob$_2$'s familial relationship with Nephi$_1$. The Book of Jacob begins when Nephi$_1$'s reign and ministry are about to end.[32] Thus, while the appositives in the small plates of Nephi both involve Nephi$_1$, they do so in two different ways. One helps introduce the subjects to be covered in the two books written by Nephi. The other helps introduce the transfer of the small plates of Nephi into the custody and care of Jacob$_2$ and his descendants, where, at least for some time, they were known as the "plates of Jacob".[33]

The other three appositives in the beginning texts of major divisions occur in the plates of Mormon. They follow their respective titles and identify the parentage of the record keeper named in the title. In the printer's manuscript, the title "the Book of Alma" is immediately followed by a chapter designation, but the appositive is connected to the title by the insertion (below the line) of the phrase "the Son of Alma" and an inscribed line running back to the title name Alma.[34] In the 1830 printed edition, the appositive, THE SON OF ALMA, is reproduced in regular capital letters and placed immediately below the title and above the chapter designation.[35] This new record keeper is unquestionably Alma$_2$.[36]

The printer's manuscript for the next beginning text appositive in the plates of Mormon appears immediately after the first title "The Book of Nephi" in these plates. This appositive is a lengthy compound genealogical phrase "the Son of Nephi Which was the Son of Helaman &

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[27]   Additional passages also suggest this distinction between Mormon's books and their sources in the official plates of Nephi. See Mosiah 1:8; 8:1; Alma 9:34; 13:31; 3 Nephi 5:7-8; 7:17; 26:6-8.

[28]   Earlier in Nephite history, a similar distinction appears to have been made between the official plates of Nephi and the small plates of Nephi. See. Jacob 1:1-3, 9-12; Words of Mormon 1:3.

[29]   *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, I: 103 (appositive).

[30]   Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, *Part One*, 52.

[31]   Ibid., 240.

[32]   Jacob1:1-3, 9-12.

[33]   Jacob 1:1-5; 3:14. By the time of Jacob$_2$'s grandson Jarom, the name of these plates may have reverted to the "plates of Nephi" (1 Nephi 9:2-4) because they could be distinguished from "the *other* plates of Nephi" kept by the Nephite kings (Jarom 1:2, 14, italics added).

[34]   Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, *Part One*, 389.

[35]   Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 221.

[36]   Mosiah 25:19-24; 26:37; 27:8; 29:42-47.

Helaman was the Son of Helaman which was the Son of Alma which was the Son of Alma being a decendant [sic] of Nephi which was the Son of Lehi which came out of Jerusalem". In the printer's manuscript, a chapter designation immediately follows this extended genealogical appositive.[37] However, during the typesetting of the 1830 edition, the appositive was split into two parts. The first part was printed in regular capital letters as THE SON OF NEPHI, WHICH WAS THE SON OF HELAMAN. This part was placed immediately below the title and above the new, erroneous location of the chapter designation. The second part of the appositive was printed in italic font like other content "prefaces" apparently identified by the typesetter and placed below the chapter designation.[38] This appositive identifies Nephi$_3$ as the record keeper.[39]

The second title "The Book of Nephi" in the plates of Mormon is immediately followed in the printer's manuscript by the appositive "which is the Son of Nehi [sic] one of the Disciples of Jesus Christ".[40] The first printed edition reproduced the appositive directly below the title in regular capital letters, WHICH IS THE SON OF NEPHI, ONE OF THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST.[41] This appositive specifies Nephi$_4$ as the record keeper.[42]

Thus, it appears that when a title includes the noun *book* and a record keeper's name, the appearance of an appositive following the title indicates that the beginning text of a major division may have been identified. Such an appositive always modifies the record keeper's name. All five extant appositives follow these protocols. However, an appositive is not an obligatory component of the beginning text of a major division in the *Book of Mormon*. The beginning texts of ten major divisions occur without any of such appositives.

3.4   Chapter designations

The noun *chapter* apparently was placed in the *Book of Mormon* manuscripts as a way to mark a "main division or section"[43] within a major division. The word *chapter* was followed by some type of numerical specification. The combined word *chapter* and its following number are referred to in this research note as a "chapter designation".

