Part 3: Time-terms in the *Book of Mormon*

3.1   Images

In Part 1 of this Division, year-related expressions were likened to the yellow center of a circular archery target. Narrative-links were the primary red circle of language connecting the center of the target to the secondary blue circle of language in the narratives that contained year-related expressions. The blue circle then was connected with the tertiary white circle of language in the remainder of the *Book of Mormon*. Like a year-term of a year-related expression, a time-term is a component symbolized by the yellow center of the target. This Part 3 remains focused on that yellow center.

Part 2 of this Division began by comparing year-related expressions to Christmas ornaments decorating a small grove of evergreen trees. The colorful ornaments were divided into four types. Gleaming stars represented year-related expressions consisting of a single express *year* or *years*. Other ornaments were multicolored balls, figurines or toys symbolizing year-related expressions composed of more than a single word. The balls signified year-related expressions composed of express year-, time- and number-terms. The figurines represented year-related expressions composed of express year- and number-terms and the toys symbolized year-related expressions composed of implied year-terms and express number-terms. Multicolored balls were the only ornaments that symbolized the existence of time-terms. This Part 3 examines the six colors that decorate the multicolored balls, the six analytical categories of time-terms.

3.2   Standard names

A time-term is one of two express, but optional components of a year-related expression. As an adjective modifying a year-term, a time-term describes the time when the year-term did exist, does exist or will exist. A time-term may be a single word (e.g., "old"[1]) or a phrase (e.g., "since the more part of the people had turned from their righteousness"[2]). Each time-term in the extant text of the *Book of Mormon* is listed with its associated year- and number-terms in Table 3.A. Time-terms appear in just 154 year-related expressions. In each of these 154 expressions, the other optional component (a number-term) also modifies the year-term. With one exception,[3] time-terms follow their year-terms in the text.

Most time-terms in the Book of Mormon may be classified as "standard" names that identify the years apparently established, measured and recorded by Nephite authorities. Other time-terms appear to be modified standard names or they specify a time associated with an individual (e.g., "of my reign") or a group (e.g., "that the Lamanites began to make preparations for war against the people of God"). This Part begins by examining the standard names of years apparently adopted by Nephite authorities.

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[1]   Mormon 1:3.

[2]   3 Nephi 7:8.

[3]   3 Nephi 2:8.

3.2.1   Long names

One hundred four time-terms are prepositional phrases that describe, in consistent ways, events associated with the inauguration of new systems for numbering years. These phrases may be separated into two types based on the interrelated features of length, diction and design. Forty-nine of these standard phrases are longer than the others; so, each of these has been categorized simply as a "long" name. The phrase *from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem* describes the event that began the first Nephite system for numbering years. This long name occurs once in the small plates of Nephi and twice in the extant text of the plates of Mormon.[4] The phrase *of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi* identifies the event that began the second Nephite system for numbering years. This long name began to be used when king Mosiah$_2$ convinced his people that he should be their last king and that they should be ruled by judges chosen by the voice of the people.[5] This long name occurs 45 times in the plates of Mormon, but only in the books of Alma and Helaman.[6] The third long name is the phrase *since the sign was given of the coming of Christ*. The event that began this system for numbering years was a prophesied night without darkness, a night as light as at midday, the most impressive event in a series of events that Lamanite and Nephite prophets had said would precede the day of Christ's birth.[7] This long name appears in the *Book of Mormon* text just once, in Moroni$_2$'s chronological conclusion to his personal book near the end of the plates of Moroni.[8]

3.2.2   Short names

Fifty-five standard phrases appear to form a second distinctive type and they have been called "short" names. The phrase *since Lehi left Jerusalem* describes the same event that began the first Nephite system for numbering years. This short name occurs just once in the extant text of the plates of Mormon.[9] The phrase *of the reign of the judges* identifies the same event that began the second system for numbering years. This short name occurs 50 times, but only in the books of Alma and Helaman.[10] The third short name is the prepositional phrase *from the coming of Christ*. This phrase also describes the day when the night without darkness came to an end. This short name occurs four times in the books of Third Nephi, Fourth Nephi and Mormon.[11]

3.2.3   Diction and design

Even though the proposed first short name "since Lehi left Jerusalem" and the suggested third long name "since the sign was given of the coming of Christ" each occurs just once in the extant text, they are assumed to be examples of standard names. This assumption is based partly on their respective lengths and partly on the diction and design apparently used either for abbreviating a long name or lengthening a short name. The proposed short name "since Lehi left Jerusalem" becomes the long name "from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem" by substituting the

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[4]   Jacob 1:1; Mosiah 6:4; 3 Nephi 1:1.

[5]   Mosiah 29; Alma 1:1.

[6]   E.g., Alma 1:1; 63:16; Helaman 1:1; 16:24. See also Division 1, Table 3.G.

[7]   Helaman 14:1-8; 3 Nephi 1:4-21.

[8]   Moroni 10:1.

[9]   3 Nephi 2:6.

[10]   E.g., Alma 1:33; 63:10; Helaman 1:13; 16:13. See also Division 1, Table 3.G.

[11]   3 Nephi 3:1; 4 Nephi 1:21, 48; Mormon 3:4.

prepositional phrase *from the time that* for the preposition *since*. Alternatively, the proposed long name "since the sign was given of the coming of Christ" becomes the short name "from the coming of Christ" by substituting the preposition *from* for the prepositional phrase *since the sign was given of*. In this design of standard names, the words that will be called the "vital diction" of each standard name ("Lehi left Jerusalem" or "the coming of Christ") describe the person and event being honored and remembered by the year-numbering system. The long and short names of each chronological system both include the relevant vital diction.

The diction and design just described are similar to the diction and design of the more often attested long and short names of the second system for numbering years. For this system, the long name "of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi" is shortened simply by omitting the prepositional phrase *over the people of Nephi*. No substitution of words is necessary, perhaps in part because the Nephite reign of judges was unique in a region ruled by kings.[12] Similarly, the short name "of the reign of the judges" is lengthened simply by adding the prepositional phrase *over the people of Nephi*. Once more, each standard name uses the vital diction that describes the persons and event being memorialized by the year-numbering system ("the reign of the judges"). Thus, vital diction, omission and/or substitution appear to have been standard features of the designs of long and short names employed by Nephite authorities for creating their time-terms.

To summarize, 104 time-terms have been identified as standard names apparently adopted by Nephite authorities to distinguish their three systems for numbering years. For each system, the standard names have been separated into two analytical types by their different lengths, diction and designs. In the following list, the vital diction of each of the three Nephite chronological systems is italicized.

Long name	Short name
from the time that *Lehi left Jerusalem*	since *Lehi left Jerusalem*
of *the reign of the judges* over the people of Nephi	of *the reign of the judges*
since the sign was given of *the coming of Christ*	from *the coming of Christ*

3.3   Altered names in the plates of Mormon

In the extant text of the plates of Mormon, six standard names appear to have been modified five times by omission and three times by the substitution of other words.[13] Each name that appears to have undergone these modifications is usually called an "altered" name. Because the creation of altered names involves the processes of omission and/or substitution similar to the processes described for creating short names from long names, altered names and short names must be distinguished. Each time-term categorized as an altered name may be recognized by the standard name on which it is based and by its idiosyncratic diction that results from omission and/or substitution.

3.3.1   Altered names based on long names

A year-related expression in Mosiah 29:46 includes the first altered name in the extant text of the plates of Mormon: "from the time Lehi left Jerusalem". This time-term uses most of the

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[12]   E.g., Mosiah 7:21-22; 9:10-13; 10:6, 18-22; 19:15, 25-28; 20:9-26; 23:39; 24:1-7; Alma 2: 21-36; 23:1; 47:1, 4; 52:1-3; 54:16; 61:8; Helaman 1:16; 4:1-3; Mormon 3:4; 6:2-3.

[13]   Mosiah 29:46; Alma 2:1; 16:9; 54:1; Helaman 7:1; Mormon 8:6.

words that appear in the long name of the first Nephite chronological system, but the determiner *that* has been omitted after the noun *time*. Although the text of this time-term does not appear in the extant original manuscript, the printer's manuscript specifies this diction for the time-term and it occurs in the 1830 edition of the *Book of Mormon*.[14] Presumably, the copying and proof-reading processes that produced the printer's manuscript and 1830 edition reproduced the diction of the original manuscript correctly. The almost complete use of the words of a long name and the apparent omission of *that* suggest this time-term should be categorized as an altered name.

Helaman 7:1 contains the second altered long name in the extant text of the plates of Mormon: "of the reign of the judges over the people of the Nephites". Again, almost all the words of a long name appear in this time-term, but the phrase *the Nephites* has been substituted for the proper noun *Nephi*. This time-term does not appear in extant original manuscript, but its diction is identical in the printer's manuscript and 1830 edition.[15] Royal Skousen noted that

> [h]ere in Helaman 7:1, Oliver Cowdery started to write "the people of Nephi" in [the printer's manuscript], but he ran out of ink as he was writing *Nephi*. Having completed only *Neph*, he redipped his quill and overwrote the *ph* with *pit*, and then he continued inline with the final *es* (thus accidentally omitting the *h* in his correction). Finally, Oliver inserted the necessary *the*. Although the original manuscript is not extant for this part of the text, it probably read as "the people of the Nephites" (especially since it is unlikely that Oliver would have emended the text to the less common phraseology).[16]

The almost complete use of the words of a long name and the substitution of the phrase *the Nephites* for the word *Nephi* suggest that this time-term should be categorized as an altered name.

In Mosiah 29:46 and Helaman 7:1, each altered name's vital diction ("Lehi left Jerusalem" or "the reign of the judges") indicates that a standard name was the basis for the altered name. In both time-terms, the phrase that accompanies the vital diction of the long name has been modified (by omission in Mosiah 29:46 and by substitution in Helaman 7:1). The modified lengths (shorter in the first instance and longer in the second) also contrast the forms of these two time-terms. Nonetheless, despite such modifications, the chronological meanings of the altered names remain identical to those of the long names on which they are based. The persons and events being honored and remembered by the year-numbering systems are certain.

3.3.2   Altered names based on short names

The year-related expression in Alma 16:9 is "the eleventh year of the judges" and the expression in Alma 54:1 is "the twenty and ninth year of the judges". In each instance, the short name "of the reign of the judges" appears to have been modified by omitting the words *of the reign*.[17] In the narrative associated with Alma 16:9, the altered name identifies the end of the

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14   Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 37; idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 389; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 221.

15   Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 37; idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part Two*), 739; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 426.

16   Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part Five*, 2989 (italics in original).

17   Royal Skousen speculated that in Alma 54:1, "the phrase 'of the reign' may have been in the original text". While he also noted that "the reading without 'of the reign' is supported by the reading in Alma 16:9" (the 11th "year of the judges"), he speculated further that "this too may be an error". Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part Four*, 2687-88. These speculations about scribal error are not supported by the letter pattern analysis of time-terms described in this Part 3.

11th year. This same year is identified in Alma 16:1 by a year-related expression that includes the long name of the second Nephite chronological system. In the narrative associated with Alma 54:1, the altered name identifies the commencement of the 29th year, which directly follows the year-related expression in Alma 53:23, where the end of the 28th year is noted with the long name of the second Nephite chronological system. The original manuscript text of the first time-term is not extant, but a fragment of the original manuscript containing the text of the second time-term is extant.[18] In both instances, the printer's manuscript and 1830 edition include time-terms modified by the same omissions.[19] Alma 2:1 contains a year-related expression with a more completely modified short name: "of their reign". In this verse, the short name has been changed by omitting the phrase *of the judges* and by substituting the possessive pronoun *their* for the article *the* in the remaining phrase. The words *their reign* refer to the reign of the judges mentioned in the year-related expression of the previous verse. The original manuscript is not extant for this text, but the printer's manuscript and 1830 edition both read "of their reign".[20] Because the nearby texts associated with each of these three altered names include year-related expressions with standard names, the complete chronological meanings of the altered names are implied. These three texts appear to be instances where time-terms were contracted without any loss in chronological meaning.

Moroni$_2$ placed the fourth altered name based on a short name near the very end of the plates of Mormon. His statement in Mormon 8:6, "four hundred years have passed away since the coming of our Lord and Savior", identifies a time in the third Nephite system for numbering years. In the time-term of Moroni$_2$'s statement, the short name of this system, "from the coming of Christ", has been modified by two substitutions. First, the preposition *since* has been substituted for the preposition *from.* This substitution, simple as it seems, uses the same word that begins the short name of the first Nephite chronological system and the long name of the third system. In other words, this change linked Moroni$_2$'s time-term with the beginning of the saga of the Nephite people when "Lehi left Jerusalem", and with the remarkable sign by which the believing Nephites and Lamanites identified the day of Christ's birth. Moroni$_2$ is formally and symbolically concluding the years associated with Lehi$_1$ and his followers, and their descendants and converts, who became believers in Christ, the Savior prophesied by Lehi$_1$.