The word *chapter* was inserted into the beginning text of each major division (and elsewhere in the longer books), but the word seems not to have been part of the vocabulary of any *Book of Mormon* writer. Rather, it was an insertion made by others while preparing the manuscripts and typesetting the 1830 edition.[44] The source of the word *chapter* in the original manuscript seems to have been Joseph Smith. Royal Skousen proposed that Smith "would from time to time perceive breaks within the text. At those points in his dictation he would tell the scribe to put the word *chapter* into the manuscript but without any numerical specification (the chapter numbers were added later, sometimes months later)".[45]

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[37]   Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, *Part Two*, 777.

[38]   Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 452.

[39]   See also 3 Nephi 1:2-3.

[40]   Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, *Part Two*, 870.

[41]   Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 514.

[42]   See also 3 Nephi 1:2-3; 11:18-22; 19:4.

[43]   *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, I: 380 (chapter).

[44]   Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text*, xl; Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 43-44.

[45]   Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text*, xl.

The insertion points in the beginning texts are not uniform. In nine instances in the printer's manuscript, the word *chapter* was placed after the title and before the following introductory declaration.[46] In two instances, the word was mistakenly inserted after the title and before the following appositive.[47] In two more instances, the insertion occurred after the appositive and before the introductory declaration.[48] In one instance, *chapter* was inserted within the introductory declaration.[49] In another instance, the insertion of the word *chapter* occurred after the title, but immediately before the narratives of the major division commenced with a societal description.[50]

One might expect the word *chapter* to occur after the introductory declaration of the major division and before the narratives begin. The confusion in where the word was inserted in the manuscripts appears to have led the typesetter of the 1830 edition to modify the manuscript placement of the word *chapter* in three of the major divisions.[51] After Skousen's extensive study of the matter, he resolved in *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* to mark the original breaks in the text with a symbol, rather than with the word *chapter*.[52]

As the accompanying tables indicate, the word *chapter* in the manuscripts was later followed by some sort of numerical specification in the blank space left for it. These quantitative insertions in the beginning texts of major divisions were as inconsistent as the locations where the word *chapter* was inserted. In two instances preserved in the extant original manuscript, the specification is simply the Roman numeral I (not followed by a period). Very few of the specifications in the manuscripts included a period. In the original manuscript fragment identified with the Book of Enos, the specification is "first .I." In the printer's manuscript, seven different forms of numerical specification occur. In six instances, the specification is the Roman numeral I, although at the beginning of the extant Book of Mosiah, the specification initially was "III" and two of the Is were later crossed out several times. In one instance, the specification is the Arabic numeral 1. In three instances, the specification is "first". In two instances, the specification is the combination ".1.st"; in one instance it is the combination "ft I"; and in another instance, the specification is the combination "1st". Lastly, in the Words of Mormon, the printer's manuscript numerical specification initially was the combination "2.d", but the 2 was later crossed out and a Roman numeral I and a period were added to create the combination ".d I." The 1830 typesetter used the Roman numeral I followed by a period in every initial chapter designation in a major division.

3.5   Introductory declarations

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a *preface* introduces "a literary work, usually containing some explanation of its subject, purpose, and scope, and of the method of treatment".[53] In this research note, the noun *preface* is not used to describe the introductory

[46]   Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, *Part One*, 143, 270, 274, 276, 281; idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, *Part Two*, 710, 877, 908, 958.

[47]   Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, *Part One*, 52, 389.

[48]   Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, *Part One*, 240; idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, *Part Two*, 777.

[49]   Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, *Part Two*, 870.

[50]   Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, *Part One*, 284.

[51]   See Tables 3.A, 3.K and 3.L in this Division 10.

[52]   Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text*, xl.

[53]   *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, II: 2276 (preface).

Division 10

declarations of a major division for two reasons. First, some parts of the introductory declarations were italicized by the typesetter of the 1830 edition. Each of such parts has come to be called a "preface";[54] so, to avoid confusion with the typesetter's prefaces, the noun *preface* is not used in this research note to describe an introductory declaration. Second, as mentioned above, an introductory declaration may consist of as many as four kinds of information: a content synopsis, a contextual statement of chronology, a societal description, and a verification. Introductory declarations range greatly in their lengths. Two introductory declarations even repeat their book titles and a third repeats the title of its source book. Tables 3.A through 3.O also separate the beginning texts of the major divisions, so that the words most closely associated with these four kinds information in the introductory declarations are clearly identified. Except where otherwise footnoted, sources for the following statements and quotations are specified in the tables.

3.5.1   Content synopsis

The content synopsis in a beginning text often outlines the subjects of its major division, similar to a typical preface. However, the content synopsis in other major divisions may be just a simple phrase and the extant initial text of the Book of Mosiah has no content synopsis. In stark contrast with Mosiah, the content synopsis of First Nephi identifies more than a dozen narratives that are about to be told. In the other 13 major divisions of the *Book of Mormon*, the writers mention one or more subjects or purposes of their writings.

- Nephi$_1$ listed four of his narratives in the content synopsis of the Second Book of Nephi.

- Jacob$_2$ listed three narratives about to be engraved in the Book of Jacob and then described the kinds of things Nephi$_1$ commanded him to include and exclude.

- The content synopsis of the Book of Enos introduces the paramount narrative that would follow, "the wrestle which I had before God", in which "I received a remission of my sins".

- The content synopsis of the Book of Jarom mentions "a few words ... that our genealogy may be kept". Nonetheless, Jarom also notes that "these plates are small" and "I shall not write the things of my prophesying nor of my revelations". This last statement might be described as an "omission" synopsis and a similar one appears in the beginning text of Moroni$_2$'s abridgment of the Book of Ether in the plates of Moroni.

- The Book of Omni mentions Jarom's commandment that Omni "should write somewhat ... to preserve our genealogy".

- The content synopsis of the Words of Mormon seems to be the phrase "the record which I have been making", a lengthy record on a separate set of plates that he later describes more fully in this last major division in the small plates of Nephi.

- The content synopsis of the Book of Alma, the first extant and complete book in the plates of Mormon, lists three separate compilations, each of which is an "account" composed of multiple narratives.

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[54]   For example: "The lack of a preface for the book of Mosiah … is probably because the text takes up the Mosiah account some time after its original beginning". John A. Tvetnes, "Colophons in the Book of Mormon", in John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne, eds., *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1991), 33. As another example: "Interestingly, Mormon never wrote a preface to his own book, nor did Moroni write a preface to the book of Ether or his own book of Moroni. It would appear that all other books except for the small books at the end of the small plates (Enos, Jarom, and Omni), plus the Words of Mormon, originally had book prefaces". Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part Six*, 3715.

- The content synopsis of the Book of Helaman lists three accounts and other narratives, and repeats the title of the book at the end of its content synopsis.

- Third Nephi is unique in the extant text of the plates of Mormon because its content synopsis is a summary of the conditions under which $Nephi_3$ became the official Nephite record keeper, combined with the simple phrase "the record of this people" (meaning the one kept by $Nephi_3$).

- Fourth Nephi merely lists "[a]n account of the People of Nephi" that will follow the introductory declaration.

- The Book of Mormon states that "a record of the things which I [$Mormon_2$] have both seen & heard" is the content that will follow the introductory declaration. He also repeats the title of his book at the end of its content synopsis.

- In the plates of Moroni, the Book of Ether also begins with an "omission" synopsis that emphasizes the content in the 24 plates of Ether that will not be included in $Moroni_2$'s account. Then, the content synopsis summarizes the extensive genealogy of Ether, a Jaredite prophet who composed the ancient record that $Moroni_2$ relied on to create his abridged version of the source, the Book of Ether. This genealogy lists the names of Ether's ancestors whose lives are then examined further in the text of this book.

- The length and complexity of the content synopsis in the Book of Ether contrast with the synopsis in the Book of Moroni. $Moroni_2$ mentions that he "had supposed to not have written more", but then he speaks of "a few more things" that he hopes "may be of worth unto my brethren the Lamanites in some future day according to the will of the Lord".

Thus, every complete major division in the *Book of Mormon* includes a content synopsis of some kind, even if it merely mentions a genealogy that is being kept. The Book of Mosiah apparently has lost its content synopsis.

3.5.2   The lost texts of the plates of Mormon

$Mormon_2$'s composition of seven books on the plates of Mormon has been altered substantially in the *Book of Mormon* transcribed into the printer's manuscript and published in 1830 and thereafter. This revision began to occur when the first 116 pages of the original manuscript were lost before they could be copied. In the first half of 1828, Joseph Smith and his then-principal scribe, Martin Harris, produced more than 116 pages of original manuscript. During July 1828, Harris lost the first 116 manuscript pages when he took them to show his family. These pages contained the complete text of $Mormon_2$'s first book, the Book of Lehi,[55] and perhaps a small initial part of $Mormon_2$'s second book, the Book of Mosiah.[56] For months, the writing of the original manuscript was stalled. Skousen noted that "Joseph Smith retained from the summer of 1828 some small portion of the translation … and may have added a few

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[55]   Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), [iii]-iv; Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 66-68; Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 5-6.