Second, Moroni$_2$ modified the short name by substituting the noun phrase *our Lord and Savior* for the proper noun *Christ*. This change is similar to the substitutions in Alma 2:1 and Helaman 7:1. The phrase *our Lord and Savior* not only distinguishes Moroni$_2$'s concluding time-term in the plates of Mormon from the short name his father had used four previous times in the books of Third Nephi, Fourth Nephi and Mormon, but it also provides a witness to the faith and knowledge of Moroni$_2$, the final Nephite record keeper.

The phrase *our Lord and Savior* occurs only one other time in the extant text of the *Book of Mormon*, in one of Mormon$_2$'s brief comments about the failure of the Nephite people to repent, a failure that, as the Lord explained to him, would result in their utter destruction.

> And when they had sworn by all that had been forbidden them by *our Lord and Savior* Jesus Christ that they would go up unto their enemies to battle and avenge themselves of the blood of their brethren, behold, the voice of the Lord came unto

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[18] Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 37, 431.

[19] Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 37; idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 468; idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part Two*, 661; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 267, 377.

[20] Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 37; idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 395; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 224.

me saying: Vengeance is mine, and I will repay. And because this people repented not after that I had delivered them, behold, they shall be cut off from the face of the earth" (italics added).[21]

Furthermore, with the noun *Savior*, Moroni$_2$ appears to link his year-related expression directly to Lehi$_1$'s prophecy of the mortal birth of a "prophet", "Messiah" or "Savior of the world" and to Nephi$_1$'s discourse on the baptism of "your Lord and your Savior".[22] Finally, by employing the phrase *our Lord and Savior*, which Mormon$_2$ had used previously with the name *Jesus Christ*, Moroni$_2$ also seems to associate the year-related expression in Mormon 8:6 with Nephi$_1$'s vision in which an angel referred to the expected Messiah as "Jesus Christ, which is the Lamb of God" and then showed Nephi$_1$ the dreadful vision of the eventual destruction of his people.[23] Thus, with what appears to be a symbol-laden time-term in Mormon 8:6, Moroni$_2$ officially concluded the last year-related expression in the plates of Mormon.

The original manuscript is not extant for the text of this time-term, but the printer's manuscript and 1830 edition both exhibit identical diction.[24] Skousen's examination of the earliest manuscripts determined that "[f]or nearly one-sixth of the current Book of Mormon text (from somewhere between verses 7 and 18 in Helaman 13 to the end of Mormon), the original manuscript rather than the printer's manuscript was taken to the printer's shop and used to set the type for the 1830 edition."[25] Thus, at Mormon 8:6, both the printer's manuscript and 1830 edition are copies of the original manuscript; i.e., the original diction of this time-term is attested by both extant copies. The short name of the third Nephite chronological system, as modified by two substitutions, is categorized as an altered name.

In summary, six time-terms based on long and short names have been identified above by their similarities to standard names and by their narrative contexts, omissions and/or substitutions. The altered names apparently placed by Mormon$_2$ and Moroni$_2$ in the plates of Mormon may be compared with their associated standard names, as follows. The substitutions are italicized.

Standard name	Altered name
from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem	from the time Lehi left Jerusalem
of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi	of the reign of the judges over the people of *the Nephites*
of the reign of the judges	of the judges
of the reign of the judges	of *their* reign
from the coming of Christ	*since* the coming of *our Lord and Savior*

3.4   Personalized names in the small plates of Nephi

Each altered name listed above continues to point to or, in its narrative context, to imply the specific event when its associated chronological system began: Lehi$_1$'s departure from Jerusalem, the inauguration of the judges' reign and the coming of Christ. In the small plates of Nephi, four time-terms also point to the time of Lehi$_1$'s departure from Jerusalem, but it seems unlikely that these time-terms should be categorized as altered names because the long name

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[21]   Mormon 3:14-15; see also Mormon 3:9-13.

[22]   1 Nephi 10:4; 2 Nephi 31:13.

[23]   1 Nephi 12:18; see also 1 Nephi 12:19-21.

[24]   Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 37; idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part Two*, 897; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 532.

[25]   Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 6.

"from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem" seems unlikely to have been in existence when the event occurred. $Lehi_1$ and his family escaped from Jerusalem when the Lord commanded them to leave. In this Section, the possible development of the long name of the first Nephite system for numbering years is examined and the identification of a fourth type of time-term is discussed. This type is usually called a "personalized" name because it refers to an individual's age or reign, or to some other time during an individual's life or during the lives of a group of people, such as the family of $Lehi_1$.

3.4.1   Evolution of the first long name

The six altered names in the plates of Mormon may be compared to the names of the first Nephite system for numbering years that appear in the small plates of Nephi. One of the earliest names is related just to the family of $Lehi_1$. In 1 Nephi 2:1-5, $Nephi_1$ wrote that $Lehi_1$ was blessed by the Lord for his faithful prophetic work, warned that his life was in danger, and told to "take his family and depart into the wilderness". In compliance with this command, "he departed into the wilderness … and took nothing with him save it were his family and provisions and tents". $Nephi_1$ concluded this narrative by recording that $Lehi_1$'s "family … consisted of [$Nephi_1$'s] mother Sariah and [his] elder brethren, which were Laman, Lemuel, and Sam". Thus, in 2 Nephi 5:28, when $Nephi_1$ reported the passing of 30 years "from the time we left Jerusalem",[26] the personal pronoun *we* clearly refers to $Lehi_1$ and his family. Because $Lehi_1$ left Jerusalem with his family, the time-term in 2 Nephi 5:28 is chronologically equivalent to the prepositional phrase that has been proposed as the long name of the first Nephite chronological system: "from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem". Nonetheless, it does not seem likely that the phrase *from the time we left Jerusalem* was created by modifying a standard name created by Nephite authorities. More likely, this phrase reflects a thought, memory or statement created while $Lehi_1$'s family sought to survive in the wilderness.

The time-term "from the time we left Jerusalem" also is chronologically equivalent to four texts in which the passing of years was mentioned by $Nephi_1$ and his antagonistic older brothers. In these four texts, the year-related expressions do not include time-terms. Instead, the chronological meanings are implied by the narrative contexts. $Nephi_1$ noted with two year-related expressions that "we did sojourn for the space of many years, yea, even eight years in the wilderness" before "we did come to the land which we called Bountiful because of its much fruit and also wild honey".[27] The year-related expressions "many years" and "even eight years" may be inferred to measure time from the day that $Lehi_1$'s family left Jerusalem and began their sojourn in the wilderness.

After "the space of many days" in Bountiful, $Nephi_1$ received a commandment from the Lord to build a ship to carry the group to a "promised land" and he was instructed where to find ore to create the necessary tools. He built a bellows, gathered and smelted ore, and made tools. His older brothers called him "a fool … like unto our father, led away by the foolish imaginations of his heart". They believed he could neither build the ship nor sail it across "these great waters", the sea that bordered the land Bountiful.[28] Then, $Nephi_1$ quoted his older brothers'

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[26]   This diction is attested in the earliest sources. Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 174; idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 166; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 73.

[27]   1 Nephi 17:4-5. Both of these year-related expressions are attested in the earliest sources. Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 137; idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 113; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 42.

[28]   1 Nephi 17:7-20.

complaints in connection with two more year-related expressions: "we have wandered in the wilderness for these many years" and "these many years we have suffered in the wilderness".[29] In these early year-related narratives, the personal pronoun *we* has been used consistently. Quite naturally, Lehi$_1$ and his family appear to have personalized the passing of years from the time they left Jerusalem and began their trek through the wilderness.

The long and short names discussed above, and the narrative contexts of some of the initial year-related expressions in the small plates of Nephi that have no time-terms, all suggest that the family of Lehi$_1$ adopted a system for naming, measuring, numbering and recording the passing of time. In addition to the motivations provided by their separation from home and friends and their physical sufferings, the religious impetus for their apparent attention to these chronological tasks[30] seems to have been Lehi$_1$'s temporal prophecy regarding the time of the Messiah's birth, which Nephi$_1$ recorded in 1 Nephi 10:4: "yea, even six hundred years from the time that my father left Jerusalem". Nephi$_1$ also included this prophecy in slightly different forms two more times in his two books.[31] In all three of these instances, the time-terms use the personalized phrase *my father* rather than Lehi$_1$'s proper name. Nephi$_1$'s phrase emphasizes his sonship and evidences his commitment to measuring the years prophesied by his father. Again, these three familial time-terms appear to be chronologically equivalent to the proposed long name of the first Nephite system for numbering years "from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem".

The proposed long name of the first Nephite system finally occurs in the small plates of Nephi at a time of political transition, more than half a century after Lehi$_1$'s family departed into the wilderness. The ship had been built, the voyage had been completed and, after the death of Lehi$_1$, the followers of Nephi$_1$ had separated themselves from the followers of Laman$_1$.[32] Decades had passed and "Nephi began to be old and saw that he must soon die". At that time, "he anointed a man to be a king and a ruler over his people", who consisted of "Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites [and] Zoramites".[33] These different groups were not all descendants of Lehi$_1$, but their chronological system continued to refer to the time when Lehi$_1$ left Jerusalem and their religion continued to look forward in accordance with his prophecy of the Messiah's coming.[34] In Jacob 1:1, the formal transition of political power from Nephi$_1$ to his successor is recorded to have occurred when "fifty and five years had passed away from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem".[35] At least from this time forward, if not long before, a non-familial long name appears to have been established for the first Nephite chronological system.

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[29] 1 Nephi 17:20-21. The diction of both of these year-related expressions is attested in the earliest sources. Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 140; idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 116; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 43-44.

[30] 1 Nephi 17:4 ("yea, even eight years"); 2 Nephi 5:28 ("thirty years"); 5:34 ("forty years"); Jacob 1:1 ("fifty and five years").

[31] See 1 Nephi 19:8; 2 Nephi 25:19. The original manuscript is extant for the first two of these three year-related expressions and the printer's manuscript and 1830 edition of the *Book of Mormon* duplicate the slightly different wording of the three texts. Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 96, 150; idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 79, 128, 214; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 22, 51, 105.

[32] E.g., 1 Nephi 18; 2 Nephi 4:12; 5:1-19; Jacob 1:13-14.

[33] Jacob 1:9, 13-14.

[34] E.g., Jacob 1:1-8, 17-19; 4:1-5; 7:1-23.

[35] This standard long name is not extant in the original manuscript, but it appears in identical form in the printer's manuscript and 1830 edition. Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 37; idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 240; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 123. Skousen noted that "Oliver Cowdery initially omitted the *that* after 'from the time' in this passage, but later he supralinearly inserted it with somewhat heavier ink flow.... [T]he correction is probably the result of Oliver's proofing of [the printer's manuscript] against [the original manuscript]." Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part Two* (Provo, Utah: BYU FARMS, 2005), 934.

The long name of the first Nephite chronological system seems to have evolved naturally from days to weeks, months and then years "in the wilderness", and during that time perhaps to an identification of the importance of Lehi$_1$'s Messianic prophecy, and then to an official name for the system of a diverse Nephite people and their religion. Nonetheless, in the small plates of Nephi, five other year-related expressions occur in contexts where the personalization of time-terms seems more distantly related to the development of the long name. In 1 Nephi 1:4, the first year-related expression in the small plates occurs in Nephi$_1$'s report that "in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah … there came many prophets prophesying unto the people that they must repent or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed".[36] Nephi$_1$ then implies, by his use of the adverb *wherefore* as a conjunction, that the work of these prophets led Lehi$_1$ to pray for his people and to experience visions of a pillar of fire, the throne of God and a heavenly book. During these visions, he was called to be a prophet and given his prophetic tasks, which he immediately began to carry out.[37] The personalized name in this year-related narrative, "of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah", relates to the beginning of a king's reign and establishes the time and historical context in which Lehi$_1$'s prophetic mission appears to have commenced.

In 2 Nephi 16:1 and 24:28, the time-terms specify years when the reigns of other Jewish kings apparently were ended by their deaths.[38] In these verses, Nephi$_1$ quotes passages from the Book of Isaiah contained in the brass plates. The first quotation specifies the year "that king Uzziah died", when Isaiah$_1$ saw a vision of the throne of God and received prophetic messages related to the destruction of cities and the desolation of land.[39] The fulfillment of these prophecies regarding the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians appears to have been the historical catalyst that drove Lehi$_1$'s ancestors to Jerusalem in the southern kingdom of Judah.[40] The second quotation identifies the year "that king Ahaz died", when Isaiah$_1$ saw a vision about the eventual destruction of the Babylonian empire,[41] which, at the time of Isaiah$_1$, had not yet come to dominate Judah.[42] By the time of Lehi$_1$'s vision of the throne of God, however, Babylonia had defeated Assyria, subjugated the kingdom of Judah, exiled thousands of Jews to Babylon, and installed Zedekiah as the Babylonian emperor's vassal in Judah.[43] While it seemed like Jerusalem had been saved from destruction, Lehi$_1$ and other prophets continued to foretell the city's destruction if the people did not repent.[44] These time-terms with personalized names in Second Nephi relate to the ends of royal reigns, but they also help to establish the prophetic environment of Lehi$_1$'s visions and calling to be a prophet.

Each of the other time-terms in the small plates appears to be personalized to an individual or a people. The year-related narrative in Jacob 4:4 declares, "we knew of Christ, and we had a

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[36] This diction is not extant in the original manuscript. Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 37. The identical diction for this text appears in the printer's manuscript and 1830 edition. Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 53; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 5.

[37] 1 Nephi 1:5-20.

[38] Neither of these texts appears in the extant original manuscript. Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 37, 188-89. The diction of both texts is attested in the printer's manuscript and 1830 edition. Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 194, 210; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 91, 102.

[39] Isaiah 6.

[40] Chadwick, "Lehi's House at Jerusalem and the Land of His Inheritance," in Welch, Seely and Seely, eds., *Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem*, 81-93.

[41] Isaiah 14.

[42] See Division 10: "Was Jerusalem Destroyed in 601 B.C.?" which discusses the rise of Babylonia to power during Lehi$_1$'s lifetime.

[43] See Division 10: "When was the First Year of the Reign of Zedekiah, King of Judah?"

[44] See Division 5: "Prophecy of Immediate Destruction".

hope of his glory many hundred years before his coming".[45] The time-term "before his coming" seems to give a very general time of Jacob$_2$'s writing about the faith and hope of the Nephites with respect to Lehi$_1$'s 600-year prophecy. Likewise, in Jacob 7:7, Jacob$_2$ quotes the words of Sherem, a non-believer who referred to Christ as "a being which ye say shall come many hundred years hence".[46] The time-term "hence" refers to the same time in the future as the time-term in Jacob 4:4, but in this instance, the time is measured from the day of Sherem's face-to-face confrontation with Jacob$_2$. Similarly, in the year-related narrative that begins the Book of Enos, Jacob$_2$'s son Enos$_2$ reported the voice of the Lord testifying to him regarding Christ: "many years passeth away before that he shall manifest himself in the flesh".[47] The time-term "before that he shall manifest himself in the flesh" refers again to the time of the coming of Christ, but measures the interval from the time Enos$_2$ heard the voice of the Lord.

Enos$_2$ also stated that "an hundred and seventy and nine years had passed away from the time that our father Lehi left Jerusalem".[48] The time-term of this clause contains all the words of the long name of the first Nephite system for numbering years, but it is not a long name or an altered name. Unlike all the altered names in the plates of Mormon, there is no omission or substitution. Instead, this time-term includes the inserted phrase *our father*, a reference to the grandfather or ancestor of Enos$_2$ and many other Nephites. This modification suggests that this time-term should be classified as something other than a long name or an altered name. Hence, it is proposed that this time-term should be grouped with the other personalized names.

The descendants of Jacob$_2$ filled the small plates of Nephi before they could record the birth of Christ.[49] Still, enough room remained on these plates for Mormon$_2$ to add a few words to testify that Lehi$_1$'s prophecy had been fulfilled. Mormon$_2$ began his words by referring to himself and his son by name and then providing a contextual statement of chronology: "it is many hundred years after the coming of Christ".[50] Note that Mormon$_2$ used "many hundred years", the same number- and year-terms recorded twice in Jacob$_2$'s book. Mormon$_2$ apparently sought to add his witness to that of Jacob$_2$ and the believing Nephites, and to contrast his testimony with the contrary witness of Sherem and the non-believers, and to do so in a simple chronological statement. In addition, the time-term "after the coming of Christ" contrasts with the time-terms "before his coming" in Jacob 4:4 and "before that he shall manifest himself in the flesh" in Enos 1:8. From Mormon$_2$'s perspective, his words may have been designed to complete the message of the small plates of Nephi. His time-term testified that Lehi$_1$'s ancient prophecy had been fulfilled.

One may question whether the phrase *after the coming of Christ* in Words of Mormon 1:2 should not be classified as one of Mormon$_2$'s altered names, similar to some of the six altered

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[45] This text is attested in all the earliest sources. Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 198 (fragmentary); idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 250; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 129.

[46] This text does not appear in the extant original manuscript, but it is attested in the printer's manuscript and 1830 edition. Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 37, 205-06; idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 267; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 141.

[47] Enos 1:8. The original manuscript for this text is not extant. Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 37, 209-10. The diction is identical in the printer's manuscript and 1830 edition. Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 271; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 143.

[48] Enos 1:25. The original manuscript for this text is not extant. Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 37. The diction is identical in the printer's manuscript and 1830 edition. Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 273; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 145.

[49] Jarom 1:14; Omni 1:1-12, 30.

[50] Words of Mormon 1:2. The original manuscript for this text is not extant. Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 37. The printer's manuscript and 1830 edition both attest to this diction. Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 281; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 151. See also Division 10, Part 3: "Identifying Major Divisions in the Plates".

names that appear in the plates of Mormon. One could also note that the short name of the third Nephite chronological system, "from the coming of Christ", appears to have been changed merely by substituting the preposition *after* for the preposition *from*. This change certainly suggests that the time-term at the end of the small plates of Nephi should be categorized as an altered name. The phrase *after the coming of Christ* clearly maintains the vital diction used in the standard names of the third Nephite chronological system.

Nonetheless, the time-term "after the coming of Christ" is proposed to be grouped with the other personalized names on four grounds, three of which have been noted above. First, the associated number- and year-terms, "many hundred years", link Mormon$_2$'s year-related expression to the personalized names and beliefs about Christ that were associated with Jacob$_2$ and Sherem. Second, Mormon$_2$'s use of the preposition *after* contrasts with the preposition *before* recorded by Jacob$_2$ and Enos$_2$, and thus emphasizes Mormon$_2$'s similar, certain, witness of Christ. Third, Mormon$_2$'s time-term appears in the small plates of Nephi, an entirely different set of plates from the set in which Mormon$_2$ used altered names. If his time-term in the small plates of Nephi were to be categorized as an altered name, it would be the only one in these plates and inconsistent with the letter pattern of time-terms apparently created by Nephi$_1$ (discussed in Section 3.8 below).

Fourth, Mormon$_2$'s year-related expression is preceded by the words *it is*. This part of the narrative context cannot be overlooked or ignored. The verb *is*, of course, is the present tense of the verb *be*, which Webster's 1828 dictionary defined to mean "[t]o be fixed; to exist; to have a real state or existence, for a longer or shorter time".[51] According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the verb *be* means such things as "to exist, occur, happen ... [t]o be the case or the fact".[52] The verb *is* followed by a year-related expression suggests the question: what narrative subject *is* that number of years? For the year-related expression in Words of Mormon 1:2, *it* is.

Again according to Webster's dictionary, the pronoun *it* may be defined as a "substitute or pronoun of the neuter gender…. Very often, *it* is used to introduce a sentence, preceding a verb as a nominative, but referring to a clause or distinct member of the sentence".[53] Similarly, the *Oxford English Dictionary* states that "[a]s nominative of the verb *to be, it* refers to the subject of thought, attention, or inquiry".[54] Thus, the actual subject of Mormon$_2$'s clause is its year-related expression. In other words, Mormon$_2$ testified that when he added his words to the small plates of Nephi, "many hundred years after the coming of Christ" had existed in fact—because the coming of Christ foreseen by Lehi$_1$, Nephi$_1$, Jacob$_2$, Enos$_2$ and other Nephite prophets had occurred in fact. Mormon$_2$'s personal witness in this clause advocates for the conclusion that the phrase *after the coming of Christ* should be categorized as a time-term personalized to Mormon$_2$ and the time of his witness, rather than as a generic altered name identifying a Nephite chronological system, the structure of which was borrowed from the plates of Mormon and inserted in the small plates of Nephi.

In summary, 11 different forms of personalized time-terms have been proposed for the small plates of Nephi. Three time-terms have been identified as references to the times of specific kings of Judah. Four more forms (one of which was used twice by Nephi$_1$) exhibit close similarities with the time-term that eventually became the long name of the first Nephite

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[51]   Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, I: [237] (be).

[52]   *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, I: 179-80 (be).

[53]   Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, I: [1004-5] (it), italics in the original.

[54]   *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, I: 1492-93 (it), italics in the original.

chronological system. Three more time-terms also describe times when the Nephites looked forward to the coming of Christ and one time-term (added by Mormon$_2$) describes the time of his witness that Christ, in fact, had come. These 11 names are listed below and, where the meaning of a long or short name appears in a personalized form, the divergent words and phrases have been italicized.

Standard name	Personalized name
—	of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah
—	that king Uzziah died
—	that king Ahaz died
from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem	from the time that *my father* left Jerusalem
from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem	from the time *my father* left Jerusalem
from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem	from the time that *our father* Lehi left Jerusalem
from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem	from the time *we* left Jerusalem
—	before his coming
—	hence
—	before that he shall manifest himself in the flesh
from the coming of Christ	*after* the coming of Christ

3.5   Personalized names in the plates of Mormon and Moroni

Twenty-five year-related expressions in the extant text of the plates of Mormon and six year-related expressions in the plates of Moroni refer to an individual's age or reign, or to some other time during an individual's life or during the lives of the people of Nephi. Twelve of these 31 expressions contain time-terms that state the ages of individuals, in nine instances by using the adjective *old*[55] and in three instances by using the adjectival phrase *of age*[56] or *of his age*.[57]

3.5.1   Individuals' ages

Mosiah 29:45, for example, records a year-related narrative in which the time-term is the adjective *old*. In the following quotation, the year-related expression has been placed in italics to distinguish it from the narrative-link and secondary narrative language. "And now it came to pass that [Alma$_2$'s] father died, being *eighty and two years old*, having lived to fulfill the commandments of God." In connection with this type of year-related expression (*x years old*), Webster's 1828 dictionary defines *old* to mean "[o]f any duration whatever" and the *Oxford English Dictionary* provides a similar definition: "[o]f (any specified) age or length of existence".[58] The time-term "old" specifies or names the time (the life of Alma$_1$) when these 82 years existed. In this and each of the other eight instances where the time-term is the word *old*, the time specified or named is the duration of an individual's life and, thus, these time-terms are proposed to be categorized as personalized names.

Mormon 1:1-2 includes the year-related expression "about ten years of age". The time-term "of age" refers to the life of Mormon$_2$, who identifies himself in these verses. Since he is the writer, the phrase *of age* means "of my age" or "of my existence", but the time-term has been condensed by ellipsis. The context identifies whose age is mentioned; so, the possessive pronoun

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[55]   Mosiah 29:45-46; Alma 43:17; 3 Nephi 28:3; Mormon 1:3, 6; Ether 7:4; 9:24.

[56]   Mormon 1:2, 15.

[57]   Mosiah 6:4.

[58]   Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, II: [206] (old); *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, I: 1983.

my has been omitted. In Mormon 1:15, Mormon$_2$ again uses the condensed adjectival phrase *of age* as his time-term. In Mosiah 6:4, however, Mormon$_2$ is not the person whose age is mentioned. In the following quotation from this verse, the year-related expression is in italics to distinguish it from the narrative-link and secondary narrative language. "And Mosiah began to reign in his father's stead, and he began to reign in *the thirtieth year of his age*". Both Mosiah$_2$ and his father are mentioned in the first of these conjoined clauses. The personal pronoun *he* is the subject of the second clause and refers to Mosiah$_2$, the person who "began to reign". The possessive pronoun *his* in the time-term "of his age" appears for clarity. The time-term again specifies or names the time (the life of Mosiah$_2$) when this 30th year existed. The phrases *of age* and *of his age* are both proposed to be personalized names.

3.5.2   Individuals' reigns

Eleven other time-terms in the plates of Mormon and Moroni relate to the reigns of nine specific rulers (one of whom is also mentioned in the small plates of Nephi). The categorization of seven of these reigns as personalized names is straightforward. In the preface to the Book of Third Nephi, Mormon$_2$ used the year-related expression "the first year of the reign of Zedekiah the king of Judah" (italics removed from the Yale text). The year-term has been modified by a time-term specifying Zedekiah's reign. In Mosiah 9:14, the Nephite king Zeniff[59] used the year-related expression "the thirteenth year of my reign" and, in Mosiah 29:46, the Nephite king Mosiah$_2$[60] is described by Mormon$_2$ as having died in "the thirty and third year of his reign". These two year-related expressions include the pronouns *my* and *his* to personalize the time-terms. The end of king Mosiah$_2$'s reign also is mentioned in 3 Nephi 2:5, when 100 years of the reign of the judges are mentioned with the time-term "since the days of Mosiah, which was king over the people of the Nephites". In Alma 24:4, the year-related narrative states that the king of the Lamanites[61] died in "that selfsame year that the Lamanites began to make preparations for war against the people of God". The time-term identifies the time when the Lamanite king named his successor and suffered death by describing it as the time of Lamanite preparations for war. Ether 14:11 includes the year-related expression "the first year of Lib", which refers to a Jaredite king whose reign apparently lasted less than a year.[62] The time-term "of Lib" likely means "of the reign of Lib". In the previous verse, Lib is identified as "a man of great stature" who "obtained unto himself the kingdom" by murdering the previous Jaredite king. With the terse time-term "of Lib", Moroni$_2$ personalizes this year, but also appears to use ellipsis to indicate the short duration of the usurper's power and to deny the legitimacy of his reign. In the first chapter of the Book of Alma, two year-related expressions honor the first chief judge with personalized time-terms "of the reign of Alma in the judgment seat" and "of the reign of Alma".[63] Decades later, the 92nd year of the reign of the judges is mentioned in a personalized way: "the year that Lachoneus was the chief judge and the governor over the land".[64]

A more difficult time-term categorization occurs with the text in Alma 50:40 regarding the report that a new chief judge named Parhoron "did commence his reign in the end of the twenty

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[59]   Mosiah 7:21; 9:1.