[56]   Typical scribal practice concluded one book and started another on the same manuscript page. The only known exceptions occurred at the conclusions of the Book of Mormon (on a page that also ended a gathering of pages) and the Book of Ether (which concluded at the bottom of a page). Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 13-16, 34-37, 164-65 (1 Nephi/2 Nephi), 208-09 (Jacob/Enos), 486-87 (Alma/Helaman), 512-13 (Helaman/3 Nephi); idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 9-15, 31-33, 142-43 (1 Nephi/2 Nephi), 240-41 (2 Nephi/Jacob), 270-71 (Jacob/Enos), 274-75 (Enos/Jarom), 276-77 (Jarom/Omni), 280-81 (Omni/Words of Mormon), 284-85 (Words of Mormon/Mosiah), 388-89 (Mosiah/Alma); idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part Two*, 710-11 (Alma/Helaman), 776-77 (Helaman/3 Nephi), 870-71 (3 Nephi/4 Nephi), 876-77 (4 Nephi/Mormon), 906-09 (Mormon/Ether), 956-59 (Ether/Moroni).

additional pages translated in March 1829 … just prior to Oliver Cowdery's arrival the following month". Skousen also theorized that the original manuscript pages existing at the end of March 1829 included some part of the Book of Mosiah dealing with the reigns of king Mosiah$_1$ and his son king Benjamin.[57] In April 1829, Cowdery became Joseph's principal scribe and the writing process re-commenced probably somewhere in the Book of Mosiah, where it had left off in March 1829.[58] About this same time, Joseph decided to substitute narratives in the small plates of Nephi for the narratives in the plates of Mormon that had been part of the lost 116 pages. The small plates of Nephi apparently covered much of the same period.[59]

When the time came for Cowdery to begin preparing the printer's manuscript, the earliest extant Nephite narratives were those in the original manuscript text of the small plates of Nephi. Whatever then remained of the initial part of the Book of Mosiah (narratives occurring prior to the end of king Benjamin's reign) apparently was not copied into the printer's manuscript. Thus, the portion of the text that is referred to in this study as the "lost texts" included, first, the 116 original manuscript pages that contained the Book of Lehi and perhaps the title and other beginning texts of the Book of Mosiah and, second, the portion of the original manuscript that contained the initial part of the Book of Mosiah describing the reigns of king Mosiah$_1$ and his son, king Benjamin. This initial part of the Book of Mosiah not only was not copied into the printer's manuscript, it apparently was later destroyed by water and mold when the original manuscript lay inside the cornerstone of a building in Nauvoo, Illinois.[60]

Some of the last parts of the original manuscript to be dictated (the text on the small plates of Nephi) were placed ahead of chapter III (later renumbered I) of the Book of Mosiah in the printer's manuscript and to some extent replaced the lost texts. This textual reorganization (the six books and Words of Mormon on the small plates of Nephi beginning the *Book of Mormon*; the Book of Lehi entirely lost; and some initial part of the Book of Mosiah apparently omitted) saved some of the oldest *Book of Mormon* narratives, but made considerable changes to the book list and chronological structure that Mormon$_2$ evidently had intended for the *Book of Mormon*.

3.5.3 Contextual statement of chronology

The beginning text of each major division of the *Book of Mormon* (except for the Book of Mosiah) includes one or more chronological expressions that identify a time associated with the initial content of that major division. These temporal expressions (each called a "contextual statement of chronology" in this source book) may be placed within, or at the end of, the rest of their associated introductory declarations. A contextual statement of chronology may be lengthy or short, may include a single statement regarding time or several of such statements, and may be

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[57] Royal Skousen, "Critical Methodology and the Text of the Book of Mormon", *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 137-39. Skousen's theory of two initial chapters in the Book of Mosiah is not unquestionable. Compare the chapter designation for the Book of Omni ("Chapter first") with the original chapter designations for the Words of Mormon ("Chapter 2.d") and the perhaps as yet untitled Book of Mosiah ("Chapter III"), which suggest that Cowdery may have initially identified "Chapter III" as the third chapter in the Book of Omni before the title "the Book of Mosiah" was inserted above the line in that part of the text. Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 276, 281, 284.