[60]   E.g., Mosiah 29:4, 7; Alma 1:1.

[61]   Alma 23:1.

[62]   Ether 14:10-16.

[63]   Alma 1:2, 23.

[64]   3 Nephi 1:1.

and fourth year over the people of Nephi". In this verse, the long name of the second Nephite system for numbering years ("of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi") appears to have been modified by omitting the initial preposition and vital diction: "of the reign of the judges". The ellipsis of the vital diction means that this time-term is not an altered name and that the diction of this expression is confused. The phrase *over the people of Nephi* still follows the year-term and modifies the noun *reign*, but the positions of the phrases *in the end of the twenty and fourth year* and *over the people of Nephi* have been reversed. This garbled diction, as it appears in a fragment of the original manuscript, is partially extant. The text *d commence his reign in t* is missing, but the text *he end of the twenty & fourth year over the People of Neph* has been preserved. The reversal of phrases appears in the printer's manuscript and 1830 edition.[65] Because of the ellipsis of the vital phrase of the long name after the year-term and the insertion of a clause about Parhoron commencing "his reign" before the year-term, the condensed time-term is categorized as a personalized name.

For the text in Alma 10:6, another complicated categorization is presented. This instance is only distantly related to a reigning chief judge. The short name of the second Nephite chronological system has been changed by the substitution of the possessive pronoun *our* for the second article *the*: "of the reign of *our* judges" (italics added). The original manuscript for this text is not extant, but the possessive pronoun *our* appears in the printer's manuscript and 1830 edition. The change was reversed (perhaps accidentally) by an editor or typesetter of the 1837 edition and the short name of this system has appeared in all subsequent editions of the *Book of Mormon*.[66] In terms of categorization, the apparently original substitution in a short name might seem to be an instance where an altered name was created, similar to "of their reign" in Alma 2:1. However, the narrative context of Alma 10:6 is strikingly personal and similar to the immediacy expressed in Jacob 4:4 and 7:7. Mormon$_2$ is quoting a speech given by Amulek in the city of Ammonihah. Amulek refers to the reign of the judges that brought some of his antagonists in the audience to power (lawyers who were exploiting the new judicial system to acquire personal wealth and power) and he criticizes their cunning and greed.[67] Thus, this time-term is specific to Amulek, his audience, their rule by judges and their lawyers' current treachery. This time-term probably should be categorized as a personalized name.

3.5.3   Other personalized names

Two additional time-terms refer to the life of the Jaredite prophet Ether: "that same year which he was cast out from among the people" and "the first year that Ether dwelt in the cavity of a rock".[68] Three more time-terms refer to various prophets' declarations about the time of Christ. Alma 45:10 includes the expression "four hundred years from the time that Jesus Christ shall manifest himself unto them". Helaman 8:18 mentions prophecies of Christ "a great many thousand years before his coming" and 3 Nephi 2:7 includes a measure of "nine years … from the time which the sign was given which was spoken of by the prophets that Christ should come into the world". In these three instances, the time-terms occur in narratives relating, respectively,

[65]   Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 412; idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part Two*, 644; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 366.

[66]   Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part Three* (Provo, Utah: BYU FARMS, 2006), 1777-78; Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 37; idem, *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 436; Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 249.

[67]   Alma 10-11.

[68]   Ether 13:15, 18.

to the prophet Alma$_2$, to "many before the days of Abraham which were called by the order of God", and to "the prophets" (including Samuel$_2$ the Lamanite and Nephi$_3$) apparently recorded in the Nephite plates, all of whom testified of Christ. Finally, three time-terms relate to the people of Nephi. In Alma 50:37, the time specified is "that same year that the people of Nephi had peace restored unto them". In Helaman 11:24, the expression "some years before" refers to a time when Nephite dissenters went over to the Lamanites. In 3 Nephi 7:8, Mormon$_2$ mentions "six years … since the more part of the people had turned from their righteousness". All eight of these time-terms are proposed to be categorized as personalized names.

To summarize, 22 different personalized names (a few of which appear multiple times) have been identified in the plates of Mormon and Moroni. These non-standard time-terms refer to an individual's age or reign, or to some other time during an individual's life or during the lives of the people of Nephi. These names are listed below, together with their associated intervals or points in time.

Personalized name	Period or point in time
old	individual lifetime
of age	individual lifetime
of his age	individual lifetime
of the reign of Zedekiah the king of Judah	reign of a Jewish king
of my reign	reign of a Nephite king
of his reign	reign of a Nephite king
since the days of Mosiah, which was king over the people of the Nephites	reign of a Nephite king
that the Lamanites began to make preparations for war against the people of God	reign of a Lamanite king
of Lib	reign of a Jaredite king
of the reign of Alma in the judgment seat	reign of a Nephite chief judge
of the reign of Alma	reign of a Nephite chief judge
that Lachoneus was the chief judge and the governor over the land	reign of a Nephite chief judge
his reign ... over the people of Nephi	reign of a Nephite chief judge
of the reign of our judges	reign of Nephite judges
which he was cast out from among the people	rejection of a Jaredite prophet
that Ether dwelt in the cavity of a rock	rejection of a Jaredite prophet
from the time that Jesus Christ shall manifest himself unto them	prophecy of Alma$_2$ related to Christ's visit
before his coming	prophecy by many Old World prophets
from the time which the sign was given which was spoken of by the prophets that Christ should come into the world	prophecy by New World prophets
that the people of Nephi had peace restored unto them	Nephite event
before	Nephite event
since the more part of the people had turned from their righteousness	Nephite event

3.6   Omitted names

In the foregoing discussion, familial, group and other individualized time-terms have been categorized as personalized names. These time-terms also have been distinguished from long, short and altered names. Year-related expressions containing these four types of time-terms also must be distinguished from the 272 year-related expressions that contain no time-terms at all. For these most numerous year-related expressions, exact or approximate times often may be inferred from their locations in the narratives, major divisions and plates. However, for a comprehensive

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analysis, a category for the expressions without time-terms is required. In this study, data initially is categorized by the four types of express time-terms discussed above and by a category that, solely for purposes of analysis, will be considered a fifth type. This analytical category usually will be called an "omitted" name.

In this regard, the year-related expression "it" in Helaman 1:13 has been categorized initially as having an omitted name. Like the other year-related expressions categorized with omitted names, "it" is a year-related expression that may be identified with a specific time only by inferring that time from a definite time mentioned in a separate text. Admittedly, one may note that the pronoun *it* refers to the full noun phrase *the fortieth year of the reign of the judges*, which appears earlier in the same verse and includes a short name. Hence, the time-term implied by the pronoun *it* is categorized initially as an omitted name, but in the examination in Division 3, "it" is also analyzed as an expression that may be inferred to have a short name.

3.7 Reckoned time

As mentioned above, the year-related expression in 3 Nephi 2:7 includes a time-term that has been categorized as a personalized name: "from the time which the sign was given which was spoken of by the prophets that Christ should come into the world".[69] This time-term is personalized as to the prophets of Christ and is composed of 22 words, which appear to make it the longest time-term in the extant text of the *Book of Mormon*. The length may symbolize the centuries of carefully recorded years leading up to the event mentioned in the following verse, "the coming of Christ". This 22-word time-term marks the point when the two chronological systems in which a nine-year period had been measured reached their respective conclusions. After 609 years "since Lehi left Jerusalem" and 100 years "from the days of Mosiah", these chronological systems are never again mentioned in the narratives of the *Book of Mormon*.

Perhaps then, it should not be unexpected that the conclusion of these year-numbering systems is followed in 3 Nephi 2:8 by the following year-related narrative: "Now the Nephites began to reckon their time from this period which the sign was given, or from the coming of Christ; therefore nine years had passed away." The temporal-expression in this verse is the pivotal temporal-expression in the *Book of Mormon* and much more will be said about it in subsequent Parts and Divisions of this source book. In this Part 3, the analysis focuses on what appears to be the time-term associated with this exceptional expression. This time-term is the last of the 154 express time-terms to be categorized.

One immediately noticeable aspect of this time-term is that the diction of the short name "from the coming of Christ" occurs in this component, rather than the long name proposed above, "since the sign was given of the coming of Christ". With the inauguration of the third Nephite system for numbering years, the long name might seem to have been more formal and appropriate. A second distinguishing feature of this time-term is that the short name follows the phrase *from this period which the sign was given*, which is neither a long name nor an altered name, but might be a time personalized to the Nephites, who had just been mentioned. A third unique aspect of this time-term is that the two prepositional phrases are coupled by the conjunction *or*. No other time-term in the *Book of Mormon* uses two phrases conjoined with the word *or*; so, the interpretation of these conjoined phrases must be thorough. One cannot merely

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[69] Royal Skousen noted that "in standard English we expect *when* as the relative pronoun when the referent involves time.… [T]he original text of the Book of Mormon sometimes used *which* … in place of the expected *when*." Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part Five,* 3205 (italics in the original).

speculate that they indicate Nephite confusion or lack of respect for the day when the coming of Christ occurred. Nonetheless, the conjoining of two phrases does raise a temporal question requiring interpretation: do the two phrases describe identical times?

3.7.1 Elements of the long name

The proposed long name of the third Nephite system for numbering years appears only in Moroni$_2$'s last time-term in the *Book of Mormon*: "since the sign was given of the coming of Christ".[70] This long name appears to consist of two declarations: first, the sign of a night without darkness had been given; and second, the sign meant that Christ would be born on the following day.[71] This time-term was placed in the text 35 years or more after the destruction of the Nephites and at least 20 years after Moroni$_2$'s engraving of the plates of Mormon. During that time, Moroni$_2$ would seem to have been able to compose his last year-related expression with precision. Thus, it would seem likely that Moroni$_2$ closed his record of the Nephite people by using the most formal name of the Nephites' third chronological system.

If, in fact, the long name of the third system consisted of the two declarations regarding the *sign* and the *coming*, then Mormon$_2$'s first reference to the inauguration of the system in 3 Nephi 2:8 clearly presents both declarations. However, instead of using a standard long name for this first reference to the new chronological system, Mormon$_2$ appears to have conjoined the short name of the new system with a distinctive phrase referring to the sign being given to the Nephites. Indeed, in the time-terms of 3 Nephi 2:4-8, the appearance of the sign of Christ's birth is mentioned in connection with the last references to the two earlier year-numbering systems and with the first reference to the third year-numbering system. Apparently, Mormon$_2$ did not want the chronological significance of the vital, religious sign to be overlooked or ignored.

3.7.2 The crucial sign

To understand the extraordinary construction of the year-related expression in 3 Nephi 2:8, it is important to begin with an examination of Mormon$_2$'s statement about the sign. The phrase *this period which the sign was given* was recognized by the believers to refer to the sign prophesied by a Lamanite named Samuel$_2$, who is quoted as describing the sign as "one day and a night and a day, as if it were one day and there were no night" and as "two days and a night; nevertheless the night shall not be darkened. And it shall be the night before [Christ] is born".[72] Unquestionably, the noun *day* in these descriptions refers to the artificial day rather than the natural day because *day* is contrasted with *night*.[73] In fulfillment of Samuel$_2$'s prophecy, the sign was perceived to occur when, in the ending of the first of the prophesied days,

> 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…. And it came to pass that there was no darkness in all that night, but it was as light as though it was midday. And it came to pass that the sun did rise in the morning again,

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70   Moroni 10:1.

71   3 Nephi 1:4-21.

72   Helaman 14:4.

73   See Division 1, Part 1, Sections 1.9.1 through 1.9.3.

according to its proper order. And they knew that it was the day that the Lord should be born, because of the sign which had been given.[74]

These statements indicate that the time appointed to start each of the new system's years "from the coming of Christ" was understood to involve a "period" related to the night without darkness.[75] When the *Book of Mormon* was first published, the noun *period* was defined in several ways that seem applicable to this text. A *period* could be "[a]ny specified portion of time, designated by years, months, days or hours complete."[76] The prophesied night was a "specified portion of time" explicitly identified in 3 Nephi 1:15, 19 by the observation of sunset and sunrise without any intervening darkness. In the normal course of events, a dark night would have occurred between sunset and sunrise; however, in accordance with the prophesied sign, this particular night was as light as at midday. The noun *period* also could mean an "[e]nd [or] conclusion."[77] Certainly, the prophesied night without darkness was understood by Lamanite and Nephite believers as the end or conclusion of Lehi$_1$'s prophesied period of 600 years. This long-awaited conclusion occurred when the sign reached its own conclusion and the sun appeared on the morning of the day of the birth of Christ.[78] The noun *period* also could be understood as the "[s]tate at which anything terminates; limit."[79] The *Oxford English Dictionary* includes a similar definition, which is noted to be obsolete: "The time during which anything runs its course; time of duration." The examples listed in this dictionary are dated from 1413 to 1672.[80] Again, the prophesied night without darkness was understood by the believers to be the termination of "a great many thousand years" of prophecy preceding the birth of "a Savior of the world".[81]

To realize the significance of this unique morning to the believers, one must note that the appearance of the risen Christ to the believers did not occur until more than three decades later.[82] Until that great prophesied day[83] arrived, the believers presumably remembered and referred to the sign as an extraordinary, widely observed event that heralded the birth of the Messiah on the second of Samuel$_2$'s prophesied days associated with the coming of Christ. Furthermore, it seems likely to suppose that in every official mention of the proposed long name of the new chronological system, the believers would have reiterated their remembrance of, and faith in, the period of the sign. Before the sign was experienced, a day had been "set apart by the unbelievers that all those who believed in those traditions should be put to death except the sign should come to pass which had been given by Samuel the prophet".[84] The day of that religious purge had not yet arrived when the sign was given. Thus, the events that filled the sky and earth with extraordinary light were vital to the believers' survival and religion, and continued to be

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[74]   3 Nephi 1:15, 19.

[75]   In this discussion of the sign, just the sun is mentioned because of its important role as brightest and most temporally consistent of the two "great lights" of heaven; however, "a new star" also was prophesied and apparently was seen following the night without darkness (Helaman 14:3-5; 3 Nephi 1:15-21; see also 1 Nephi 5:7-22; Genesis 1:14-18). The specific role of the moon as the other "great" light of heaven is not mentioned in the narrative.

[76]   Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, II: [268] (period).

[77]   Ibid.

[78]   3 Nephi 1:10-19.

[79]   Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, II: [268] (period).

[80]   *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, II: 2134 (period).

[81]   Helaman 8:18; 1 Nephi 10:4.

[82]   3 Nephi 10:18-19; 11:1-17.

[83]   E.g., 2 Nephi 26:1-3; Helaman 14:14-29; 3 Nephi 8:1-3.

[84]   3 Nephi 1:9.

fundamental to their faith in the prophecy of another great day yet to be fulfilled[85] and to their reverence for, and remembrance of, the Messiah's day of birth. That day, which began when the period of the night without darkness came to an end, appears to have been the first day of the first month of the Nephites' new chronological system measured "from coming of Christ".[86]

3.7.3   Placement of the time-term

One final aspect of the extraordinary time-term in 3 Nephi 2:8 is that the regular order of year-related expressions with express time-terms does not occur in this verse. Mormon's description of the formal inauguration of this new system places the time-term ahead of its associated year-term. This exceptional order helps to draw attention to the pivotal placement of 3 Nephi 2:8 in the *Book of Mormon*, but it does more than that. The introductory clause for this unique time-term cannot be overlooked or ignored: "*Now the Nephites began to reckon their time from this period which the sign was given, or from the coming of Christ*" (italics added). No year- or number-term occurs in the introductory clause because they have been placed in the following clause. Nonetheless, the verb phrase of the introductory clause, *began to reckon*, must be examined because it is the only place in the *Book of Mormon* where the verb *reckon* has to do with time. Why was a reckoning even necessary? One day, month and year followed another and nine years had already been measured and numbered in the first two Nephite chronological systems. What was involved in the reckoning? Why did the Nephites only then, nine years after "the coming of Christ", *begin* to reckon their new system?

3.7.4   The reckoning process in Alma 11

In the *Book of Mormon*, the verb *reckon* and the noun *reckoning* are mentioned only in connection with two narratives, both of which involve transitions in the formal measurement of quantities. The first quantity-related transition occurs in Alma 11, which describes the adoption of a new system for measuring quantities of gold and silver. The second quantity-related transition occurs in 3 Nephi 2, which describes the adoption of a new system for measuring quantities of time.[87] The description of the transition in Alma 11 appears to have been chosen by Mormon$_2$, at least in part, to set the stage for the description of the transition in 3 Nephi 2.

Lengthy narratives about judicial corruption, religious discrimination and political rebellion at the city of Ammonihah[88] create the overall context in which a new system of valuing gold and silver with respect to grain is explained. Prior to the institution of this system, the people "altered their reckoning and their measure according to the minds and the circumstances of the people, in every generation until the reign of the judges".[89] King Mosiah$_2$ inaugurated a uniform valuation system when he established the reign of judges in the land of Zarahemla.[90] According to "the law of Mosiah" regarding judicial compensation, "every man which was a judge of the law, or which was appointed to be judges" received "wages" of "a senine of gold for a day, or a senum of

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[85]   See footnote 83.

[86]   See 3 Nephi 8:2.

[87]   In 3 Nephi 8:2, the noun *reckoning* is used in connection with this new system.

[88]   Alma 8:7-16:11.

[89]   Alma 11:4.

[90]   Alma 11:1-4.

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silver, which is equal to a senine of gold".[91] With the wage law thus stated, Alma 11:4 then introduces a table of valuation for comparing and equating pieces of gold and silver with measures of grain.[92] As this study depicts Alma 11:4 below (with separate lines labeled with letters and numbers, and key words emphasized by italics), the text appears to be structured by various parallel concepts. The diction, capitalization and punctuation of this single verse are reproductions of the Yale text; so, the capitalization and punctuation do not necessarily accord with the proposed parallels. The text seems organized in two closely-related segments.

A_1 Now these are *the names*
B_{1A} of *the different pieces*
C_{1A} of *their gold*
C_{1B} and of *their silver*,
B_{1B} according to *their value*;

A_2 and *the names* are given by *the Nephites*.
B_{2A} For they did not *reckon*
C_{2A} after *the manner* of *the Jews* which were *at Jerusalem*,
B_{2B} neither did they *measure*
C_{2B} after *the manner* of *the Jews*;
B_{2C} but they altered their *reckoning* and their *measure*
C_{2C} according to the *minds* and the *circumstances*
C_{2D} of the *people*, in *every generation*
D_{2A} until *the reign* of *the judges*—
D_{2B} *they* having been *established by king Mosiah*.

The verb *reckon* and the noun *reckoning* in lines B_{2A} and B_{2C} of this introduction are clearly distinguished from the verb and noun *measure* in lines B_{2B} and B_{2C}. The table of valuation that follows this introduction suggests that the distinction is between quantities that permit arithmetic processes and comparisons to be applied on the one hand to pieces of gold and silver (likely gauged by weights) and on the other hand to quantities of grain (probably measured by volumes).[93] Table 3.B depicts the text of this table of valuation with its list of Nephite names and relative values reckoned by the law of king Mosiah$_2$.

According to Webster's 1828 dictionary, the verb *measure* means "[t]o compute or ascertain extent, quantity, dimensions or capacity by a certain rule" and the noun *measure*, as applied to things such as grain, means "[a] limited or definite quantity".[94] The A and B lines in both segments of Alma 11:4, as organized conceptually above, associate the transitive verb *reckon* with the giving of names to values of gold and silver and to comparing and equating such values to each other (and to measures "of every kind of grain", according to the table of valuation). Since only a measure of barley is mentioned specifically in the table, the volume of a measure of another kind of grain may have been larger or smaller than the volume of a measure of barley, depending on the scarcity or abundance of each particular grain. Apparently, such measures of grain were well enough established that they were not required to be listed in a table of values for gold and silver.

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91   Alma 11:1-3. The unusual "shift in number, from singular to plural" and the shift from past-tense to present-tense verb forms in this passage have been examined in Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part Three* (Provo, Utah: BYU FARMS, 2006), 1798-1800, 1804-05.

92   Alma 11:5-19.

93   Alma 11:7, 15.

94   Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, II: [112-13] (measure).

The action of naming or enumerating separately, while not explicitly included in Webster's 1828 definition of the verb *reckon*,[95] is included in the first definition of that verb in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "[t]o enumerate serially or separately; to name or mention one after another or in due order; to go over or through (a series) in this manner". These are noted to be obsolete uses of the verb *reckon*. The listed examples range from about 1200 to 1533.[96] Webster, penning his definition nearly 300 years after the date of the last example, may not have been familiar with naming or separately enumerating as an obsolete definition of *reckon*.[97] Similarly, Webster's definition for the noun *reckoning* is not expressly associated with naming or enumerating, but with "[t]he act of counting or computing [or] calculation",[98] which assumes that quantity names or figures and their sequence of values have been determined previously. Again, the *Oxford English Dictionary* expressly includes "enumeration" with "calculation [and] computation" in its initial definition of *reckoning* and it adds the "[m]anner or mode of computing or numbering" as another definition.[99] The noun *enumeration* means both "[t]he action of ascertaining the number of something" and "the action of specifying seriatum, as in a list or catalogue".[100] These definitions all are pertinent to the three uses of *reckoning* in Table 3.B. This table of equated quantities of metals and barley begins its reckoning by listing the Nephite names to be used in measuring the metals and then computing their equalities.

3.7.5   Equating the first two Nephite chronological systems

The second *Book of Mormon* context where the words *reckon* and *reckoning* are used is in the Book of Third Nephi. Unlike the table of equated values of metals and barley presented in Alma 11, the words *reckon* and *reckoning* as used with quantities of time are not compacted into a few consecutive verses at a single point in the text. The solitary use of the verb *reckon* with respect to time occurs in 3 Nephi 2:8. The only use of the noun *reckoning* with respect to time occurs six chapters later in 3 Nephi 8:2, a verse that has reference to the same temporal context as 3 Nephi 2:8. This context is the measurement of a quantity of time in the third Nephite system for numbering years. The year-related expression in 3 Nephi 8:2 has no time-term; so, it will not be discussed further in this Part 3, but it will be examined in Division 3 of this source book. In contrast, the time-term in 3 Nephi 2:8 completes a previous series of three equations of quantities of time in the two earlier Nephite systems for numbering years. These three equations, which themselves do not use the words *reckon* or *reckoning*, are embedded in year-related narratives in Mormon$_2$'s books of Mosiah, Alma and Third Nephi.

The first equation of quantities of time measured in the first and second Nephite chronological systems occurs when a government by elected judges was instituted by king Mosiah$_2$. At that time, the first year "of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi" began to be numbered. The installation of Alma$_2$ as the chief judge occurred before the end of the

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95   Ibid., II: [429-30] (reckon).

96   *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, II: 2440 (reckon).

97   In 2009, Skousen noted that "[o]ne of the most remarkable findings of the [Book of Mormon] Critical Text Project is the frequent occurrence of vocabulary from Early Modern English." Skousen, "Editor's Preface" in Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text*, xxvii. By 2018, he had concluded that "virtually all the language of the original text of the book dates from the 1530s through the 1730s". Royal Skousen, "Summary" in Royal Skousen with Stanford Carmack, *The History of the Text of the Book of Mormon, Part Three* (Provo, Utah: BYU FARMS and BYU Studies, 2018), iv.

98   Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, II: [430] (reckoning).

99   *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, II: 2440 (reckoning).

100   Ibid., I: 879 (enumeration).

509th year measured from when Lehi$_1$ left Jerusalem.[101] Some number of days (most likely less than one of such years) seems to have existed between the first day of the first year of the second Nephite chronological system and the first day of the 510th year of the first Nephite chronological system. This equation assumes that if the first year of the second chronological system began before the 508th year since Lehi$_1$'s departure had ended, this fact would have been mentioned. The formality of the peaceful transition from the reign of kings to the reign of judges chosen by the people, which evidently included new laws associated with the wages of judges, weights and measures, and the beginning point and names of a new chronological system, all suggest that the year in which the transition occurred may have been noted for the record. Only the 509th year measured from Lehi$_1$'s departure is so noted and it is mentioned only after an unknown number of days in the first year of the reign of the judges had passed away.

The second equation of the first two Nephite chronological systems substantiates the foregoing assumptions and indicates that after 91 years measured in the reign of the judges had passed away, the 600th year from Lehi$_1$'s departure also came to an end; that is, the 92nd year in the second Nephite chronological system commenced an unknown number of days before the beginning of the 601st year in the first Nephite chronological system.[102] This is the same temporal relationship between the years of the two systems that is depicted in the first equation. In addition, this second equation suggests that the year-lengths of the two systems were practically the same, if not identical. This close similarity or equality of year lengths may be demonstrated by simple addition. As to the first chronological system, the end of the 509th year from Lehi$_1$'s departure plus 91 completed years (509+91 = 600) places the time one or more days into the 601st year from Lehi$_1$'s departure. As to the second chronological system, the day when the years of the judges "commenced"[103] plus 91 completed years (0+91 = 91) places the time one or more days into the 92nd year of the judges. A one-day difference in year-lengths would have become a 91-day difference by the beginning of the 92nd year of the judges and a mere four-day difference in year-lengths would have become a 364-day difference by the beginning of the 92nd year of the judges. Hence, it appears that the year-lengths of the two systems were basically the same, if not identical.