[58] Welch and Rathbone, "How Long Did It Take to Translate the Book of Mormon?" in Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, 1-8. See also Welch, "The Miraculous Translation of the Book of Mormon", in Welch, ed., *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820-1844*, 99-104, 107.

[59] Words of Mormon 1:3-11. See also Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 66-69; Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 5-6; Welch, "The Miraculous Translation of the Book of Mormon", in Welch, ed., *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820-1844*, 96, 106-07; *The Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 3 (Introduction) and Section 10.

[60] Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 6-7, 37.

specific or vague in terms of the chronological system used to measure and describe the passing of time.

- In the First Book of Nephi, the content synopsis identifies Lehi$_1$, his wife Sariah, and their four sons, the youngest of whom was Nephi$_1$. The contextual statement of chronology in the printer's manuscript includes the use of the phrases "the cours [sic] of my days" "all my days" and "my days", which are woven into Nephi$_1$'s verification. The verification is followed by a brief statement in which Lehi$_1$ is identified as "haveing [sic] dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days", up to and including "the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah". The societal description of conditions "in that same year" is then presented. Thus, the existence and relationship of Lehi$_1$ and Nephi$_1$, the verification of Nephi$_1$'s knowledge and authorship (within "the cours [sic] of [his] days"), and the "days" of his father, all are interwoven with a content synopsis, verification and societal description focused on "the first year of Zedekiah king of Judah".

- In the Second Book of Nephi, the composition of the contextual statement of chronology that follows the content synopsis is both short and imprecise: "after I Nephi had made an end of teaching my Brethren". This printer's manuscript statement verifies that Nephi$_1$ is the writer, but it also contrasts with the contextual statement of chronology in Nephi$_1$'s first major division. There, the statement was lengthy, repetitive and precise to the point that it identified the "commencement" of king Zedekiah's first regnal year, when it could (still?) be said that Lehi$_1$ had dwelt at Jerusalem his entire life. At the start of Second Nephi, Lehi$_1$ is about to die in a very different land.

- The initial, shortest part of the content synopsis of the Book of Jacob is followed immediately by the contextual statement of chronology. As in First Nephi, the contextual statement of chronology is precise: "fifty & five years had passed away from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem". The subsequent, longest part of the content synopsis focuses on Nephi$_1$'s delivery of the small plates to Jacob$_2$ and Nephi$_1$'s commandments regarding the content to be placed on these plates.

- The simple language of the content synopsis of the Book of Enos, "the wrestle which I had before God" and "I received a remission of my sins", is combined by a one word contextual statement of chronology, the adjective *before*. Enos appears to have begun his book according to the pattern of, but contrasting with, the beginning that Nephi$_1$ gave to his second book. Nephi$_1$ placed a short and imprecise contextual statement of chronology at the beginning of Second Nephi through his use of the adjective *after*. Enos has provided a similarly short and imprecise contextual statement of chronology through his use of the adjective *before*.

- The contextual statement of chronology in the printer's manuscript of the Book of Jarom comes at the end of the other three parts of Jarom's introductory declaration. This declaration includes a verification, a content and "omission" synopsis, and a societal description regarding the condition of the people. Then, the beginning text of this book ends simply: "two hundred years had passed away". This appears to be a chronological statement that was important to Jarom because he seems to be looking back to his father's statements in the beginning text of the Book of Enos and to his grandfather's concluding chronological statements in the Book of Jacob. Another century had passed away since Lehi$_1$ left Jerusalem and God had been "exceding [sic] merciful unto them".

- The initial contextual statement of chronology in the beginning text of the Book of Omni is short and imprecise. Omni weaves together "my days" and the precise statement "two hundred & seventy & six years had passed away" with his verification, content synopsis and societal description.

- The last major division in the small plates of Nephi is entitled the Words of Mormon. Its contextual statement of chronology is a witness to the fulfillment of the expectation expressed in the Nephites' maintenance of the chronological system based on Lehi$_1$'s departure from Jerusalem. In Mormon$_2$'s contextual statement of chronology, a different chronological system is used, but he repeats the phrase "many hundred years" that occurs twice in the Book of Jacob. Mormon$_2$ testifies that "it is many hundred years after the coming of Christ".