This relationship between the two systems also is set forth in the third equation, which appears in 3 Nephi 2:4-7. This part of the text culminates the reporting of events that occurred in the 92nd through 95th years of the judges.[104] Then, for the next five years, the year-by-year record of the passing of time is compressed, somewhat like the compact table of valuation in Alma 11:5-19. In Third Nephi, however, the compressed text presents an emphatic record of the quantitative march of time up to the inauguration of the third Nephite chronological system. The text of 3 Nephi 2:4-7 is set forth below in a proposed conceptual structure. The text is separated into lines and segments. Letters and numbers help to identify the parallel ideas. Almost every line expresses some type of chronological meaning; so, italics have not been used to identify chronological terms.

> A$_{1A}$ And thus did pass away the ninety and sixth year,
> A$_{1B}$ and also the ninety and seventh year,
> A$_{1C}$ and also the ninety and eighth year,

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[101]   Mosiah 29:37-Alma 1:2.

[102]   Helaman 16:24; 3 Nephi 1:1.

[103]   Mosiah 29:44.

[104]   3 Nephi 1:1, 4, 25-28; 2:1.

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A_{1D} and also the ninety and ninth year.

A_{2A} And also an hundred years had passed away

B_{2A} since the days of Mosiah,

C_{2A} which was king over the people of the Nephites.

A_{2B} And six hundred and nine years had passed away

B_{2B} since Lehi left Jerusalem.

A_{2C} And nine years had passed away

B_{2C} from the time which the sign was given

B_{2D} which was spoken of by the prophets

C_{2B} that Christ should come into the world.

Seven year-related expressions fill these verses. The A lines record the Nephite year counts in their first two chronological systems, with the years of the judges mentioned first, apparently because the first day of a judges' year commenced some number of days before the first day of a $Lehi_1$ year. The close temporal relationship equating the first two systems is maintained. The end of the 100th year of the judges occurred nine years after the end of 91st year of the judges (91+9 = 100) and this note is placed before the end of the 609th year from $Lehi_1$'s departure is mentioned. The end of the 609th year from $Lehi_1$'s departure occurred nine years after the end of the 600th year (600+9 = 609). Again, these two systems appear to have maintained a close similarity or equality of year-length, with the 101st year of the judges beginning some number of days before the 610th year from $Lehi_1$'s departure.

The B lines specify the starting points of the three chronological systems. The system of judges' years commenced when king $Mosiah_2$ instituted the reign of the judges, apparently very near the end of his life.[105] The system of $Lehi_1$'s years commenced hundreds of years earlier when his life was saved by obedience to the Lord's command to flee with his family from Jerusalem.[106] The mention of nine years in 3 Nephi 2:7 suggests that both systems that had been used to record the work of the prophets had continued to be measured from the day of Christ's birth. For reasons not explicitly stated, the Nephites waited nine years after the coming of Christ before the third Nephite chronological system was officially established.

3.7.6   The reckoning in 3 Nephi 2:8

The equation of the first two chronological systems in 3 Nephi 2:4-7 is followed in verse 8 by the announcement of the inauguration of the third Nephite system for numbering years. This declaration uses the phrase *began to reckon* in connection with the event and notes that nine years in the new system also had passed away. This segment of text is comparable in its proposed parallel structure to that in verses 4-7. Third Nephi 2:8 is presented below as a separate segment, but the letters and numbers from the preceding text have been used to identify the separate lines. As in the two previous segments of text, italics have not been used to identify chronological terms.

A_{3A} Now the Nephites began to reckon their time

B_3 from this period which the sign was given,

C_3 or from the coming of Christ;

A_{3B} therefore nine years had passed away.

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[105]   Mosiah 29:37-Alma 1:2.

[106]   1 Nephi 2:1-5.

Line A_{3A} states that the Nephites *began to reckon* a new chronological system ("their time"[107]), while line A_{3B} identifies the quantity of time that already had passed in this system. As part of the reckoning process, the B_3 line names the first of the key events that, at least for the believers, seems to have given impetus to the official creation of the new chronological system and the C_3 line names the second key event that the believers understood to have occurred on the day that concluded the first event. Note that the C lines in the textual segments of 3 Nephi 2:4-8 refer to the death of the last Nephite king (Mosiah$_2$) and to the birth of the Nephites' long prophesied Messiah or Christ.[108]

Just as the mention of nine years passing away in 3 Nephi 2:7 seems to refer back to the earlier Nephite systems that had just been described in verses 5 and 6 (the entwined years of Lehi$_1$ and the judges), even so, the mention of nine years in 3 Nephi 2:8 seems to refer back to the time when the sign came to an end at sunrise on the day prophesied for the Messiah's birth.[109] That long-awaited and long-remembered day apparently became the first day of the first month of the first year measured "since the sign was given of the coming of Christ" or "from the coming of Christ".[110] The reckoning suggested by the verb *reckon* in 3 Nephi 2:8 appears to have involved new temporal enumerations with new standard names for the chronological system, together with new quantitative names and new starting points for naming or numbering each day, month and year.

3.7.7 The meanings of *reckon* in 3 Nephi 2:8

The transitive verb *reckon* is defined in Webster's 1828 dictionary to mean "[t]o count ... number ...compute [or] calculate."[111] However, if counting, numbering, computing or calculating is part of the intended meaning of the word *reckon* in 3 Nephi 2:8, one may question what it was that needed to be counted or numbered. The Nephites had two chronological systems that appear to have had numbered years of similar length and they had an official record keeper, Nephi$_3$, who apparently recorded the date of the heavenly sign of the coming of Christ in both systems. Nephite record keepers had measured and numbered the years of the judges for more than 100 years and the years of Lehi$_1$ for more than 609 years and Nephi$_3$ apparently had measured both of these systems consistently for more than nine years from the day that followed the night without darkness. Thus, since nine years had already been counted or numbered in two well-established systems, one may well ask what the Nephites would have needed to compute or calculate. Was their third system for numbering years "from the coming of Christ" composed or observed in a manner that differed materially from the two previous systems? Why did the Nephites wait nine years to officially recognize this long-awaited interval of time? What kinds of calculations and, perhaps, what kinds of related observations or political transformations were required to get the third chronological system inaugurated? These questions are raised now because they are inherent in a rational attempt to understand the narratives in 3 Nephi 2 and they are implicit in the singular use of *reckon* with respect to time in 3 Nephi 2:8. In Division 3 of this study, where the plates of Mormon are examined, these issues will be analyzed.

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[107] Compare 3 Nephi 3:1; 4 Nephi 1:21, 48; Mormon 3:4 (years "from the coming of Christ") and 3 Nephi 8:2 ("our time").

[108] He is the leader prophesied to rule and reign eventually over the believers, Jews and Gentiles, including descendants of the Lamanites (1 Nephi 22:20-28).

[109] Helaman 14:2-9; 3 Nephi 1:4-21.

[110] See 3 Nephi 8:5 for an example of the practice of numbering of days, months and years in the third Nephite chronological system.

[111] Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, II: [429] (reckon).

Before leaving the introduction of 3 Nephi 2 in this Part, other similarities between this chapter and Alma 11 should be noted. In 3 Nephi 2:4-8, the year numbers and apparently similar or equal year-lengths of the two well-established and entwined chronological systems are made for the last time and then compared with a new time-term name ("from the coming of Christ") and number-term in the first year-related expression of the third chronological system. Contrasting with this "two old/one new" pattern associated with time in 3 Nephi 2, the Nephite names and legally defined values in Alma 11:4-19 equate two metals (gold and silver) by means of newly standardized names and weights, and then equate these metal values with a dissimilar measure or volume of grain, the size of which was to be determined by an apparently well established system for valuing "a measure of barley" and "a measure of every kind of grain". Hence, in Alma 11 the pattern seems to be "two new/one old". Furthermore, in each chapter where the verb *reckon* is used, two similar things (newly standardized metal weights or old chronological systems) seem to be compared with a third dissimilar thing (measures of grains or new chronological system) requiring not just computation or calculation, but enumeration (new names) as well.

Were there differences, other than names and starting dates, between the two entwined chronological systems and the third system? If so, were the differences quantitative? As grain presumably was more universal than gold and silver, was the new chronological system a more universal system than the ancient systems of the Nephites? Since Lamanites were being converted and Samuel$_2$, a Lamanite prophet, had been sent to the Nephites to prophesy the sign of Christ's coming, was the new Nephite chronological system similar to a Lamanite system? Was the new system adopted to more closely unite converted Lamanite and Nephite believers? Did the comparison of quantities of time require as much reckoning as the comparison of quantities of gold, silver and grain? Again, these questions are raised now because they are part of a rational analysis of 3 Nephi 2:4-8 and they are implied by the verb *reckon* in Alma 11 and 3 Nephi 2. In Division 3, these questions also will be addressed.

3.7.8   Categorizing the time-term in 3 Nephi 2:8

To conclude this introduction of 3 Nephi 2:8, it is noted that the following analysis must deal with the fact that unlike all the other express year- and time-terms, the year-term in this verse is not followed by its express time-term. Should this year-related expression be deemed to have an omitted name? A yes answer seems to deny the existence of the conjoined phrases that precede the number- and year-terms and establish the year's position in the new chronological system. Since the diction of a short name appears before the year-term, should this year-related expression be deemed merely to have a short name as its time-term? A yes answer would seem to ignore the chronological meaning of the first of the conjoined phrases of the time-term. As a third alternative, since both the sign and the coming of Christ are mentioned before the year-term, should this year-related expression be deemed to have an altered name (a modified long name) as its time-term? A yes answer would seem to take both of the conjoined phrases into account, but no other altered name occurs before its related year-term. Finally, since the Nephites are expressly mentioned in connection with the sign they saw and the reckoning process they undertook to create the new chronological system, should this year-related expression be deemed to have a personalized name as its time-term? A yes answer might seem to ignore the complete diction of what appears to be the conjoined short name "from the coming of Christ".

These four possibilities for classifying this year-related expression all are considered further in this study because the temporal-expression in 3 Nephi 2:8 unquestionably describes an

exceptional time. This time-term is labeled a "unique" name in the following Tables 3.C, D, E and G of this Part 3. The remaining Sections of this Part address two final analytical issues related to time-terms: their apparently systematized placements throughout the text of the *Book of Mormon* and the chronological settings or "era" contexts that may be inferred from their meanings.

3.8   The placement of time-terms

In the following discussion, the unique name that appears in 3 Nephi 2:8 and the five other analytical types of time-terms initially are grouped with respect to the three sets of plates on which the *Book of Mormon* was engraved.[112] Then, time-terms are grouped by the major divisions of the text. Lastly, as with the year-terms discussed in Part 2, time-terms are analyzed in terms of the placement of their various types in letter-sets and letter-groups throughout the plates and major divisions of the *Book of Mormon*.

3.8.1   Time-terms in the three sets of plates

Table 3.C presents the numbers and percentages for each type of time-term in the small plates of Nephi, the plates of Mormon, the plates of Moroni, and all the plates. Most of the year-related expressions in the small plates of Nephi (16 or 55.2% of the 29 expressions), the plates of Mormon (229 or 63.1% of the 363 extant expressions) and the plates of Moroni (27 or 79.4% of the 34 expressions) are categorized by their omitted names. Because the texts of the small plates and the plates of Moroni are complete, it is possible to conclude that all short names and altered names, as well as the unique name, occur only in the plates of Mormon. However, because of the lost texts of the plates of Mormon, the numbers and the five analytical types of time-terms other than the unique name can only be said to represent the extant time-terms in these plates.

3.8.2   Time-terms in the major divisions

Table 3.D depicts numbers and percentages for each type of time-term in the major divisions of the *Book of Mormon*. As the numbers for the three sets of plates presented in Table 3.C indicate, a long name only appears once in the small plates of Nephi and once in the plates of Moroni.[113] Long and short names occur most often in Alma and Helaman (95 or 93.1% of the 102 instances of such names in the extant text of the plates of Mormon). The Book of Mosiah is the only major division in plates of Mormon that does not contain a short name, a fact that may be due to the lost texts of these plates.

One of the more intriguing facts associated with these numbers is the use of 33 omitted names in the Book of Fourth Nephi and 33 total time-terms placed by Mormon$_2$ in his personal book. According to 3 Nephi 8:1-23, the prophesied sign of the Messiah's death occurred when 33 years had passed away following the sign of his birth. These numbers might suggest that Mormon$_2$'s placement of time-terms was intentionally symbolic, a suggestion that is thoroughly analyzed in Division 3 of this study. In the presentation of time-terms in this Part, the suggestion of Mormon$_2$'s symbolic use of time-terms introduces his apparent planning of the placement of time-terms throughout his writings.

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[112]   See Division 1, Part 1, Section 1.6.

[113]   Jacob 1:1; Moroni 10:1.

3.8.3   The placement of time-terms in the text

The express time-terms in 154 year-related expressions have been divided above into five analytical types: long, short, altered, personalized and unique names. The other 272 year-related expressions do not include express time-terms and, thus, suggest a sixth analytical type of time-term (usually called an omitted name in this study). In Table 3.E, the placements of the six types of time-terms are charted in the major divisions of the three sets of plates. To assist in conceptualizing this textual distribution, each analytical type of time-term in Table 3.E has been labeled with a capital letter: D = long name; E = short name; F = altered name; G = personalized name; H = omitted name; and J = unique name. These letters have been chosen so as not to be confused with the capital letters A, B and C that identified the year-terms in Table 2.C and to avoid condensing and thereby mistakenly viewing the capital letter I as part of some of the other the capital letters. In the following discussion, letter patterns, letter-sets and letter-groups representing time-terms are examined through the use of these additional capital letters.

The time-term letter-groups in the major divisions of the small plates of Nephi include three of the six types: First Nephi (GHGHGH),[114] Second Nephi (GHGHG), Jacob (DGHG), Enos (G), Jarom (H), Omni (H) and Words of Mormon (G). If the major divisions are disregarded as just passing divisions in the constant motion of time, the letter-groups and letter-set for the small plates (GHGHG[H]GHGHG)(D)(GH[G]HG) seem to suggest an overall plan that involves the careful use of the three types of time-terms. The long name (D) letter-set divides the two other types of time-terms into two letter-groups, the first of which was created by $Nephi_1$ and may be described as balanced and reversible around a central [H] letter-set. The second letter-group also is balanced and reversible around a central [G] letter-set, thanks to $Mormon_2$'s addition of a final (G) letter-set to complete this letter-group. The symbolic nature of these letter patterns is analyzed in Division 2 of this study.

The time-term letter-groups in the major divisions of the plates of Moroni use the same three types of letter-sets: Ether (HGHG[H]GHGH) and Moroni (HD). If the major divisions again are disregarded as ephemeral separations of the movement of time, the letter-group and letter-set for the plates of Moroni (HGHG[H]GHGH)(D) seem to contrast with the pattern created by $Nephi_1$ and $Jacob_2$ in the small plates of Nephi. The alternating pattern of H and G time-terms in the plates of Moroni begin and end with (H) letter-sets, instead of (G) letter-sets as in $Nephi_1$'s books. In the plates of Moroni, the single D time-term completes $Moroni_2$'s writings, whereas in the small plates, the single D time-term commences the writings of $Jacob_2$ and his descendants. While it is not certain from the information so far adduced that the letter pattern in the plates of Moroni is a function of $Moroni_2$'s intentional contrast with the word choices in the small plates, the potential reasons for these time-term choices are examined in Division 4, where the temporal-expressions in the plates of Moroni are analyzed.

The complex letter pattern in the plates of Mormon uses all six time-term categories. The letter-group that appears in the extant text of the Book of Mosiah (GDHGHGF) might seem to

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[114]   The year-term in 1 Nephi 15:13 occurs in the phrase "for the space of many years" and it is not immediately followed by a time-term. This phrase is conjoined with the following phrase "and many generations after that the Messiah hath manifested himself in body unto the children of men". The two noun phrases "many years" and "many generations" are temporally related, but distinct. The first is about a period measured with observations or calendars, while the second is about extended families. Except in the unique year-related expression in 3 Nephi 2:8, where alternative phrases in the time-term immediately precede the number- and year-terms, every other express time-term in the *Book of Mormon* follows its year-term without an intervening reference to "generations". Hence, the year-term in 1 Nephi 15:13 has been categorized by an omitted H time-term, even though the "many years and many generations" both appear to be prophesied to follow the bodily appearance of the Messiah. This interpretation does not affect the letter pattern of time-terms in First Nephi because, if this instance were deemed to be a personalized G time-term, it would be part of the immediately preceding (G) letter-set.

exhibit an organized pattern if the final altered name (F) letter-set were to be classified as a long name (D) letter-set. Then, the letter pattern associated with the reign of king Mosiah$_2$ would be (GD)(HGH)(GD). Perhaps the word *that* in what was intended to be a long name in Mosiah 29:46 was dictated indistinctly by Joseph Smith or was dropped by a scribe's mistake when the text was written down. The possibility that such speculations are likely to be true seems to disappear when the letter-groups in Alma (DGHGEFEHEDEDEHDGHDHFHDHDHEHGDEH DEHDEHGDGDEHEHDEHDEHEDGDHEDEDHDFDEHEHDHDEHEHD), Helaman (DEHE DEHEHDEHEHEHEHEHEHEHDHDFHGDEHDGHDHEHDEHD), Third Nephi (GHDGHGE GJHEHGHG), Fourth Nephi (HEHE) and Mormon (GHGHEHF) are considered. These letter-groups suggest that the seemingly organized letter-group in Mosiah is not an integral part of a planned pattern of six types of time-terms in the plates of Mormon. The books of Alma and Helaman, for example, also contain what might appear to be organized letter-groups: (HE DEDEH), (GDEHDEHDEHG) and (GDEHDG); however, between these seemingly planned letter-groups, there appear to be entirely random lists of letters.

3.8.4   The organization of time-terms in the plates of Mormon

Assuming that Mormon$_2$ may have used an organized system for the placement of his time-terms, a search for possible patterns was undertaken. This inquiry produced a series of additional letter lists by sorting the six types in alternative ways, such as: ignoring omitted names (hence just five categories); combining the principal non-standard types (altered names and personalized names, hence five categories); combining altered names and personalized names and ignoring omitted names (four categories); combining the standard categories (long names and short names, hence five categories); and so forth. A total of 206 additional letter lists were produced, with each letter list having three, four or five categories. (A letter list with just one or two categories could not present a meaningful letter pattern.)

One hundred seventy of the 206 alternative letter lists included the omitted (H) letter-sets, either as stand-alone letter-sets or in combination with other letter-sets. Another 36 of the alternative letter lists excluded (H) letter-sets altogether; i.e., while (H) letter-sets seem to be integral to the letter patterns of the small plates of Nephi and the plates of Moroni, the possibility that Mormon$_2$'s system of organization ignored omitted names also was examined. When (H) letter-sets were included in the analysis of time-terms in the plates of Mormon, 21 letter-lists seemed to suggest organized placement systems in most parts of the plates of Mormon and 15 of these were based on long and short names being combined (sometimes with other time-terms). When omitted names were ignored, six more letter-lists seemed to suggest organized placement systems and five of these also were based on long and short names being combined (sometimes with other time-terms). Of the 27 potentially organized letter lists, eight appeared to be simplistic lists composed of two alternating letters before the unique name and the same two alternating letters following the unique name. Of the remaining 19 more complex lists, one list provided a consistent letter pattern throughout the plates of Mormon. To create this list, the long and short names were combined into an "official" name category (labeled D in the remainder of this Part and in Table 3.F) and the unique name was identified as an altered name time-term (labeled F in the remainder of this Part and in Table 3.F). The personalized names (labeled G in Tables 3.E and 3.F) were unchanged as a separate type. Omitted names labeled H in Table 3.E were disregarded as a separate type. Their placements are marked with a tilde in Table 3.F. With these changes, time-terms, like year-terms, were divided into distinct types that seemed to be governed not just by individual narrative requirements or choices, but by an overriding pattern as well.

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Based on the three types labeled D, F and G, the placements of all 154 express time-terms in the *Book of Mormon* appear as depicted in Table 3.F. The letter-groups in the small plates of Nephi (GDG) and the plates of Moroni (GD) could exist without any plan for time-terms other than to meet the requirements of the writers' narrative diction. In other words, the letter patterns in these two sets of plates suggest that some kind of an organizing protocol (a method for making decisions about the type of time-term to use in each year-related expression) was at work only when omitted (H) letter-sets are included in the patterns. In the extant text of the plates of Mormon, however, the suggestion of a consistent organizing protocol for the letter-groups appears most distinctively in the text only when: (a) standard time-terms are combined into an official name (D) type; (b) the unique name is considered to be an altered name (F) type; and (c) omitted (H) letter-sets are disregarded. The letter-groups and letter-sets suggested by the placements shown in Table 3.F seem to have been organized around the seven altered name (F) letter-sets that appear only in the plates of Mormon: (GDG)(FDGD[F]DGDF)(DGDG[D] GDGD)(FDF)(GDGD[G]DGDG)(FDG[D]GDF). This pattern suggests that the unique name may have been considered an altered name, with the phrase *from this period which* substituted for the preposition *since* in the beginning of the long name and the phrase *or from* substituted for the preposition *of* in the middle of the long name. If that suggestion is correct, then time-terms in the plates of Mormon would appear to have three categories, like the year-terms in these plates.

Presumably, the lost texts of the books of Lehi and Mosiah also included D, F and G time-terms, but the GDGF letter pattern associated with the reign of king Mosiah$_2$ does not provide sufficient information to project what the actual pattern in the lost texts. In Division 3, the letter pattern for time-terms in the plates of Mormon is analyzed. The proposed pattern raises a variety of questions. Are these three types of time-terms related to the three types of year-terms, other than as separate components of year-related expressions? Are the associated narratives influenced by the decision pattern or structure of the time-terms, or vice versa? How do these six types of year- and time-terms in the plates of Mormon relate to the other optional component of a year-related expression, the number-term that usually precedes and modifies a year-term? To lay the conceptual foundation for answering such questions in Division 3, number-terms also must be examined. The various types of number-terms and their placement patterns are introduced in Part 4 of this Division. To conclude this Part 3, however, one more important feature of the express time-terms of the *Book of Mormon* must be discussed. This is a symbolic feature that is usually called an "era" context.

3.9   Nephite eras and era contexts

The noun *era* does not appear in the *Book of Mormon*, but it is used in this source book to mean "[a] system of chronological notation, characterized by the numbering of years from some particular point of time".[115] Based on the assumption that time-terms expressing era names may be classified or grouped in terms of their diction and meanings, 124 or 80.5% of the 154 time-terms appear to separate Nephite time and the chronology of the *Book of Mormon* into three long and overlapping intervals. Table 3.G presents these 124 time-terms in the three proposed groups, each of which appears to identify a "point of time" or unique event from which Nephite years were measured and separately numbered. In this study, each of these three systems of numbering years usually is called an "era" and the lengthy interval associated with the use of each era typically is called an "era context". In other words, "era context" is the name given to the

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[115]   *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, I: 889 (era).

temporal setting of narrative events that occurred within the time measured and numbered by the same "era". When the text indicates that the use of different eras overlapped, the narrative events in those overlapping era contexts may need to be understood in accordance with each of the eras.

The textual foundation for each Nephite era includes both the express time-terms that in various ways appear to identify the beginning point of a Nephite chronological system and the express number-terms that quantify the passing of years from that beginning point. This Section 3.9 introduces Nephite eras and their era contexts. Part 4 of this Division introduces number-terms. Number- and time-terms are listed together in Table 3.A and the era-related time-terms are listed and grouped in Table 3.G.

A fourth interval may be inferred from statements in the books of Mosiah and Ether,[116] and might be considered an era context if the noun *era* were defined more generally as "a portion of historical time marked by the continuance throughout it of particular influences, social conditions, etc."[117] The interval identified with the people of Jared and their rulers might be called such an era; however, the year-related expressions in the Book of Ether, Moroni$_2$'s abridgment of the Jaredite record, appear to relate only to years numbered in connection with specific individuals or groups of Jaredites,[118] rather than from the original emigration of Jared and his followers from the land of "the great tower"[119] or from their coming ashore in their new homeland.[120] If the Jaredites did have such a long-term chronological system, the year-related expressions in the Book of Ether do not appear to provide direct evidence of that system. Thus, in this source book, the lengthy interval associated with the rise and fall of the Jaredite people will be called a "Jaredite period" rather than a "Jaredite era context". This distinction between the definitions of the three Nephite era contexts and the Jaredite period appears to be further justified by the markedly dissimilar use of temporal-expressions in Moroni$_2$'s abridgment of the Book of Ether, which is examined in Division 4 of this source book.

3.9.1   The Lehi era

The first Nephite era or chronological system has been identified above as numbering years from a specific event: "Lehi left Jerusalem". This vital diction, as standardized, altered or personalized in the ten time-terms listed in Table 3.G, is the first of two interrelated elements that define this era. Lehi$_1$'s departure from Jerusalem began the measurement and numbering of years in the earliest part of Nephite chronology. From the time that he and his family left Jerusalem, they measured and counted years.[121] In their new homeland, Lehi$_1$'s children and grandchildren continued to refer to this event with personalized phrases such as: "from the time we left Jerusalem"[122] or "from the time that our father Lehi left Jerusalem".[123] At some point, years in this Nephite system for measuring time appear to have been counted in less personalized ways: "from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem"[124] or "since Lehi left Jerusalem".[125]

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[116]   Mosiah 8:7-14; 28:10-19; Ether 1:1-33.

[117]   *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, I: 889 (era).

[118]   E.g., Ether 9:14-16, 25; 10:5-8, 13-14, 30, 32; 14:11.