- In the plates of Mormon, the extant initial text of the Book of Mosiah does not include a contextual statement of chronology. The chapter designation is followed by a societal description that includes the phrase "all the remainder of his days". This is not a contextual statement of chronology. Where is the text fixing "all the remainder of his days" in Nephite chronology? Since the reference to "his days" uses the third person singular pronoun, this text contrasts with the eyewitness references to "my days" that some of the writers in the small plates had used.

- The content synopsis in the printer's manuscript of the Book of Alma is followed by a precise contextual statement of chronology: "in the first Year of the Reign of the Judges over the people of Nephi". This chronological statement is the textual bridge between the content synopsis and the societal description that follows.

- Similarly, the content synopsis in the printer's manuscript of the Book of Helaman is followed by a precise contextual statement of chronology: "in the commencement of the fortieth year of the reign of the Judges over the people of Nephi". This statement also serves as a textual bridge to the following societal description.

- The contextual statement of chronology in Third Nephi reaches all the way back to the time of Lehi$_1$, the ancestor "which came out of Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah the king of Judah" (according to Mormon$_2$'s apparent inference regarding Nephite chronology). This precise chronological statement creates a textual bridge at the end of the appositive in the printer's manuscript. Then, the year when Nephi$_3$ became the record keeper is described in four distinct ways. First, it is noted that "the ninety & first year had passed away" in the reign of the judges.[61] Second, the chronological system that began when Lehi$_1$ escaped from Judah is mentioned: "it was six hundred years from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem". Third, the specific year in the reign of the judges is again mentioned: "it was in the year that Lachoneus was the chief Judge & the governor over the land". Fourth, a numerical description of that year is given: "the commencement of the minety [sic] & second year" in the reign of the judges. After this last part of the chronological statement, a summary societal description is provided and the narratives begin.

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[61] Compare Helaman 16:24-25.

- The brief content synopsis of Fourth Nephi is followed by a clear contextual statement of chronology that serves as a textual bridge between the synopsis and societal description: "the thirty and fourth year passed away & also the thirty and fifth".[62]

- With the Book of Mormon, the pattern of the beginning text is the same. After the content synopsis and before the societal description, Mormon$_2$ makes a contextual statement of chronology in two parts. First, he states that "abot [sic] the time that Ammoron [sic] hid up the records unto the Lord he came unto me" and then he adds a personal parenthetical: "I being about ten years of age". This contextual statement places Mormon$_2$'s calling to be the official Nephite record keeper in the 321st Nephite year measured from the coming of Christ.[63]

- The contextual statement of chronology that begins the Book of Ether in the plates of Moroni occurs at the end of the genealogical part of the content synopsis: "at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people & swear in his wrath that they should be scattered upon all the face of the earth". This vague chronological statement immediately precedes the societal description involving "the great tower".

- In Moroni$_2$'s final book, the contextual statement of chronology also is vague. Just as Nephi$_1$ began his second book with the simple chronological phrase "after I Nephi had made an end of teaching my Brethren", Moroni$_2$ began his second book, the Book of Moroni, with the simple chronological phrase "after having made an end of abridging the account of the people of Jared".

3.5.4 Societal descriptions

The societal descriptions that appear in the beginning texts of every major division in the *Book of Mormon* usually focus on the moral or religious condition of the people; however, the descriptions were composed in significantly different ways.

- First Nephi presents a societal description in terms of a single narrative statement: "there came many prophits [sic] prophesying unto the people that they must repent or the great City Jerusalem must be destroid [sic]".

- In Nephi$_1$'s second book, he presents a complex societal description relating to Lehi$_1$ and his followers. This part of his introductory declaration in the printer's manuscript may be best understood with its parallelisms suggested:

A$_1$	our father Lehi also spake many things unto them
A$_2$	& rehearsed unto them
B$_1$	how great things the Lord had done for them
C$_1$	in bringing them
D$_1$	out of the land of Jerusalem
A$_3$	& he spake unto them
B$_2$	concerning their rebellions upon the waters
B$_3$	& the mercies of God
C$_2$	in spareing [sic] their lives
D$_2$	that they were not swallowed up in the sea

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[62] These are years in the chronological system that was measured "from the coming of Christ". Compare 3 Nephi 2:5-8; 3:1; 4 Nephi 1:21.