[119]   Ether 1:33-2:1.

[120]   Ether 6:1-13.

[121]   1 Nephi 17:4.

[122]   2 Nephi 5:28.

[123]   Enos 1:25.

[124]   Jacob 1:1.

[125]   3 Nephi 2:6.

The various era names appear to have three narrative aspects in common. They expressly remember that Lehi$_1$ left Jerusalem with his family at a specific time commanded by the Lord.[126] They implicitly recall Lehi$_1$'s prophecy that "even six hundred years" would pass away following his departure and then "a prophet would the Lord God raise up among the Jews, yea, even a Messiah, or in other words, a Savior of the world".[127] And they suggest that the time of Lehi$_1$'s departure and his 600-year prophecy were thereafter to be remembered, honored, measured and counted as vital elements in the part of his descendants' religion that came to be known as the "doctrine of Christ".[128] Some of his descendants appear to have believed that Lehi$_1$'s 600-year prophecy eventually would be proven to be true. The standard era names occur in year-related narratives where they are associated with key civil and religious events of the Nephites.[129] In the remainder of this study, the chronological system or era that began with Lehi$_1$'s departure from Jerusalem usually will be called the "Lehi era" and the interval measured and numbered by that first Nephite era usually will be called the "Lehi era context".

The second of the interrelated elements defining the Lehi era is the measurement system that required the use of the next larger integer in the numbering of elapsed years in the Lehi era context. The natural day, week, moon and month all were introduced above and were associated with numbering the passage of time, but the principal length of time mentioned in the *Book of Mormon* for measuring an interval as long as 600 years is the noun *year*. The basic English word for the tool that measures the length of a year is the noun *calendar*, which the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as "[t]he system according to which the beginning and length of successive civil years, and the subdivision of the year into its parts, is fixed".[130] The word *calendar* also does not appear in the *Book of Mormon*, but the system for measuring the length of each *year* in the Lehi era usually will be called the "Lehi calendar".

While little direct information is given in the text about the composition of the Lehi calendar, the measuring, numbering and recording of years from the beginning of the family's trek through the wilderness suggests that they used a familiar calendar.[131] Seven-day weeks apparently were observed in connection with Mosaic law and as a way to measure the passing of time,[132] but no text indicates that weeks were counted serially or refers to them as a defining component of the length of the Lehi calendar (such as, for example, the hypothetical equation $7 \times 52 = 364$ might suggest). The numbering of nine consecutive "moons" occurs in a report written by a Nephite for other Nephites.[133] This suggests that measuring time with "moons" was a familiar concept. Still, no narrative in the *Book of Mormon* expressly describes the length of the Lehi calendar, other than (apparently) to equate its length with that of the calendar used to measure the second Nephite era context.[134] The use of increasing quantities of years, as specified in the ten number-terms that appear with Lehi era names, does suggest that the years of the Lehi era were measured with the same system for observing the passing of time; i.e., the same calendar. The number-terms may be expressed separately with increasing quantities represented

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1 Nephi 2:1-4.

[127] 1 Nephi 10:4.

[128] E.g., 2 Nephi 31:1-32:6; Jacob 7:1-23; 3 Nephi 2:1-3.

[129] Jacob 1:1; Mosiah 6:4; 3 Nephi 1:1.

[130] *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, I: 318 (calendar).

[131] 1 Nephi 17:4.

[132] Mosiah 18:25; Alma 31:12; 32:11; see also Division 1, Part 1, Section 1.9.4.

[133] Omni 1:21.

[134] Mosiah 29:41-46 ("commenced" and 509); 3 Nephi 1:1 (91 and 600); 2:5-6 (100 and 609).

by the figures 30, 55, 179, 476, 509, 600 (four times) and 609. The 609th year of the Lehi era appears to have been the last full year to be measured and numbered with the Lehi calendar, and then reported in the *Book of Mormon*.[135]

When Nephi$_1$ reported that "thirty years had passed away from the time we left Jerusalem", when Jacob$_2$ stated that "fifty and five years had passed away from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem" and when Mormon$_2$ mentioned that "six hundred and nine years had passed away since Lehi left Jerusalem",[136] each clause used a different type of Lehi era name to specify a unique moment within the Lehi era context. The fact that almost all the intervening years in the Lehi era context are not expressly numbered in the text is immaterial to the chronological symbolism of these clauses. Most *Book of Mormon* narratives that may be associated with the Lehi era and its context do not include year-related expressions referring to that era[137] and most year-related expressions that may be associated with that era do not include Lehi era names.[138] Nevertheless, the Lehi era may be assumed to have existed and to have been measured for at least 609 Lehi calendar years. The ten express times-terms listed in Table 3.G for the Lehi era may be grouped by their diction and then read together or combined to imply a specific chronological setting, the Lehi era context, for all the narratives dealing with events between Lehi$_1$'s departure from Jerusalem and the last narrative associated with a Lehi era name.

3.9.2   The Judges era

The second Nephite system for measuring and numbering years had elements similar to the Lehi era. This second era began to be used at another specific time—when king Mosiah$_2$ instituted the rule of judges chosen by the people.[139] According to the long name of this era, years were measured and counted from the inauguration of "the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi".[140] Many shorter time-terms and an even longer altered name also appear in the text. The 106 time-terms that identify this era are listed in Table 3.G. These time-terms refer to the rule of a specific judge, to the rule of judges as a group, or to the time near the end of king Mosiah$_2$'s life when he instituted judicial rule. As with the ten number- and time-terms that implied a Lehi era context, the 106 number- and time-terms associated with this era may be read together or combined to imply a second specific chronological setting or era context for all the narratives describing events between the inauguration of the judges' rule and the last narrative associated with a Judges era name. The events related to this peaceful political revolution appear to have occurred during the 509th Lehi calendar year.[141] In the remainder of this study, this second Nephite era usually is called the "Judges era" and the interval measured and numbered by this chronological system typically is called the "Judges era context".

The second element of the Judges era usually is called the "Judges calendar". Based on a few narratives that include exact dates, the Judges calendar had at least 11 numbered "months".[142] Days were numbered within each month and the 12th day is the largest day number

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[135]   3 Nephi 2:6.

[136]   2 Nephi 5:28; Jacob 1:1; 3 Nephi 2:6.

[137]   These narratives appear to include all those related in the books of the small plates of Nephi and in the books of Mosiah, Alma and Helaman, and the initial narratives in Third Nephi.

[138]   See Table 3.A.

[139]   Mosiah 29.

[140]   E.g., Alma 1:1; 4:1, 5, 20; 63:16; Helaman 1:1; 2:12; 16:24.

[141]   Mosiah 29:44-46.

[142]   Alma 49:1; 58:7.

referenced in a single month.[143] Of course, the mention of an 11th month or a 12th day does not mean there were not more months than 11 or that any month was necessarily limited to just 12 days. The Judges calendar apparently served as the Nephite civil calendar for at least 100 years.[144] As Table 3.A indicates, most Judges calendar years are expressly numbered in the text.

No narrative states or suggests that the inauguration of the Judges era eliminated the use of the Lehi calendar or displaced it from its religious purposes. Indeed, during the entire period that the Lehi and Judges calendars were apparently measured alongside each other, they seem to have maintained the same or a very similar year-length, while differing in their annual starting and ending dates.[145] A Judges calendar year seems to have commenced and ended before the Lehi calendar year with which there was the greatest overlap. The ancient Lehi calendar and the newer Judges calendar appear to have been entwined consistently for many generations. The final mention of both calendars occurs when the third Nephite era is officially instituted.[146]

3.9.3   The NC era

The last Nephite era is sometimes referred to in this study as the "Nephite Christian era", but it will be more frequently called the "NC era". Most year-related expressions numbered in the NC era are characterized by omitted time-terms, but the increasing numbers in their number-terms and the eight express time-terms listed in Table 3.G may be read together or combined to suggest a third specific era context for all the narratives describing events between the coming of Christ and Moroni$_2$'s close of the *Book of Mormon*, the last narrative associated with an NC era time-term. The interval in which the NC era was used typically is called the "NC era context" and the measuring and numbering system of the era usually is called the "NC calendar".

No *Book of Mormon* description of the NC calendar gives its length or complete composition, but months of some type and days within months both were numbered.[147] Eight time-terms listed in Table 3.G identify the "point of time" or unique event that began the NC era. In two texts, NC calendar years are said to have been measured from the giving of "the sign",[148] the completion of which appears to have occurred on the morning of the day equated with "the coming of Christ".[149] For reasons not explained directly, the official use of the NC calendar appears to have been inaugurated by the Nephites more than nine years after the occurrence of the prophesied sign of a night without darkness, which signified for believers the night before the Messiah's birth.[150] Sometime after nine Lehi and Judges calendar years both had been measured and numbered from that event, nine NC calendar years appear to have been reckoned officially from the rising of the sun to begin the day that followed the night without darkness. From that day forward, the NC era context endured for more than 420 years[151] and apparently ended with the death of Moroni$_2$, the last official Nephite record keeper.[152]

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[143]   Alma 14:23.

[144]   Mosiah 29:44-46; 3 Nephi 2:4-8.

[145]   Mosiah 29:41-46 ("commenced" and 509); 3 Nephi 1:1 (91 and 600); 2:5-6 (100 and 609).

[146]   3 Nephi 2:4-8.

[147]   3 Nephi 4:5-7, 11; 8:5.

[148]   3 Nephi 2:8; Moroni 10:1.

[149]   3 Nephi 2:8; 3:1; 4 Nephi 1:21, 48; Mormon 3:4.

[150]   Helaman 14:1-8; 3 Nephi 1:4-21; 2:1-8.

[151]   Moroni 10:1.

[152]   Moroni$_2$'s year-related expressions both indicate that NC calendar years had passed away. In the first instance (Mormon 8:6), he seems to have recorded the passing of "four hundred years ... since the coming of our Lord and Savior" as soon as he could fulfill his father's

3.10   Conclusion

This introduction to the types of time-terms, the three Nephite eras and their associated commencement dates and calendars, and their symbolic and overlapping era contexts concludes with a few cautionary notes relating to temporal interpretation. The use of the noun *month* in the Judges and NC era contexts is a textual fact that does not necessarily mean the numbers of months or the lengths of the months in their respective calendars were the same or different. Similarly, the noun *moon*s used by a Nephite in a Lehi era context and the very similar lengths of the Lehi and Judges calendars are textual facts that do not necessarily mean the Lehi calendar was defined by moons or that the months of the Judges calendar were the same as the moons perhaps associated with the Lehi calendar, nor do such textual facts necessarily mean the opposite. Because each era began a new measurement and numbering of time, its calendar need not have been the same one used for either of the other eras.

In addition, the importance of the beginning point of the Lehi era in Nephite thought (e.g., "the time we left Jerusalem" or "the time that Lehi left Jerusalem") appears to have resulted in the use of these and similar types of phrases in contexts other than year-related expressions.[153] Likewise, the significance of the beginning point of what would become the NC era (e.g., "the coming of Christ" or "the coming of our Lord and Savior") also seems to have led to similar phrases appearing in contexts other than year-related expressions.[154] Narratives containing such phrases must be distinguished from year-related narratives that use the phrases as time-term components in year-related expressions. Finally, it must be noted that while the 124 time-terms listed in Table 3.G may be combined to imply the three Nephite eras and to represent the largest sub-class of express time-terms, all narratives within the *Book of Mormon* may be associated temporally with the three Nephite era contexts. All *Book of Mormon* narratives may be located, definitely or generally, before, in or after each of the three Nephite era contexts.

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commandment to do so (Mormon 8:1-13), presumably in the 401st NC calendar year. In the second instance (Moroni 10:1), Moroni$_2$ stated that "more than four hundred and twenty years has passed away since the sign was given of the coming of Christ". This does not necessarily mean that this passage was written in the 421st year. Moroni$_2$ may have lost track of exact Nephite dates in the NC calendar during the 35 or more years that he hid from Lamanites who sought his life (Mormon 6:5-15; 8:1-13; Moroni 1:1-3; 10:1). In addition, Moroni$_2$ seems to have had other reasons for emphasizing an era of ten 42-year periods of time. E.g., 4 Nephi 1:6 (1x42), 20 (2x42), 27 (5x42); Mormon 4:16-5:5 (9x42); Ether 9:16 [42+(1x20)], 24 [42+(3x20); 42+(5x20)]; 10:8 (1x42), 15 (1x42), 32 (1x42); see also Division 4: "Interpreting *Forty and Two Years* in the Book of Mormon."

[153]   E.g., 2 Nephi 1:24; 25:10; Mosiah 1:6; 2:34; 28:20; Alma 18:36, 38; 28:2; 3 Nephi 4:11; 5:15).

[154]   E.g., 1 Nephi 1:19 ("a Messiah"); 2 Nephi 6:13; Mosiah 13:33; Helaman 8:13 ("the Messiah"); Alma 16:19 ("the Son of God"); 2 Nephi 11:4; Mosiah 7:26; Helaman 8:22 ("Christ").