[63] Compare 4 Nephi 1:47-49; Mormon 2:2.

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<div style="text-align: left">

A_4 & he also spake unto them

B_4 concerning the land of promise which they had obtained

B_5 how m[ ]ciful the Lord had been

C_3 in warning us that we should flee

D_1 out of the land of Jerusalem

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Following this brief descriptive recap of his followers' experiences that were recorded in First Nephi, Lehi$_1$ exhorts and blesses them in Second Nephi (as quoted by Nephi$_1$) and the other narratives of this second major division are then set forth.

- The societal description in the printer's manuscript of the Book of Jacob follows its content synopsis with information regarding the "faith & great anxiety" of the religious leaders. The descriptions of their teachings and prophecies to "our People" are more extensive than, but akin to, the societal description that began First Nephi: the people must be taught "not to rebell [sic] against God to provoke him to anger".

- This theme carries over into the societal description that begins the Book of Enos, but the summary depiction there seems focused solely on the relationship of Enos and his father Jacob$_2$, the religious leader of the Nephite people. While Enos understood that his father "was a just man for he taught me in his language & also in the nurture & admonition of the Lord", Enos still had "a wrestle ... before God before that [he] received a remission of [his] sins". This personal description of the "wrestle" experienced by Enos, who apparently knew his father well, implies the "wrestle" that other Nephites may have experienced as they too were taught by Jacob$_2$ and their other religious leaders not to rebel against God.

- The societal description in the Book of Jarom supports this implication. Jarom notes, among other things, "that much should be done among this People because of the hardness of their hearts & the deafness of their ears & the blindness of their minds & the stiffness of their necks".

- The beginning text of the Book of Omni includes a brief societal description, part of which is personalized: "I fought much with the sword to preserve my People the Nephites from falling into the hands of their enemies the Lamanites" and "we had many seasons of peace & we had many seasons of serious war and bloodshed".

- The beginning text of the Words of Mormon briefly states Mormon$_2$'s societal description. He had witnessed "allmost [sic] all the destruction of my People the Nephites" and he supposed that his son Moroni$_2$ "will witness the entire destruction of my People".

- The extant text of the Book of Mosiah in the printer's manuscript begins with a societal description that has no narrative predicate in the plates of Mormon: "there was no more contension [sic] in all the land of Zarahemla among all the People which belonged to King Benjamin so that King Benjamin had continual peace all the remainder of his days". What text describes the original "contension"? Where was "the land of Zarahemla" introduced? What text explains the origins of "all the People" and how they came to "belong" to a king named Benjamin? Where were king Benjamin's earlier "days" depicted? The extant text of this societal description begins without any concern for all this missing information. The only narrative predicate is the one supplied in the Words of Mormon on a separate set of plates.

- The societal description that follows the contextual statement of chronology in the Book of Alma focuses on the transition that occurred just before the death of king Mosiah$_2$. Laws "established" by king Mosiah$_2$ were "acknowledged by the people" and, thus, "they were obleiged [sic] to abide by the Laws which he had made", even after his death and the inauguration of the reign of the judges.

- In the Book of Helaman, the contextual statement of chronology is followed by a brief societal description which states that "there began to be a serious difficulty among the people of the Nephites".

- Third Nephi similarly follows the last part of its interwoven content synopsis, verification and contextual statement of chronology with a summary societal description: "the prophecies of the prophets began to be fulfilled more fully for there began to be greater signs & greater miracels [sic] wrought among the people".

- Fourth Nephi also has a succinct societal description following its contextual statement of chronology: "the Disciples of Jesus had formed a Church of Christ in all the lands round about".

- Mormon$_2$ provides a personal note that implies a bit about his people in the societal description that begins the Book of Mormon: "I began to be learned somewhat after the manner of the learning of my People"; i.e., the Nephite people apparently were literate.

- In the plates of Moroni, the societal description that begins the Book of Ether is very brief: "according to the word of the Lord the people were scattered".

- The beginning text of Moroni$_2$'s own book includes personal notes that imply societal conditions ("I have not as yet perished & I make not myself known to the Lamanites lest they should destroy me" and "I wander whither soever [sic] I can for the safety of mine own life"); however, the Book of Moroni also is clear about the people he is avoiding: "their wars are exceeding fierce among themselves & because of their hatred they put to death every Nephite that will not deny the Christ".

3.5.5   Verifications

The introductory declaration of every major division in the *Book of Mormon*, other than the Book of Mosiah, includes some type of affirmation or verification. An affirmation may be defined as "[t]he action of asserting or declaring true" and a verification may be defined as a "formal assertion of truth".[64] In this research note, these assertions of truth all are called "verifications". Sometimes a verification in the beginning text of a major division is made by the personal declarations of the record keeper, with the assumption being that he knows what he is writing about. In other instances, the verifications identify the records of previous official Nephite record keepers and assume their personal knowledge and truthfulness.

- Nephi$_1$, in the lengthy introductory declaration of First Nephi, states that "I Nephi wrote this record ... I know that the record which I make to be true & I make it with mine own [ ]nd & I make it according to my knowledge".

- A lengthy verification is not necessary and does not occur in the beginning text of Nephi$_1$'s second book. Still, he formally identifies himself as "I Nephi".

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64   *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, I: 40 (affirmation); II: 3612 (verification).

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- Jacob$_2$ identifies himself several ways in the beginning text of the Book of Jacob. He is "The Brother of Nephi", "me Jacob", and "I Jacob", the writer who takes it upon himself "to fulfil the commandment of [his] Brother Nephi"—and, by implication, to fulfill the obligation as Nephi$_1$ had done, "according to [his] knowledge" of its truthfulness.

- Jacob$_2$'s son, Enos, begins his record by identifying himself as the writer and testifying of his father's verity: "I Enos knowing my father that he was a just man". Then Enos introduces a narrative about one of his personal experiences. He is also an eyewitness.

- With the emphasis on keeping their genealogy, the subsequent writers in the small plates of Nephi just identify themselves as the writers (and, by implication, as eyewitnesses of what they also experienced): "I Jarom write"; "I Omni"; "I Amaron write"; "I Chemish write"; "I Abinadom"; and "I am Amaleki ... I will speak unto you".

- Mormon$_2$'s beginning text in the Words of Mormon includes the phrases "I Mormon" and "I have witnessed" to verify his authorship and personal knowledge.

- This same type of personal verification in the beginning texts of major divisions occurs in the plates of Mormon only in the Book of Mormon. There Mormon$_2$ identifies himself and verifies his knowledge: "I Mormon make a record of the things which I have both seen & heard".

- The personal type of verification does not appear in the beginning texts of the other complete books in the plates of Mormon (the books of Alma, Helaman, Third Nephi and Fourth Nephi). In these four books, Mormon$_2$ verifies that the following accounts and their abridged narratives are reported "[a]ccording to the Record of Alma the first and Chief Judge", "according to the Record of Helaman & his Sons", according to "the record of this people" kept by "Nephi the Son of Nephi" (Nephi$_3$), and "according to his Record", with "his" referring to the previously identified "Nephi which is the Son of Nehi [sic] one of the Disciples of Jesus Christ" (Nephi$_4$). These verifications identify the records of previous official Nephite record keepers and assume their personal knowledge and truthfulness.

- Both types of verification appear in the plates of Moroni. The Book of Ether begins with Moroni$_2$'s verification of his own identity, "I Moroni" and his statement that "I take mine account [his abridgment] from the twenty & four plates which were found by the people of Limhi". Then, Moroni$_2$ identifies the author of the record on those plates: "He that wrote this record was Ether" and Moroni$_2$ lists 29 generations of Ether's forefathers, apparently to verify that the records on which Ether relied were kept from generation to generation. Thus, this type of verification implies the personal knowledge and truthfulness of previous Jaredite record keepers. The other type of verification occurs with Moroni$_2$'s personal book: "I Moroni ... write a few more things that perhaps they may be of worth unto my brethren the Lamanites in some future day according to the will of the Lord". Thereafter, Moroni$_2$ quotes various official Nephite church records; states his personal understanding of Nephite practices regarding baptism, church meetings and record keeping; quotes "a few of the words" of his father regarding faith, hope and charity; quotes two of his father's personal letters to him; and ends with an exhortation from "I Moroni" to "my brethren the Lamanites".

Thus, except for the extant text of the Book of Mosiah, the beginning text of every major division in the *Book of Mormon* includes one of the two types of verification: a personal

identification and express or implied eyewitness affirmation; or an identification of a previous record impliedly made by one or more eyewitnesses.